

The Greenburg International Conference Center at Yale University Blends the Old and New

Modern materials and processes put this building on track for LEED® Certification while remaining true to the Victorian style of the connecting historic building

A leading national construction management firm, in collaboration with Robert A. M. Stern Architects, recently completed the Maurice R. Greenberg International Conference Center – a 13,000 square foot addition to the historic 22,000 square foot Betts House. Built in 1868 by renowned architects Henry Austin and David R. Brown in the French Victorian Second Empire Style, the building is on the National Register of Historic Places.

The existing structure, which dictated the architectural design of any subsequent buildings within its proximity, remained fully operational throughout construction. Housing the Yale Center for the Study of Globalization, the Office for International Affairs, and the World Fellows Program, the addition includes a state-of-the-art, 60-seat amphitheater, translation and A/V booths, classrooms, a kitchen, and an ornate dining hall, all carrying the campus's traditional architectural elements – wainscoting, radius windows, and vaulted, wood ceilings. A corridor connects the new building to the existing Betts House on the first floor. An important facet of this project was matching the exterior of the new Greenberg Conference Center and connecting tunnel to the existing French Victorian carriage house-style façade of Betts House. It was Yale's goal to have this new addition to the campus blend in seamlessly with the traditional architecture, as if it had always been there. The beauty of the design by Robert A. M. Stern Architects LLP clearly reflects this intent, and it was up to the construction manager to realize this design, down to its smallest detail.

Director of Historic Preservation, Carl Jay, was on hand as an advisor throughout the pre-construction and construction phases to work with the team on all issues surrounding the historic elements of the project. Carl is one of the most respected builders in New England, and his 25-year resume spans buildings and architectural styles of every period. He assisted the team in identifying and procuring materials for the façade of the Conference Center that were a perfect match to Betts House, as well as providing insight and best practices for constructing the connecting tunnel without compromising the historic integrity of the building. In addition to the historic façade, the advanced audiovisual equipment and amphitheater were two of the most involved elements of the construction for this project. Extensive experience with a wide variety of audiovisual and other technologically advanced equipment installations made Shawmut uniquely qualified to act as an informed advisor throughout pre-construction and construction for what can be a complex process. A detailed pre-construction process addressed Yale's green campus initiatives and revealed geothermal wells as an efficient and earth-friendly alternative to traditional carbon-dioxide-

emitting heating/cooling systems. This project is targeting LEED® Gold Certification. Specifically, for new building construction, there are numerous issues surrounding the building and site that, when addressed early in the process, can help maximize the potential for achieving a higher score on the LEED rating chart. Since significant documentation is required to support any application for LEED Certification, including photographs and other proof of sustainable practices, every stage of the construction process requires careful planning to ensure no important details are missed.

Now a fixture on the Yale campus, the success of this project places the team at the forefront of institutional construction in New England.