

Transforming the Museum

Construction Project Begins at Marine Hospital

EVER SINCE acquiring the historic Marine Hospital property in 2011, the Martha's Vineyard Museum has been working to put a foundation beneath its lofty vision of a vital cultural hub that honors the Vineyard's past, affirms a commitment to its future, and inspires people to strengthen their connections to this Island and its diverse heritage.

This October, the transformation of that vision into reality began in earnest as construction crews arrived at the Marine Hospital on its dramatic four-acre bluffs overlooking the Lagoon and Vineyard Haven Harbor, and set to work building the new Martha's Vineyard Museum.

The general contractors, Consigli Construction of Milford, have a history of completing successful projects for public and private universities and schools, government, corporations and such distinguished cultural institutions as the United States National Archives and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. The award-winning firm of Oudens Ello Architects, designers of the new Museum, lists among its many notable projects the Old Lighthouse Museum in Stonington, Conn., the Arthur M. Sackler Museum at Harvard University and, closer to home, the West Tisbury Free Public Library.

"The Museum already reaches the Island's diverse communities through educational programs, exhibits and publications," says MVM executive director Phil Wallis. "Our new location will

ensure that the Museum's objects, knowledge, stories and experiences can be forever shared."

With final approvals in hand from the Martha's Vineyard Commission, the

Museum broke ground on the Marine Hospital's front steps on Memorial Day weekend. Lucy Hackney, whose late husband, Sheldon Hackney, had chaired the Museum board when the 1895 Marine Hospital was acquired, wielded the golden shovel. Nancy Gardella, executive director of the chamber of commerce,



Teresa Kruszewski

With encouragement from Phil Wallis, Lucy Hackney digs in at the ceremonial groundbreaking for the new Museum on Memorial Day weekend.

described the day as "a pivotal moment for our Island." And Wallis thanked all the Museum's supporters, declaring: "We're on the move. This is about all of you, all of us. It's the Island's museum, and we're launched."

July saw demolition of a brick addition behind the Marine Hospital building that dated to 1938. That structure was already condemned by the town, and the engineers and preservationists consulting on the restoration project agreed that it needed to go. "We were advised that our best approach was to take the building right back to 1895," says Wallis.

Through the summer, hazardous materials teams removed

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