

2019 International Awards Program for Religious Art & Architecture

Religious Architecture » Renovation » Award

Elkus Manfredi Architects

Cathedral of the Holy Cross » Boston, Massachusetts

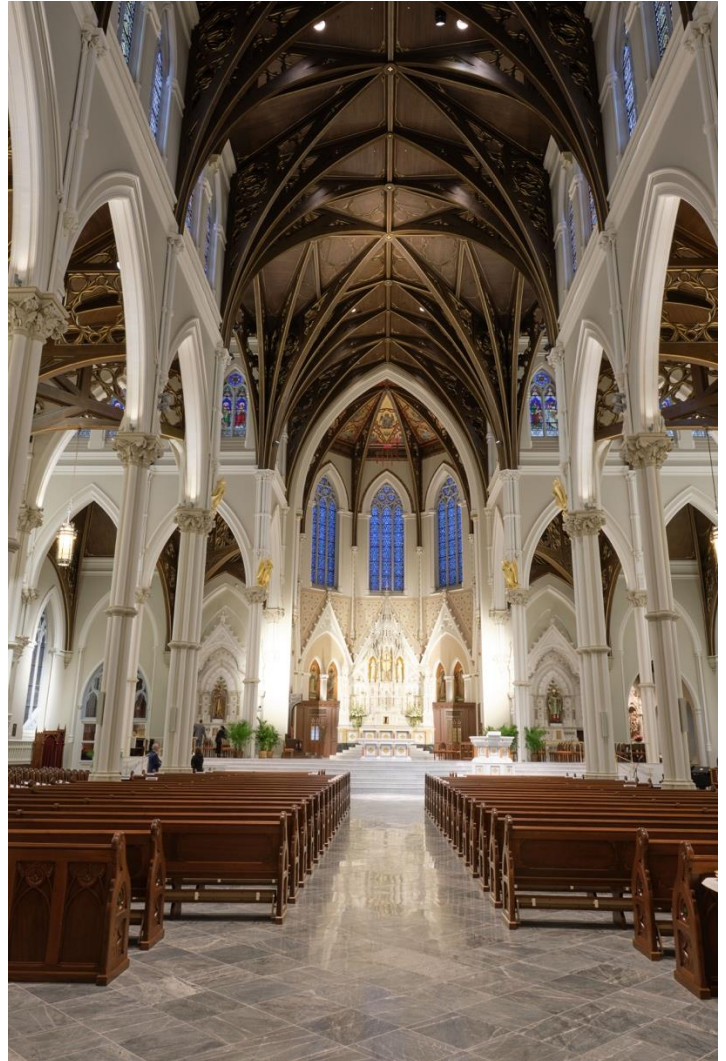
The Cathedral of the Holy Cross is the largest Roman Catholic church in New England. Built in the Gothic Revival style using local Roxbury puddingstone and gray limestone trim, the 61,600-square-foot cathedral was consecrated in 1875 and had not had a comprehensive renovation in decades. The archdiocese asked for a comprehensive renovation to bring new life and light to the holy space—inside and out.

To gain a full understanding of the existing architecture, including the 85-foot-high nave, the design team used a 3D digital model developed by the construction team from laser scans. This afforded precise measurements for the placement of MEP systems, fire protection, life safety systems, and the lighting plan. Designers also analyzed black and white historical photos to discover former interior details that may have been altered over the years.

In addition to backlighting the stained-glass windows for exterior illumination, a complete lighting redesign was implemented to improve visibility and drama, brightening formerly dark ceilings and façades. Comprehensive interior renovations also included reconfiguring the sanctuary platforms, projecting the altar closer to congregants; restoring/refreshing and lightening interior finishes; integrating modern infrastructural upgrades and ADA improvements; creating new liturgical appointments to match the original marble appointments; installing natural stone floors in the sanctuary/nave. Liturgical painters refurbished the original oil-painted Stations of the Cross and restored murals in the apse ceiling. Gold accents were restored on column capitals and added to ceiling truss trims, and sanctuary wall patterns were replicated from historic photos.

Jury Comments

This is a very sensitive restoration of a classic building. The renovation/restoration is very understated and restrained bringing lightness to the interior. The liturgical furnishings have a wonderful scale. There is a great relation of the ambo to the font. The project reveals a great level of skill in retaining the best elements of the original structure, and emphasizes the bones of the building.



Architect

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