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Mandell School Goes Green with 60,000 SF of New Space on Upper West Side By Betsy Kraat

NEW YORK, NY-- Upper West Side's Mandell School is set to expand into a new state-of-the-art facility at 795 Columbus Avenue – a 15 story apartment building that is part of Columbus Square, a retail and residential community currently under development between 97th and 100th Streets.

Aragon Construction, together with JRS Architect, P.C., has been tapped to lead the 50,000-sf build-out. The school will comprise the building's entire second floor and half of both the first floor and cellar.

Currently with three locations on west 94th, 95th and 96th Streets, the Mandell School can accommodate a total of 300 children, from a two's program up to the 2nd grade. When the new facility is complete, total capacity will grow to 650 and Rowe will be able to achieve her vision of matriculating children to the 8th grade.

Aragon will be constructing many features such as a black box theatre -- inspired by collaboration among the teachers, the head of the drama department and a theatre consultant -- so that students can stage their own drama productions. Also, a 20-foot-long digital screen that will display student artwork and constantly be updated is being installed on the first floor.

Numerous sustainable materials are being utilized in construction with a mind towards LEED-certification. For instance, the school will have rubber flooring, which is comprised of tire rubber and other recycled waste materials. Also, all classrooms will have high-efficiency lighting, using digital photo sensors and dimmers that comply with the Daylight Harvesting requirement.

As well as renovating the cellar, first and second floors, Aragon will be building out an 8,000-sf outdoor terrace for the children. A modular design is being employed that will allow the school to create a green roof garden filled with annuals and perennials, a planting garden and a poetry reading space.

Aragon is scheduled to begin work on the school and learning center in March of 2010, when construction is complete on the two buildings. Columbus Square is being developed by the Chetrit Group and comprises three contiguous city blocks. The entire project is over 320,000 sf.

Aragon Construction

www.aragonllc.com