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Erland completes expansion/renovation of American Antiquarian Society

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Worcester, MA Erland Construction completed an expansion and renovation of the American Antiquarian Society (AAS).

Partnering on the project were Samuel Anderson Architects and Pinck & Co.

During its more than two centuries of collecting, AAS has accumulated some four million items and now houses the largest and most accessible collection of books, pamphlets, broadsides, newspapers, periodicals, sheet music, graphic images, and other printed materials from pre-twentieth-century America. The Society is committed not only to the preservation of these materials, but also to sharing them with scholars, educators, students, and the general public.

The new three-story, 7,000 s/f addition to the existing building houses a conservation studio, as well as a technology-enhanced learning lab where events and programming will be offered. In addition, a new climate-control system was installed to ensure the preservation of the society's extraordinary collections, which date back to the seventeenth century.

From a construction standpoint, the new HVAC systems were the most important component of this complex renovation and expansion project. In order to upgrade the systems while maintaining the preservation of the society's operations and rare, historical documents, a multi-phase installation masterplan was created. Utilizing a design-assist approach, Erland collaborated with Phoenix Mechanical for this part of the project.

AAS and Erland's focus at the beginning of expansion and renovation was to minimize the amount of impact on both the occupants in the building and the priceless collection of texts and materials. Together, the AAS and Erland teams came up with an efficient plan to bring this all together, while maintaining specific temperature requirements in the building.

On Friday, May 3rd, AAS held a ribbon cutting ceremony signifying the opening of the new Antiquarian Hall addition. Team members from Erland, Samuel Anderson Architects, and Pinck & Co. were in attendance.

"Not long after the groundbreaking it became clear that, aside from the weekly construction

meetings, regular consultations with the Erland field team would be crucial in coordinating sensitive tasks in our occupied spaces,” said Babette Gehrich, chief conservator at the American Antiquarian Society. “Having now filled four notebooks with meeting notes and to-do lists based on our conversations, I have gained a new understanding of the complexities of construction and an appreciation for the work of architects, construction workers, tradespeople, and engineers—no doubt a rewarding and transformative experience for me, personally and professionally.”

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