



Finegold Alexander Architects break ground for 10,000 s/f sanctuary; Temple Beth Tzedek Merges with Congregation B'nai Shalom

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Shown above (from left) are: Cantor Mark Spinder of Temple Beth Tzedek; Steven Sanders, Amherst deputy supervisor; Lisa Wallenfels, president, Temple Beth Tzedek; Harvey Sanders, chair, project Beit Tefilah, Temple Beth Tzedek; Barry Weinstein, Amherst supervisor; Tom Loughran, Erie County legislator; Gus Lima, Cannon Construction Services; and Moe Finegold of Finegold Alexander Architects.

Amherst, NY Finegold Alexander Architects held the groundbreaking of a 300-seat sanctuary that will represent the merger of two conservative congregations, Congregation B'nai Shalom (CBS) and Temple Beth Tzedek (TBT). The sanctuary building will include community, administrative and support spaces.

The new 10,000 s/f building will be constructed at the current site of CBS and will link to existing spaces. The new congregation has already combined and is known as Temple Beth Tzedek.

"The rabbi(s) and the congregation originally asked for a sanctuary in the woods, since the site is heavily wooded to the East," said Rebecca Berry, AIA, LEED AP, president and sustainability director, Finegold Alexander Architects. "Unfortunately, wetlands, tree conservation and site restraints suggested otherwise.

"The solution was inspired by the metaphorical connection to the wooden synagogues of Poland and the wish to be close to the woods. The design conceived an all 'old wood' structure, the sanctuary having a dramatic exposure to the East and the wooded site," Berry said.

"Twelve glass panels from the original TBT synagogue will be relocated to this East wall above the Ark, an interpretation of the polychromatic interiors of the synagogues' historic antecedent," said Berry, noting that a connection to TBT's former space was important. "The glass paneled wall truly bring the congregation into the woods."

"We are thrilled to have the privilege of combining these two wonderful congregations into one, and building a sanctuary that will inspire the congregation for many generations," said Moe Finegold, FAIA, Senior Principal in his groundbreaking reamarks.