



PBN EDITORIAL

Brown builds model public-private deal

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Any questions as to how much Brown University is contributing to the vitality of Providence and Rhode Island should be put to rest by the announcement last week of the \$206 million plan to rehabilitate the South Street Power Station and develop a mixed-use building and parking facility adjacent to it.

The lynchpins of the deal are the agreements of Brown to move administrative offices into 120,000 square feet of the rebuilt power station on the Providence River while Rhode Island College and the University of Rhode Island create their long-talked about joint nursing education center in the other half.

The deal sprang from talks that Brown initiated with the project developer, Commonwealth Venture Partners, to create graduate-student housing at Davol Square.

It was obvious that the empty presence of the former power station would cast a shadow over any attempt to create a vibrant neighborhood for students housed there. So Brown went to RIC and URI and invited them to consider locating the new nursing education center across the street from the Warren Alpert Medical School. From there, the discussions grew to include the state and the city (which will develop a new parking facility just across Point Street from Davol Square to support the project).

With retail, restaurant and entrepreneurial space included in the project as well, the development promises to help the city and state in their efforts to redevelop the nearby Interstate 195 land. By following its own interests with an awareness of community needs, Brown has demonstrated leadership that Rhode Island is in desperate need of. •