

MONARCH SCHOOL – Bellefaire JCB Shaker Heights, Ohio



Herman Gibans Fodor, Inc. along with associate architect, Philmore J. Hart, recently completed the design and construction of the new Monarch School for children with autism. This 21,000 square foot building is located on the historic campus of the Bellefaire JCB and provides a special needs learning environment for forty-eight students. The building is master planned to accommodate a future expansion for twenty-four additional students.

A major design objective was to create a new building that is sympathetic to the historic context of the existing campus buildings while at the same time responding to the scale of the adjacent residential neighborhood. This is achieved by employing roof forms, brick masonry and stucco in a way that is compatible with the existing architecture.



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In order to create a supportive learning environment for the special needs children, the new school employs safe, durable and abuse resistant materials that are easy to clean and maintain. At the same time, the interior finishes create warm and calming classrooms and common areas. An abundance of day light along with indirect electrical lighting also enhances the quality of life for the children. A special focus of the project is the inclusion of interior finish materials that promote healthy indoor air quality.

The gross motor room features simulated maple wood sheet vinyl athletic flooring and sky lighted vaulted ceilings. Living classrooms include functional washers and dryers as well as other kitchen appliances so that students can learn to live independently. Other areas include art and music rooms, lunch room and therapy spaces. All of the interior features and equipment are designed to accommodate the scale of the children. An outdoor activity area includes a specially designed play structure.

