



CASE STUDY

St. Benedict's Classical Academy

Location: Natick, Massachusetts | New Construction




LUDOWICI

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A New Institutional Building

St. Benedict Classical Academy's new school building in Natick, Massachusetts, was conceived to meet the needs of a growing student body. The design had to achieve several goals, foremost among them expressing the school's identity as a Catholic, classical institution of learning.

The building is organized around a symmetrical façade with carefully articulated classical detailing that draws upon Greco-Roman architecture and the Catholic Church's architectural heritage in Europe. The school had previously occupied a house, and the client wanted the new building to reference that history while blending with the surrounding residential context. Harrison Design achieved this through a two-story, bookend massing with a porch, shutters, and dormers on the front façade.

At the center, a prominent portico distinguishes the school from its residential surroundings. Roman in form and detail, the ground-floor arcaded loggia supports an enclosed second story framed by Scamozzi Ionic columns and an entablature, topped by a pediment bearing the St. Benedict medal. A cupola crowns the roof, featuring a weathervane with a raven, St. Benedict's traditional symbol, drawing the eye upward.

Material selection reflects a commitment to classical principles, emphasizing beauty and permanence. Harrison Design specified Ludowici clay-tile shakes. "We wanted to recall the traditional cedar wood shake of New England," explains Joshua Greene, project architect. "We chose a multi-toned Ludowici clay tile—a time-honored material that is sustainable, durable, and refined in character."

Exterior siding and millwork were also carefully detailed to reinforce the region's tradition of classically appointed wood-clad buildings. "We were very conscious of our context," Greene adds. "The school is in a residential neighborhood with mostly wood buildings. We wanted it to fit in—to look as if it had always been there—and to convey permanence. Our choice of Ludowici clay-tile shakes with rustic grooves helped accomplish this. We know this roof will last a long time."

Rather than allowing the roof to weather to gray, as natural cedar would, the design intentionally preserves the red clay color to contrast with the white clapboard. "It really pops," Greene noted. "The Ludowici shakes resemble fresh cedar. We specified thicker shakes with variation in size to create strong shadow lines."

Inside, the building features several formal spaces with tall ceiling heights, historic masterwork paintings, and refined millwork. In the lobby, a classical ordering system derived from the portico draws the eye upward—from the bronze balcony railings to the coffered ceiling, chandeliers, and skylight above.

ARCHITECT:
Harrison Design

**ROOFING
INSTALLER:**
Alden Bailey
80 Sand Pit Road
Danbury, CT 06810
(888) 291-7126

GENERAL CONTRACTOR:
FW Madigan Inc.

PHOTOGRAPHY:
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PRODUCTS:
Century Shake

COLOR:
Golden Red Cedar

CLIENT TYPE:
Educational

PROJECT TYPE:
New Construction

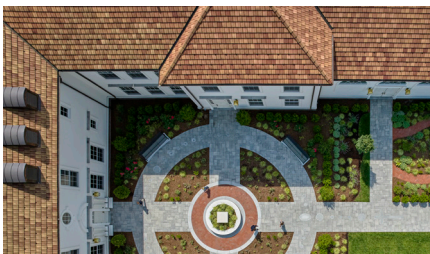




Interior material selections reflect the same commitment to timelessness as the exterior. “We wanted everything to have a timeless appearance,” Greene says. Marble and tile flooring in the lobby establish a formal and dignified entry sequence.

St. Benedict Classical Academy and Harrison Design were awarded the 2026 Addison Mizner Award for Design Excellence by the Institute of Classical Architecture & Art (ICAA), Florida Chapter.

Founded in 1991, Harrison Design is a residential, institutional, and ecclesiastical architecture and interior design practice with six offices across the United States. The firm’s award-winning work has been widely published in *Architectural Digest*, *Veranda*, *Traditional Building*, and *New Old House*.



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– **Joshua Greene**, *Project Architect, Harrison Design*




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4757 TILE PLANT ROAD | P.O. BOX 69 | NEW LEXINGTON, OH 43764
800-945-TILE (8453) | WWW.LUDOWICI.COM