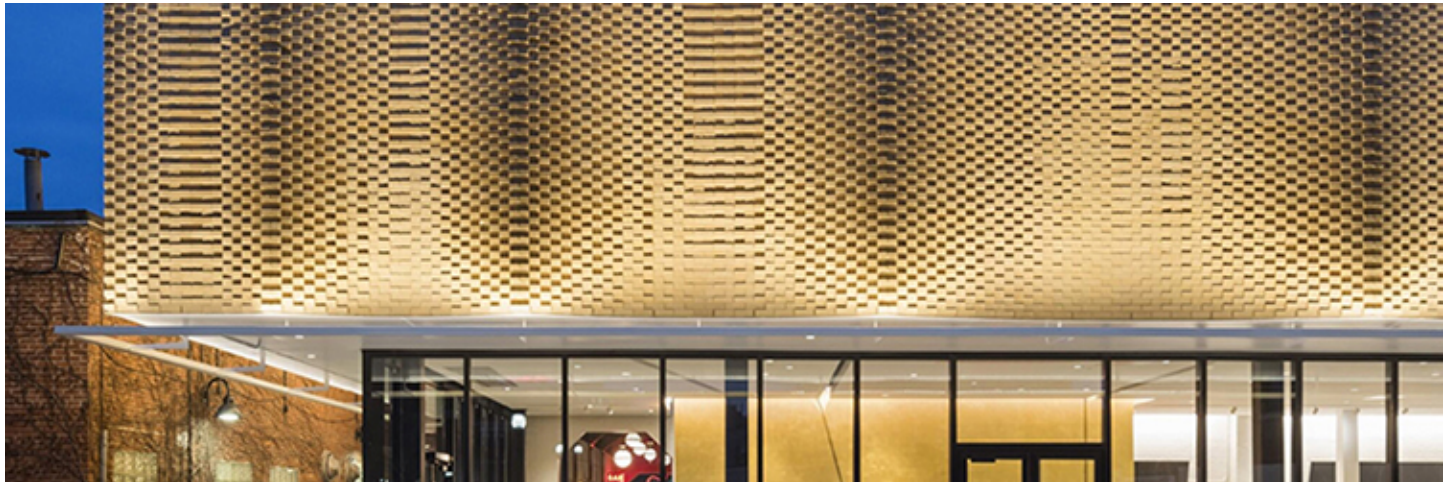




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Project of the Month: Groom Construction celebrates completion of \$14 million Coolidge Corner Theatre expansion

April 19, 2024 - Construction Design & Engineering



Brookline, MA Groom Construction, Co., Inc., a premiere general contracting firm, completed the construction of Coolidge Corner Theatre, a historic and beloved movie theater. The \$14 million expansion was unveiled at a ribbon cutting ceremony on March 26th, with its doors officially opening to the public on March 27th. Groom partnered with Boston-based architecture firm Höweler + Yoon

on the design of the theater.

“Our team enjoyed working hand in hand with Coolidge Theatre leadership and the design team over the past couple years. It’s immensely gratifying to have been involved since project inception and to have played a key role in the restoration and expansion of this historic landmark theater in the center of downtown Brookline,” said David Groom, principal, Groom Construction. “We worked closely with the talented architectural team of Höweler + Yoon and the theatre board members to retain the 1933 cinema’s art deco features and overall feel, while adding modern amenities.”

The Coolidge Corner Theatre became the community’s first movie theater in 1933, originally built as a church in 1906. The new 14,000 s/f, three-story expansion not only grows its physical footprint but also its programming. The impressive addition features two cutting-edge theaters, a new lobby, a media library, plentiful bathrooms offering amenities on every floor, an elevator, new staircase, and a third-floor education and events center offering panoramic views of the city and beyond. Enclosed in expansive windows, the new center features a nearby catering kitchen, an attached terrace, and blackout shades designed for screenings. Movie House 5, with its vibrant red hues, boasts 140 seats and an immersive audio system, while Movie House 6, adorned in deep blue, accommodates 54 guests. An articulated brick “curtain” facade on the front of the addition plays on the art deco motifs from the original 1933 building. Throughout the project, the selective use of lighting and color contributes to the spectacle of the theater-going experience. The expansion is the perfect blend of luxury and artistry, showcasing timeless beauty in every detail.

“The existing Coolidge movie houses create an incredibly memorable moviegoing experience and we designed the expansion to elevate that experience for the twenty-first century. The Art Deco patterns, materials, and textures expressed an optimism about new media and technologies like radio, film, and lighting,” said Eric Höweler, co-founder of Höweler + Yoon and partner-in-charge on the project. “There’s an interesting resonance between the emergence of film in the early decades of the twentieth century and our contemporary moment, where new digital technologies are reconfiguring our everyday lives. Through this lens, we translated the sensibilities of Art Deco into a contemporary architectural expression.”

The additional theaters will not only mean more seats but will also allow the theater to offer more diverse programming, including old classics, foreign films, midnight movies, and more. The new Education and Community Engagement Center will serve as the cornerstone for Coolidge’s expanded educational programming, offering film seminars, receptions, community rentals, lectures, school programs, and other events. This expansion will significantly enhance their capacity to serve the community.

“Groom Construction, along with Höweler + Yoon Architects, have been exemplary partners with the Coolidge Corner Theatre board and staff over the past four years as we progressed through the design, permitting, preconstruction and construction phases of this landmark expansion project. Their skills, experience and passion for their work are incomparable. This dynamic team has seamlessly joined a historic theatrical gem – ‘the Coolidge’ – with an iconic, architectural vision for the cinematic future. We proudly welcome film lovers to join the celebration of our collective contribution to the civic and cultural life of Brookline and Greater Boston,” said Michael Maynard, campaign chair and board member of the Coolidge Corner Theatre Foundation.

“I’m thankful to David Groom and his team for embracing the nonprofit Coolidge’s mission to ‘entertain, inform and engage, building vital community through film culture’, and transforming our long-term vision to reality. Their expertise, commitment and passion were evident throughout, particularly in addressing the inevitable challenges of integrating new construction with a building constructed in 1906. We are thrilled to celebrate with them the achievement of a true milestone in the future of the Coolidge” said executive director & CEO of Coolidge Corner Theatre Foundation, Katherine Tallman.

The project team included:

Groom Construction - Construction Manager

Form-Up Foundations - Foundation

Arteriors - Designer Wall Finishes

Iannazzi Electrical Services - Electrical

Advanced Solar Protection - Window Treatment, Solar Control Window Film

Souza, True and Partners Inc. - Structural Engineer

Chamberlain Companies, Inc. - Architectural Woodwork and Casework

