

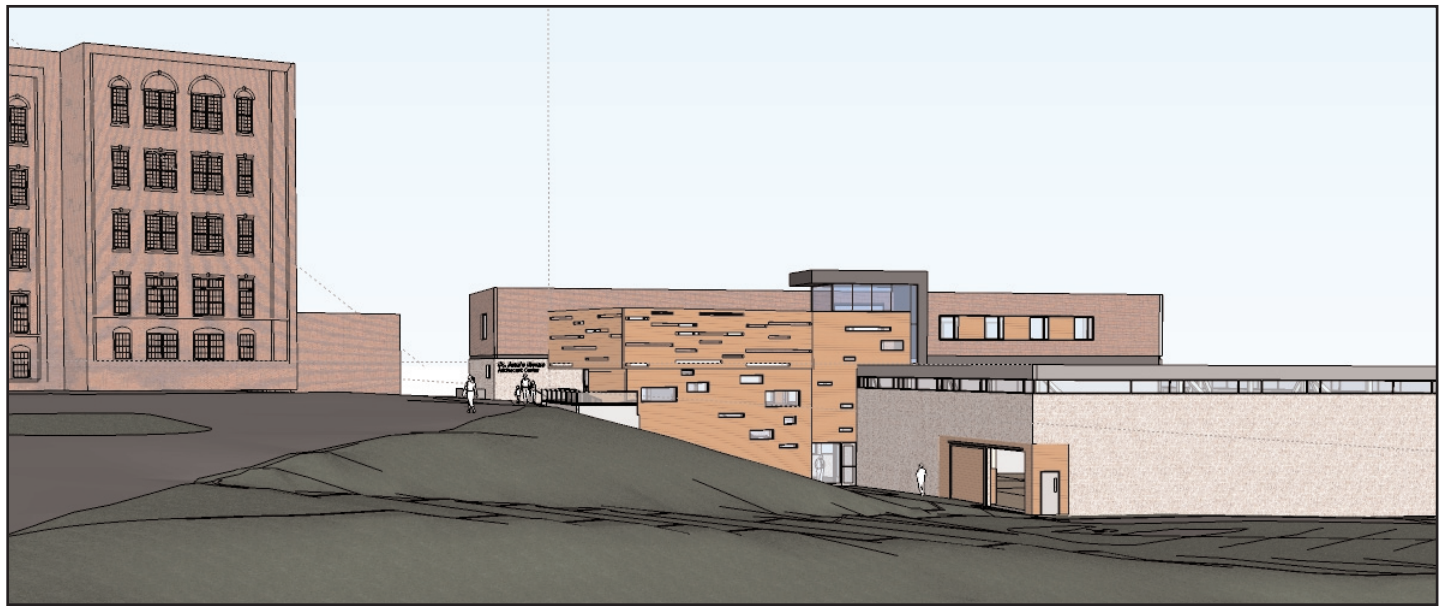
## High-Profile: Facilities Development News

# Signer Harris and Barr & Barr Break Ground on Adolescent Center

Methuen, MA – When construction began on April 4 of the new Adolescent Center at St. Ann's Home in Methuen, its community's longtime vision came one step closer to reality. Once complete, the 29,000 sf facility, designed in under a year by Signer Harris Architects of Boston and built by Barr & Barr Builders, will house a myriad of new program spaces for the school, including a modern gymnasium, eight additional classrooms, an amphitheater, as well as dedicated residential spaces for 16 of the school's teenage boarders.

Founded as an orphanage in 1925 to serve Lawrence and the surrounding region, St. Ann's adopted a new mission in the 1960s to educate, train and support children and youth with special educational or behavioral needs. Through the years, it incorporated new programming, including day and residential care, and it did so within the confines of its original historic buildings.

Although renovated and modernized, the 82-year-old structures were stretched far beyond their original intended use, so that in 2002, the school's leadership recognized the need for a new facility. They defined the need for an Adolescent Center that would provide teenagers with space apart from the school's younger users, while at the same time introducing multi-purpose, flexible and functional facilities from which the



*Rendering of a St Ann's Adolescent Center.*

entire school would benefit.

As the first new structure on campus in the organization's history, the Adolescent Center ushers in the next era at St. Ann's by preparing it to meet the needs of its student population and respond to growing demand for its programs.

When Barr & Barr, a longtime supporter of St. Ann's Home, introduced Signer Harris Architects to the school in March 2006, what developed was a truly kinetic partnership. With the design schedule fixed at just 11 months, the successful completion of the project rested on a fruit-

ful and reciprocal relationship between client, architect and builder. As design schemes evolved between Signer Harris Architects and representatives of St. Ann's, they were periodically priced by Barr & Barr to ensure that the project could be delivered on the school's fixed budget and schedule. Through open and continual communication that prioritized the needs and expectations of the client, the SHA/Barr & Barr team produced a design that falls within .1percent of the school's budget and will be ready for occupancy in April 2008.

When construction wraps early next year, the Adolescent Center designed by Signer Harris Architects will serve as the new heart of St. Ann's campus. Its material palette unifies the existing buildings while defining and enclosing the campus. Its indoor and outdoor amphitheaters encourage and accommodate school-wide gatherings, while the multi-use gymnasium and classroom spaces draw together students, faculty and staff to continue the work for which St. Ann's is known.

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