

REBUILDING LIVABLE, ENDURING COMMUNITIES

Using Rehabilitation as Framework for Revitalization



Historic



Before



After

THE TERMINAL DEPOT

Virginia Commonwealth University / Richmond, VA

SYNOPSIS

Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) is a growing urban university located in downtown Richmond, Virginia. As a product of this growth, the university has found it necessary to expand beyond its traditional campus boundaries. Current expansion is pushing north into Carver, a late 19th and early 20th century working class neighborhood made up of commercial, residential and industrial structures. Carver is a state and federal historic district with buildings typically two stories in height, brick and utilitarian in design. Many of the buildings, designed for specific industrial and commercial uses, are obsolete, abandoned and in need of revitalization. VCU purchased the Richmond Glass Company complex of four separate buildings in 2012 for anticipated classroom expansion. The design team's challenge was to take these four exhausted industrial buildings and create a state of the art facility containing studios, classrooms and gallery space for VCU's nationally ranked School of the Arts, while respecting the sensitivity of a neighbor suspicious of the university's growth.

As a VCU Real Estate Foundation project, state historic investment tax credits were pursued. Prior to starting project design work, Mills set the ground work, proposing uses, scope of work and limitations between the Real Estate Foundation, Department of Historic Resources, City of Richmond officials and the neighborhood. Finding solutions for all concerned, the result is a project that blends into the industrial neighborhood and welcomes VCU students and the community alike.

The project was completed in the spring of 2014. The Depot houses an expansive art gallery, a sound studio for the Department of Kinetic Imaging and a dance studio for the Department of Dance and Choreography. The result is a VCU Arts Center that connects studio and exhibition of VCU's talented students with Richmond's growing art community. The completed project helps connect VCU's campus along Broad Street and is bringing renewed vitality back to the Carver neighborhood. Mills' advocacy steered the project towards a successful outcome - a sensitive first step in expanding the university's footprint into Carver. The rejuvenated Terminal Depot complex of buildings has served as a catalyst for further adjacent re-development of other storefront buildings on the block. A new infill component of the project on Gilmer Street fills a "broken tooth" in the street's rhythm, greatly enhancing the urban fabric of the neighborhood.

DESIGN FIRM

COMMONWEALTH ARCHITECTS

COMPLETION DATE

2014

ROLE OF NOMINEE

Project Principal, Project Manager

