



## Performing Arts Center Construction Speeds Along

*Posted on Friday, August 29, 2014*

Since this [April's groundbreaking ceremony](#), contractors have made rapid progress in the construction of the 65,000-square-foot Performing Arts Center that will become the heart of HWS dance, theatre, music, and film endeavors. The summer's significant highlights include the relocation of the Medbery parking lot, substantial site work, building excavation, and the placing of foundations.



At the southeast corner of the site, located in what was the Medbery parking lot, prominent foundation walls now stand on concrete footings reinforced by heavy steel. These walls, when complete, will house the choral performance space and visually anchor the building. The remainder of the foundation is nearly complete and will soon be ready for structural walls. Steel framing will begin in August, followed by construction on the building's exterior shell and the preliminary plumbing and electrical work.

Under the attentive management of Welliver, a local construction firm with significant experience in higher education development, the project is advancing toward the realization of more than five years of planning. The \$28 million committed toward this venture -- through the generosity of alumni, alumnae, parents, members of the HWS community, and New York's Empire State Development -- makes it the largest of its kind in the Colleges' history.

"From start to finish, the Performing Arts Center will be an amazing teaching facility," says Chris Button, associate director for planning and construction. "The design process has been inclusive and collaborative, the design handsome and interdisciplinary, and even during the construction phase, is being used to educate."

Designed by acclaimed Cambridge, Mass.,-based architect, The GUND Partnership, the new building will complement the campus aesthetic, with its warm brick façade, tall sweeping windows, steep pitched slate roof and striking entry. It draws inspiration from the historic character of Medbery, Coxe, and Smith Halls while giving a respectful nod to the more modern Melly Academic Center and Scandling Campus Center.

While the aesthetic is complementary to campus surroundings, the Performing Arts Center speaks to the 21st century, especially its inclusive design strategies and use of materials that best serve its multiple purposes. Interior plans for the academic facility include a light filled open lobby that will become the lively focal point of the building with its beautiful glass entry and monumental main stair. The lobby also links the flexible performance and rehearsal spaces specially designed for theatre, music and dance. Adaptable seating will allow for performance spaces that can adapt to accommodate multiple types of productions and various audience sizes. In its current form, academic

space for theatre, choral and dance will seat, respectively, 140, 120 and 250 audience members. In addition to acoustically robust rehearsal spaces and recital halls, faculty offices and a classroom, there will be an instrumental ensemble space and a film screening room, each seating 50. The performance venues will be wired with the latest technology, providing unique opportunities for students interested in lighting, sound or stage design and management experience. Upon completion, the Performing Arts Center will further define the academic commons on Pulteney Street.

The Performing Arts Center will also expand the Colleges' role in the local and regional advancement of arts and culture. Members of the greater Geneva community will share in the new arts and events space through community programs, as well as those hosted by HWS. In partnership with The Smith Center for the Arts, large-scale performances will continue to be held at the Smith Opera House in downtown Geneva, where events like Koshare have enjoyed great success.

As part of the Colleges' commitment to reducing their environmental impact, HWS along with our design and construction teams are working toward a project that will achieve LEED Silver Certification or better. To reach these goals, the building will feature natural storm water management, energy efficient utilities and equipment, energy-saving LED performance lighting, superior insulation, a tight shell and daylight harvesting to name just a few features.

The Performing Arts Center will thus continue the HWS tradition of fostering student creativity through inclusive, interdisciplinary education, and now more than ever, the benefits of modern music, dance and theatre.

*Source: <http://www.hws.edu/dailyupdate/NewsDetails.aspx?aid=18093>*