Prellwitz Chilinski is staying put and moving ahead. It’s been in the same Inman Square office for nearly 30 years but is at the forefront of CRE design activity with an assortment of new retail, multifamily, and mixed-use projects.

Jason Cohen, Steve Allen, and Judith Osers are designing the adaptive re-use of the 120k SF Ames Shovel Works in Easton being developed by Beacon Communities. The plant, where most Civil War-era shovels were made, is being converted into a 118-unit rental apartment complex with about 25% of the units affordable for low- and moderate-income tenants. Jason says it’s 12 old, brick buildings form a village-like atmosphere with mews, cut-throughs, outdoor courtyards, and walkways. Of course, having lots of irregular structures makes it a design challenge. Being a state and national historic landmark means no messing with the exterior but there was also the key factor in securing $9M in Community Preservation Funds. Construction will start early ‘12.

Ana Campos, Dave Snell, Essa Ahmed, Justin Blinn, and Eric Brown (not pictured) are on the team that has given food purveyor Market Basket a sleek new look. PCA has designed 10 new stores for the supermarket that is among the fastest-growing retailers in the region. The newest store, in Londonderry, NH, is under construction with an opening planned for this spring. The new Market Baskets have shed a tired, industrial look in favor of buildings that are taller and brighter with rear-lit clerestories and cafes in front. They incorporate the local design of their various locations, which in Londonderry means clapboard siding and peaked roofs.
Wendy Prellwitz, Dan Molenkamp, and Laura Portney are in early design stages for a National Development and W/S Development retail mixed-use lifestyle center in Lynnfield. PCA also worked with this development team on the wildly successful Legacy Place, Dedham’s new spot to shop and be seen. In Lynnfield, where the site is a large 200 acres, the 680k SF center design calls for a Main Street spine where cars can pull up to park at store entries. Still awaiting final local approvals, construction will start after leasing advances. Phase 1 calls for 275k SF of grocery-anchored retail and restaurant space. Phase 2 will be more retail, restaurants, offices, and rental apartments.

Architectural Billings Holding Steady

This morning we snapped work at the Cambridge Discovery Park site that Bulfinch has been developing for offices. Chances are slim that these machines will overpopulate the landscape, according to the January American Institute of Architects’ Architectural Billings Index. It held steady last month after two months of improvements. The January score of 59.0 was down from 53.9 in December, indicating a steady demand for design services. The new project index of 56.5 was down sharply from 61.6 in December. A leading indicator of construction, architectural billings are usually nine to 12 months ahead of construction spending. For the January Index, the Midwest led with a score of 56.4, followed by the South with 51.5, the Northeast 50.4 and the West 47.3. Among asset types, commercial/industrial led with 54.6, then came multifamily, 53.7, institutional, 51.3 and mixed-use 48.7. Hopefully those aren't bringing back memories of your school grades.

Fox Planning MFS’ Big Move

Fox is hip deep in planning one of Boston largest moves: MFS Investment’s relo into 290k SF at 111 Huntington Ave. Here, Fox team leader for the job Jim McCaffrey reviews some preliminary
floor plans with colleague Ed Rybak, an ops guy. The job is unusual for its size. Also, as a gut rehab, it allows MFS and its architect for the project, CBT, to devise a cutting-edge space. Another Fox team member, Katy Emmott says construction is likely to start early next year with occupancy targeted for late in 2012.

Please send news of your big moves and hot deals to Susan Diesenhous, susan@bisnow.com.