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LeftField, Gilbane Building Company, and Raymond Design Associates complete Marblehead's new elementary school 2.5 months ahead of schedule

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Marblehead, MA According to LeftField, an owner's project management firm, despite challenges with the onset of the pandemic occurring just as construction commenced, the Lucretia & Joseph Brown Elementary School will open on October 13th; two and a half months ahead of schedule, and substantially under budget.

"While some may perceive this as a delay given the traditional start to a school year, the original contractual schedule was targeted for a December 2021 winter break completion so that the kids had a new school to come back to," said Jim Rogers, founder of LeftField. "But, thanks to a talented, hardworking project team and an equally impressive school building committee, we were able to work together to achieve a full Certificate of Occupancy so that students could enjoy their new

school early.”

The new \$54 million, 450-student, 82,000 s/f elementary school will provide programmatic parity across the town’s pre-k through grade 3 program consolidating four former elementary school buildings into one. Throughout the course of the project and the on-going impacts from the pandemic, Leftfield, Raymond Design Associates, and Gilbane Building Company collaborated to create innovative solutions to deliver the school ahead of schedule and under budget.

Gilbane proactively provided early releases on several material orders ahead of the pandemic; this proved beneficial when COVID-related supply chain issues began plaguing projects across the country, and through a concerted effort, Raymond Design Associates and Gilbane worked diligently to procure alternative materials, including masonry options, affected by the pandemic. The team conducted extensive research to locate available and comparable resources to ensure on-time deliveries and minimal impacts to the schedule.

“We are extremely proud of the entire project team who persevered despite unprecedented challenges to deliver this school to the students of Marblehead ahead of schedule,” said Mike O’Brien, senior vice president and business unit leader for Gilbane in Massachusetts. “This truly was a team effort; we’re thankful to the entire Marblehead community for entrusting us with this important project that will serve generations to come.”

The new Lucretia & Joseph Brown Elementary School consists of a two-story civic wing built into the site’s existing grade with a two-story academic wing situated on the lower site offering an abundance of natural light in all classrooms, internal support spaces and circulation spaces. The school provides ample off-street parking and queuing for student drop-off and pick-up, and as part of the project, separate pre-k and elementary school playgrounds are being presented with a spectacular organic garden and student-centered amphitheater. As a tribute to Marblehead, the town is thoughtfully represented through the interior architecture of the school incorporating a central day-lit lobby with lighthouse, sailing, and buoy themes; a cafetorium and media center that shimmer under wave-inspired ceilings, and a school of fish-shaped light fixtures that are visible through bubble-like windows from the media center looking down into the cafetorium. Additionally, a two-story mosaic panel with dozens of local themes imbedded within its design, including the school’s namesakes, Lucretia and Joseph Brown, will be proudly mounted.

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