



Editorial: UMass has designs on Springfield's Court Square

By The Republican Editorials

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The University of Massachusetts couldn't have chosen a better spot than Springfield's Court Square to carve out a niche for an urban design center.

The city square in the heart of downtown is already a place where a mix of architectural styles co-exist – from the simple Colonial style of Old First Church to the turn-of-the-century grandeur of the Municipal Group. It's a setting that is sure to inspire design students.

That's why we're pleased that UMass' long-anticipated plan to locate a design center in the vacant three-story building known as the Byers Block at 3-7 Elm St. is finally getting under way.

UMass Chancellor Robert C. Holub, who was on hand to celebrate the kick-off of renovations during an alumni event held at the Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place, said the project will give the university a permanent presence in the city.

Although UMass has teamed with Baystate Health and the Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, this is the first project with a UMass sign on the door. "That's something we haven't had," said UMass alumnus and MassMutual official Nicholas A. Fyntrilakis.

The university's design center, which will involve UMass faculty and graduate students in architecture, landscape architecture, conservation and regional planning, is a welcome addition to Court Square. We hope this is the beginning of more partnerships with UMass-Amherst.