



ICS Builders and BKSK Architects top out \$4.1 million green community

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ICS Builders, Inc. (ICS) and BKSK Architects celebrated the topping out of the new, \$4.1 million, 10,600 s/f Community of the Holy Spirit (CHS) convent building located at 454 Convent Ave. ICS serves CHS, a monastic community for women in the Episcopal Church, as general contractor. BKSK Architects LLP provided architectural and interior design for the new, environmentally friendly facility.

"Today we are celebrating the traditional topping out that marks the placement of the last steel beam of the structure and kicks off the final phase of the construction process. This milestone wouldn't be possible without the dedication, hard work, creativity, and expertise of project managers, architects, engineers, and construction workers," said ICS vice president of operations Edward O'Rourke, P.E., LEED AP.

In addition to ICS Builders and BKSK Architects, the project team includes structural engineer Weidlinger Associates Inc., MEP engineer Laszlo Bodak Engineer, P.C., lighting designer Horton Lees Brogden Lighting Design, and landscaping consultant Dennis Gray Horticulture.

The construction process encompasses excavation, construction of grade beam and spread footing foundations, erection of a hybrid steel-and-light-gauge structural system, building and MEP systems, and all interior finishes.

The four-story building will house an entrance lobby, chapel, community dining room and kitchen, silent dining room, offices, conference room, library, sitting room, art room, 12 cells/bedrooms, two guest rooms, elevator, and two types of green roofs: semi-intensive with six inches of soil and extensive with three inches of soil. The roofs will include a pergola, sitting areas, and shallow-root plant landscaping.

The façade materials include brick, EIFS stucco, and SWISSPEARL composite cement board panels. The building's first floor features a conventional steel frame structure. The remainder of the building features a light gauge framing system. The cold-fluid-applied roof will also rest on a light gauge framing. The roof will house a Rainwater HOG modular tank for collecting utility water.

Interior finishes will include numerous materials that are recycled, locally sourced, and obtained in a sustainable process. They will include a variety of flooring materials, such as coconut wood, cork tile, locally sourced stone, and Green Label Plus-certified carpet; Venetian plaster and drywall walls with high recycled content; FSC-certified Medex recycled board millwork; and IceStone 100% recycled glass in cement matrix counters in the kitchen and bathrooms.

The new building will house many architectural and religious elements transferred from The Community's current convent house located at 621 West 113th St. in New York City. These include

the Casavant Frères organ donated by Madeleine L'Engel Franklin, the author of *A Wrinkle in Time* and other books for young readers, in memory of her mother.

To maximize natural ventilation, the convent will feature Energy Star-certified operable windows, Velux motorized skylites in the chapel, and ceiling fans. The plumbing system will include low-water-consumption fixtures and a solar water-heating system with gas-fired back up. The HVAC system will feature individual Packaged Terminal Air Conditioner (PTAC) units.

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