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DUNBAR HIGH SCHOOL DESIGNED BY PERKINS EASTMAN ACHIEVES LEED PLATINUM CERTIFICATION BY USGBC

“Greenest” New School in the World Builds on Legacy, Looks to Future

Washington, DC (February 25, 2015) Perkins Eastman is proud to announce that Dunbar High School in Washington, DC, has been certified LEED Platinum, the highest distinction, by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). Designed by international design and architecture firm Perkins Eastman in association with Moody•Nolan, the 280,000 sf school achieved 91 points, out of 100 base points possible for LEED—making it the highest-scoring school in the world certified under USGBC’s LEED for Schools-New Construction system. The new school building welcomed its first students in 2013.

“Dunbar’s LEED Platinum achievement is a testament to the power of vision and dedication to create a truly sustainable high-performance learning environment,” says Sean O’Donnell AIA, LEED AP, Principal-in-Charge of the project and the leader of Perkins Eastman’s K-12 practice area. “In the same year that the school has been certified Platinum, it has also posted the highest standardized test score gains in the entire city—this after only one year in the building. I believe that innovative design has created a synergy with the school’s educational transformation initiatives that is resulting in more successful educational outcomes for the students.”

The Department of General Services (DGS) selected Perkins Eastman to design a new state-of-the-art Dunbar High School with the goal of achieving LEED Platinum certification on behalf of District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS).

Located just blocks from the U.S. Capitol, the new Dunbar provides a high-performance 21st-century learning environment designed to catalyze the renewal of one of our most historic schools. The nation’s first public high school for African Americans, Dunbar was originally founded in 1870 and relocated to the current site in 1917. Demolished in the 1970s, the 1917 building was a particular point of civic pride in the community, representing the values and dreams of the students, their families, and the larger community, and their aspirations for notable achievement.

“The new Dunbar Senior High School is built upon an historic legacy of excellence that demonstrates how schools anchor our communities. That they chose to aim for LEED Platinum speaks volumes about how the community values spaces that enhance students’ ability to learn,” said Rick Fedrizzi, CEO & Founding Chair, U.S.

Green Building Council. “Dunbar is using this high-performing building to create a high-performing future, and we are grateful for their leadership.”

The new Dunbar High School campus raises the bar for sustainable, high-performance school design in the District and for the students’ environmental stewardship. Its more prominent sustainable design attributes include:

- 482 kW photovoltaic array, provided through Washington, DC’s first power purchase agreement, that generates enough energy on a sunny summer day to power all classroom lights for eight hours
- Washington, DC’s largest ground-source heat pump (aka “geothermal”) system below Dunbar’s athletic field, with wells extending 460 feet deep
- The reopening of O Street as a sustainable model that features 6,152 sf of rain gardens able to handle a 1.2-inch storm event
- Pervasive natural light resulting from proper orientation and shading of the building
- Two 20,000 gallon cisterns and low-flow fixtures help save over 1,400,000 gallons of potable water/year
- Enhanced acoustics that help create a high-performance learning environment

The new Dunbar High School was designed in close collaboration with DGS, DCPS, the school and its alumni, the community, and the design and construction team, which was a joint venture between Perkins Eastman, Setty Associates International, and SK&A Structural Engineers in association with Moody•Nolan. The team also includes Smoot/Gilbane Construction.

About Perkins Eastman

Perkins Eastman is among the top design and architecture firms in the world. With almost 900 employees in 14 locations around the globe, Perkins Eastman practices at every scale of the built environment. From niche buildings to complex projects that enrich whole communities, the firm’s portfolio reflects a dedication to inventive and compassionate design that enhances the quality of the human experience. With work in 46 states and more than 40 countries, the firm’s portfolio includes education, science, housing, healthcare, senior living, corporate interiors, cultural institutions, public sector facilities, retail, office buildings, and urban design. Perkins Eastman provides award-winning design through its offices in North America (New York, NY; Boston, MA; Charlotte, NC; Chicago, IL; Los Angeles, CA; Pittsburgh, PA; San Francisco, CA; Stamford, CT; Toronto, Canada; and Washington, DC); South America (Guayaquil, Ecuador); North Africa and Middle East (Dubai, UAE); and Asia (Mumbai, India, and Shanghai, China).

Photos available.

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