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Boston University's Dahod Family Alumni Center receives BPA's Preservation Award

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Boston, MA Finegold Alexander Architects and Boston University (BU) said that the Dahod Family Alumni Center has been awarded a 2019 Preservation Achievement Award from the Boston Preservation Alliance (BPA) for the sustainable restoration of the former "BU Castle." The award recognizes exemplary historic preservation projects or activities around Boston.

The Castle has long been part of BU's history and one of the school's most iconic buildings. "In a campus with many purpose-built, modern facilities, it's of great value to provide a distinctive and memorable sense of place that connects to the grandeur of a residential neighborhood that's hard to otherwise grasp. Buildings like this one allow a continuum of memory to this place and across multiple generations of students," said Greg Galer, executive director of the BPA.

"This historic project enables the sustainable transformation of one of the University's richest heritage buildings into a vital Alumni Center for daily use and activity," said Rebecca Berry, president, Finegold Alexander. "The Castle, now fully restored, will continue to be an iconic, high profile destination, putting alumni literally and figuratively at the heart of the Charles River campus."

The Dahod Family Alumni Center at Boston University's (BU) historic Tudor Revival-style "Castle" is located at the corner of Bay State Road and Granby Street, part of Boston's Bay State Road Historic District. The beloved building in the heart of campus continues its dominating presence as a campus icon, now completely renovated, restored, and revitalized. The 15,371 s/f Dahod Family Alumni Center will serve as a new gathering place and "home away from home" for alumni on BU's campus. The Castle renovation was funded through generous alumni donations. Finegold Alexander Architects served as the architect of record for the project.

"The building is a testament to the power and generosity of the 335,000 Boston University alumni in 185 countries around the world. Our goal was to make this building a welcoming, vibrant gathering and meeting space for that network. The BU Castle has long been a beloved part of our campus and alumni are now able to enjoy the space on a daily basis," said Steven Hall, vice president for alumni relations.

The Castle was originally built in 1915 by William Lindsey Jr. as a home for his family. The design, executed in the Tudor Gothic style by architectural firm Chapman & Frazer, was based on

Athelhampton Hall in Dorsetshire, England. Many of the eclectic stone carvings were executed by Hugh Cairns, the sculptor of the figures in the frieze of the Trinity Church porch. In 1939, Oakes and Blanche Ames, the then owners, sold the mansion to William Chenery, who donated the house to the University. Over time the University began growing and developing around The Castle. It served as a home to University Presidents and their families until 1967 when it was converted to a University function facility for lectures, small concerts, weddings and all manner of university gatherings.

The building re-opened in September 2018 after extensive renovations. The transformation in use allowed for the opportunity for restoration of this unique structure. The interior was reconfigured to include the Alumni Relations Office, informal seating areas for alumni, and an upgraded kitchen to revitalize BU' Fuller's Pub, an exclusive gathering place for the BU Community. The exterior of the Castle's original sandstone masonry was completely restored, cleaned and repointed. The original windows were removed from the building fully restored and reinstalled. All existing slate was removed, from the roof and completely replaced with new slate tiles and copper flashing. Large numbers of slates were preserved and are being made into special plaques for Boston University Alumni. The result of all this effort is an iconic building that serves as a gathering place for students and alumni at the heart of the campus while continuing to contribute to the history and character of the historic district.

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