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Kaplan recognized by ABC MA and ENR for work on the CALA

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Somerville, MA According to Kaplan Construction, a WBE general contractor and construction management firm providing comprehensive building programs across Greater Boston, its recent adaptive reuse of CALA, the former Powder House Community School, has been recognized with awards from the Massachusetts Chapter of the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC MA) and Engineering News-Record (ENR).

Kaplan was honored with an Excellence in Construction Award (EICA) from ABC MA. The company received an Eagle award, the highest level of recognition that can be bestowed by ABC, in the renovation category at its annual awards gala. Each winner was selected for high standards of craftsmanship, safety, and quality thanks to the talents of merit shop workers and the efficiency of the merit shop approach.

“We are proud to recognize the outstanding work of our member contractors through the ABC Excellence in Construction Awards. The winning contractors maintained a constant focus on meeting their clients’ needs and set a high bar for craftsmanship, quality and safety,” said ABC MA president Greg Beeman.

In addition, at ENR's Best Regional Projects award ceremony, Kaplan was honored with ENR New England's Best Project Award in the Renovation/Restoration category and was selected as a finalist for New England's Overall Project of the Year. ENR's Best Regional Project Awards are dedicated to honoring the best construction projects and the companies that designed and built them in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Projects compete in 20 specialized categories, ranging from airports to sports/entertainment. Independent juries of industry leaders in design and construction from each of ENR's 10 regional editions will judge the projects using five criteria, including safety, innovation, and teamwork.

Located at 1060 Broadway, CALA is a 91,000 s/f inclusive, intergenerational urban village with 48 residences with accessible green space. In 2017, Kaplan was hired to provide preconstruction and construction management services and worked closely with the architect, co-owner, and developer, Sebastian Mariscal Studio, to create a campus-style environment.

The former school building is on a compact two-acre parcel and features 48 residential units including 55+ senior living and artist live/work units, with 20% of the units designated as affordable. Five commercial properties span over 23,000 s/f.

A public park adds a half-acre of usable green space for the residents of the city. Designed and constructed in partnership with the city, the park features the restoration of a vital neighborhood path, the city's first public bike repair station, and a significant number of native plants, including 16 new trees.

As with many adaptive reuses, the principal challenge of the project was born from repurposing an old building for viable new use. Over a three-year period, the fortress-like concrete building, originally built in 1973, was transformed into an open framework with over 50% of new construction incorporating outdoor space. Major structural upgrades, like additional shear walls and column reinforcing, were performed to meet modern building and seismic code.

Of the many structural changes made, the most notable was the relocation and elevation of the existing central courtyard throughout the first floor of the building. The reconfiguration freed up space for a resident garage while allowing the new, elevated courtyard to enjoy increased light and ventilation. The extensive modifications to the building inverted many of the core elements of the existing structure, creating significant waterproofing challenges that the team had to overcome.

The project achieves 29 of the 39 goals set by SomerVision, the city's 20-year plan for evolution into a model for urban planning, smart growth, open space, public transit, sustainability, diversity, artistry, and community.

The project team members for CALA include:

Co-owner/Developer: MarKa/Sebastian Mariscal Studio

Architect: Sebastian Mariscal Studio
Construction Manager: Kaplan Construction
Structural Engineer: Foley Buhl Roberts
MEP/FP Engineer: Wozny/Barbar & Associates
Civil Engineer: EBI Consulting
Landscape Architect: GroundView

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