



P.S. duPont Elementary School

Wilmington, Delaware

ABHA Architects

Entire School/Campus Building
Renovation/addition/restoration

ABHA ARCHITECTS

1621 N. Lincoln Street
Wilmington, DE 19806
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Chandra Nilekani
302/658-6426

DESIGN TEAM

Chandra Nilekani, MRAIC, LEED AP, Principal-in-Charge

Bancroft Construction Company, Construction Managers

Furlow Associates, Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing Engineers

Baker, Ingram & Associates, Structural Engineers

VanDemark & Lynch, Civil Engineers

Renald M. Corsi and Associates, Food Service Consultants

OWNER/CLIENT

Brandywine School District
Wilmington, DE

John Read, Construction Projects Manager
302/529-3110

Type of School and Grades Served:
Elementary School

Capacity: 900 students

Size of Site: 21.3 acres

Area of Building:
206,151 square feet (occupied)

Volume of Building:
3.5 million cubic feet

Square Foot Cost: \$179

Total Project Cost: \$44 million

Contract Date: Jan. 2007

Completion Date: Aug. 2008

Percent of Completion: 100%

Walk through the front doors of P.S. duPont Elementary School, and you enter a piece of history where old and new blend seamlessly to create a truly grand institution of learning. Designed by architect E. William Martin and built in 1934-35, the school was named in honor of Delaware philanthropist Pierre S. duPont and originally served as a high school for Wilmington residents. It was converted to an elementary school in 1978.

In this renovation, historic details—including terrazzo and oak floors, plaster ceilings, and wood trim—were retained and restored as much as possible, offering further opportunities for student learning and enrichment. Students, staff, and teachers benefit from improved lighting and acoustics, integrated educational technology, and multiple energy-saving features such as daylight harvesting and air-quality monitoring.

The renovation included the following highlights:

Main lobby/office: restored the original terrazzo flooring and intricate architectural detailing; added vestibule doors and electronic access-control systems; and reconfigured the main office using a variety of salvaged materials from other parts of the building.

Art suite/library: retained and refinished the original natural oak elements; repaired and repainted ornamental plaster; refinished historically



LIBRARY



AUDITORIUM



LOBBY



BUILDING EXTERIOR



CLASSROOM



CAFETERIA

significant original student work tables; opened up original skylight wells; and refinished wood casework, library shelving, and the original charge desk.

Cafeteria/kitchen: exposed original skylights and replaced them with large, glare-free, translucent insulated units; restored the original terrazzo floors; and expanded the cafeteria to include space for the school store and rest rooms.

Gymnasium: repaired and

repainted the existing vaulted wood roof structure and replaced windows with glare-free, insulated translucent panels

Auditorium: retained ticket booths; refurbished and repaired original seats; retained original wood floor and added carpet in aisles; added energy-efficient pendant and sconce lighting; unveiled boarded up windows and provided motorized room-darkening shades

and new curtains; reused original air distribution elements in the floor for upgraded HVAC system; used old equipment locations for new systems (speakers, lighting, and projection); and kept original plaster ceilings intact while incorporating sprinklers and other systems.

Classrooms: upgraded rooms for new technology; added telephone/intercom for the teacher's use; restored the original wood

floors; added glare-reducing window shades; and provided new chalk and tack boards with salvaged wood trim.

In addition, the renovation included such energy-saving features as preconditioning classroom ventilation through multiple energy-recovery units; high-efficiency lighting; inboard/outboard lighting control and daylight harvesting for classrooms; and master lighting control for corridors. ■

PHOTOS: TOP RIGHT, JILL BEELER; REMAINING PHOTOS, CHIC DAVIS