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Finegold Alexander Architects completes interior restoration of The First Church of Christ

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The First Church of Christ, Scientist, on Mass. Ave. - Boston

Boston, MA Finegold Alexander Architects has completed the first phase of the multi-phased renovations to The First Church of Christ, Scientist, on Mass. Ave. The project involved the interior repair and restoration of The Mother Church Original. The building is part of a campus that is located on a 14.5-acre site that includes a large pedestrian plaza, The Mother Church Original (TMCO) and The Mother Church Extension (TMCX), and a number of other buildings in the Back Bay neighborhood. It is the largest privately owned, yet publicly accessible space in Boston.

Work on TMCO involved strategically inserting updated electrical and life safety systems into the existing building fabric to bring the structure up to code, while leaving the original interiors intact. Additional interior work included plaster repairs, restoration of damaged interior stonework and mosaic tile, and restoration of the interior decorative painting.

Finegold Alexander is leading the project and will coordinate and oversee the multiple phases, including the restoration of TMCX which is slated for construction in 2022. The design team includes building envelope specialists Simpson Gumpertz & Heger (SGH), who are responsible for the building exterior, and Arup, who provide the electrical and fire protection services. Key elements include the preservation of the building envelope, interior repairs to address water infiltration, and life safety/accessibility code upgrades. Construction is lead by Shawmut Design and Construction.

“The team had to carefully design and implement the work in order to ensure that there were no areas in the building that showed traces that we were ever there,” said Regan Shields Ives, principal, Finegold Alexander. “The result is a modernized, code compliant church that harkens back to its original splendid design. Our goal was to refresh the building yet leave no trace of our work so that it looks as it did when it was originally completed in 1894.”

“We are delighted to see the completed restoration of the interior of The Mother Church Original, an architectural masterpiece and central place of worship, to its original condition,” said Jack Train, real estate assets director, The First Church of Christ, Scientist.

“As specialists with a long history in historic preservation, we are honored to be able to work on this Landmark project,” said Shields Ives. “We look forward to our continued work restoring this incredible architectural gem to its original splendor while bringing the buildings systems up to meet current code standards.”

The project is part of a multi-phased project involving the interior and exterior restoration of The Mother Church Extension, as well as the complete overhaul of the adjacent plaza and reflecting pool designed by CRJA landscape architects.

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