

For Immediate Release

Bohlin Cywinski Jackson

Architecture Planning Interior Design

WASHU'S BOHLIN CYWINSKI JACKSON-DESIGNED SUMERS RECREATION CENTER OPENS TODAY



Photo: Daniel Lee/Bohlin Cywinski Jackson

Philadelphia, PA (October 28, 2016) – The new Gary M. Sumers Recreation Center at Washington University in St. Louis, designed by well-known architecture firm Bohlin Cywinski Jackson, opens its doors today during a campus celebration and ribbon cutting ceremony. The new facility, which reimagines the University's historic Francis Gymnasium, adds 66,000-square-feet and creates a new gateway to a comprehensive recreation and sports complex.

The new Sumers Recreation Center, once the venue for the 1904 Olympic games, preserves the original gym facade and revitalizes its interiors. This was accomplished through the removal of preexisting half-level floors, revealing a dramatic three-story space navigated by an entrance bridge welcoming visitors inside and offering views of the activities taking place within the open, sky-lit building. Newly inserted floor plates align with the existing athletics complex to create a seamless transition between spaces, as well as direct connections to the nearby landscape and playing fields.

“WashU is a campus shaped by venerable buildings consisting of granite, limestone and brick, and we certainly wished to honor that tradition,” says Tom Kirk, Design Principal from Bohlin Cywinski Jackson's Philadelphia office. “We desired to contrast the exterior with a light-filled, delicately detailed, and highly-transparent recreation center that welcomes visitors and enhances their everyday experience.”

The Sumers Recreation Center is located on a prominent pedestrian axis, known as William Greenleaf Eliot Way, which stretches from the University's distinguished Graham Chapel to the old Francis Gymnasium archway. By reopening the archway, which was shuttered as part of a 1980s expansion project, the Sumers Recreation Center reestablishes the centrality of Eliot Way, leading visitors from the heart of campus and into a state-of-art fitness facility, adjacent wellness and recreation suites, multipurpose rooms, a spinning facility, café and lounge.

"The new complex is awe inspiring, and the faces of visitors light up when they enter the building," describes Associate Vice Chancellor and University Architect James Kolker. "The building is filled with light, transparency, energy and beautifully detailed materials that together creates a new model for architectural expression within our historic context."

Today's celebration and ribbon cutting ceremony is an all-day event meant to educate the campus community about the many recreational activities available to all visitors, not just varsity athletes, with the new Sumers Recreation Center.

"You have your residence halls, you have your academic buildings, you have the (Danforth) University Center," Director of Recreation Sports and Campus Fitness Bryan Lenz said. "The Sumers Recreation Center will serve as another one of those hubs of student activity."

###

Bohlin Cywinski Jackson, founded in 1965, is a national architecture practice noted for elegant and humane design, ranging from modest houses to large academic, civic, cultural and corporate buildings. To date, the firm has received more than 650 regional, national and international awards for design, including three AIA Top Ten Green Project Awards and the AIA Architecture Firm Award. The firm is well known for its work with Apple, designing stores such as the iconic Fifth Avenue cube in New York City and flagship stores worldwide, as well as colleges and universities across the country, including Yale University, University of Pennsylvania, Caltech, University of Illinois, and Williams College. For more information, please visit BCJ.com.

Collaborators

Hastings & Chivetta Architects, Inc., Associated Architect; KPFF Consulting Engineers, Structural Engineering; Buro Happold Consulting Engineers PC, Code Consulting; McClure Engineering, Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing, Fire Protection Engineering; DTLS, Landscape Architecture; Cole & Associates, Civil Engineering; Kiku Obata & Company, Signage; Randy Burkett Lighting Design, Inc., Lighting Design.

Media Contacts:

Blue Medium, Inc.
Michelle DiLello
michelle@bluemedium.com / +1 212.675.1800

Bohlin Cywinski Jackson
Vanessa C. Stella
vstella@bcj.com / +1 215.790.5900