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FALL, 2008

AIA Connecticut Selects Petra For New Office

When the AIA (American Institute of Architects) Connecticut office decided to expand and relocate their office to 370 James Street in New Haven, Connecticut, they wanted the construction process to go smoothly. The design was well underway, being prepared by AIA Connecticut's former President, Dan Weston of Bianco Giolitto Weston Architects, LLC. Dan, a long-time member of AIA Connecticut, had a very good understanding of their requirements and also assisted them in evaluating alternative locations. The new 5,000 square foot leased space is located on the fourth floor of an office building owned by the Acorn Group. The early 1900s building was once home to the Federated Paper Company and has since been renovated to multi-tenant office space.

Since Dan planned to incorporate some interesting features in the space, AIA Connecticut's selection of the right contractor was critical. They had many available choices, but selected Petra Construction Corporation based on their reputation and AIA Connecticut's knowledge of the company. "I had heard a lot about Petra's excellent reputation for high-quality work, collaboration with the design professionals and attention to detail," said Dan. "Until this project we never had the opportunity to work together. I can now say first-hand, everything I heard is true, and it was certainly a very pleasant experience."

The new entrance provides a strong presence from the elevator lobby



The new AIA Connecticut office reception area includes gallery space

Some of the interesting features in the space include bamboo floors in the meeting room and gallery/waiting area, a curved glass wall separating the reception area from the building corridor, and a glass demising wall for the conference room. The previous acoustical ceiling tiles and grid system were removed to expose the concrete deck above, to increase the ceiling height and to expose the decorative fluted concrete structural support columns in some areas. It was also important to bring outside light into the space, since the footprint is deep. The space includes a reception area, offices,

workstations, a large 70-seat meeting room for presentations and training, a galley, a conference room and work/storage spaces. The new office displays a strong presence from the elevator lobby and provides much needed expansion for AIA Connecticut. The final design represents feedback from other member architects in the State of Connecticut, ranging from a one-person practice to very large firms.

In addition to building out the new suite, the renovation included all new finishes, renovated mechanical systems and the introduction of a new style of

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flush mounted floor boxes to accommodate electrical, voice and data. Installation of the new model floor boxes was filmed for future training purposes by the supplier, Wiremold/LeGrand.

The project was challenging due to the presence of a number of live electrical circuits and cables for other tenants within the space. Power shut-downs required close coordination with the landlord and other tenants in the building. The installation of a new rooftop HVAC unit also required close coordination with the landlord and tenants, since there was no separate gas shutoff for the fourth floor renovation.

Energy efficiency and sustainable materials were also important elements

of the project. Electronic controls with motion sensors control the lights, the carpet contains recycled content, the bamboo floor is a renewable material, and the landlord donated workstation cubicles and furniture from a previous tenant.

"We host a variety of activities for our members in our office, and we certainly wish to present a functional, high quality and pleasant experience," said Diane Harp Jones, AIA Connecticut Executive Vice President/CEO. "I can't imagine a more challenging client than us! Petra gave us superior customer service by offering advice, providing options, collaborating with the team and working diligently on our behalf."

AIA Connecticut serves the architectural profession, encourages design excellence and works to improve society through a concern for the quality of the built and natural environments. Members commit themselves to the highest standards of practice and code of ethics that addresses responsibilities to the public, clients, the building industry and the art and science of architecture.

Petra is proud to have been selected to assist AIA Connecticut in the construction of their new office space, which will allow them to serve their members and the public for many years to come.

To discuss construction management services, please call Guido Petra, President, or Terry Wooding, Executive Vice President, at 203-865-6043.

Project Profile

Owner:

AIA Connecticut,
A chapter of The American Institute of Architects
New Haven, CT

Project:

Office Renovation

Project Delivery System:

Construction Management

Project Team

AIA Connecticut

Diane Harp Jones,
Executive Vice President/CEO

Petra Construction Corporation

Barry Zorzanello,
Senior Project Manager
Russ Faroni,
Project Manager

Robert Westrin,
Assistant Project Manager
Harrison Levy,
Estimating
Paul D'Amico,
Project Superintendent
Chris Monroe,
Carpenter
Vaughn Castonguay,
Carpenter

Bianco Giolitto Weston Architects, LLC
Dan Weston, AIA

Engineering

Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing (MEP)
Innovative Engineering Services, LLC
Jeff Earley
David Maurer

Special thanks to all of Petra's subcontractors and material suppliers

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