

Publication Date: 27 February 2013

New Brock U. arts building set to break ground

As Originally Seen in the Daily Commercial News www.dailycommercialnews.com :



Brock University expects to officially break ground this spring on its new \$30.08 million fine and performing arts facility in downtown St. Catharines after finalizing a contract with Bird Construction.

Meanwhile, work is proceeding on site.

Located on a site adjacent to a new performing arts centre to be built by the city of St. Catharines, the Brock project involves the adaptive re-use of a former 19th century textile mill on St. Paul Street, the Canada Hair Cloth building, as well as renovation of adjacent warehouse space.

Being undertaken by a team that includes Toronto's Diamond Schmitt Architects, the project also includes construction of a 25,000-square-foot addition to house a theatre, art gallery, lobby space, study areas and dressing rooms.

Substantial completion is scheduled for spring 2015 and occupancy, that fall.

Michael Leckman, a principal in Diamond Schmitt, said the repurposing of the existing facility will require installation of new mechanical and electrical systems.

As well, "clear span" space will be created on the building's fourth floor for painting and drawing rooms. New steel trusses will be put in place.

In addition, life safety systems will be upgraded, along with acoustic separations.

In all, the adaptive re-use of the building will involve about 65,000 square feet of space.

The project team includes structural engineers Blackwell Bowick Partnership, mechanical engineers Crossey Engineering Ltd. and electrical engineers Mulvey & Banani International Inc.

The university received six bids last October from prequalified general contractors on the project, the new home of the university's Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts. All bids exceeded the university's budget.

Brock subsequently entered into negotiations with low bidder Bird.

Scheduled for completion in spring 2015, the project will bring 500 students, faculty and staff into the city centre.

The Canada Hair Cloth building was expropriated by the city in 2009. Ownership transferred to Brock in March 2012 with the proviso that it be used for academic purposes only.
