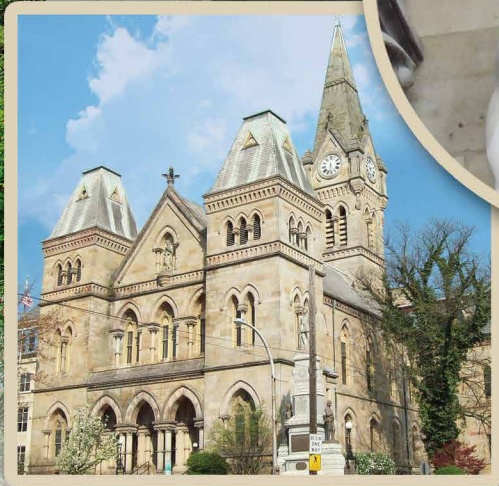


COURTHOUSE PRESERVATION

Repairs at Historic Sandstone
Building Extend Service Life



Blair County Courthouse
Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania



Heavy Masonry Preservation Limits Water Intrusion and Preserves 145-Year-Old Landmark

Blair County Courthouse

Courthouse Preservation

PROJECT BACKGROUND

- ◆ Built circa 1875, the Blair County Courthouse was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976
- ◆ Philadelphia architect David Gendall designed the courthouse in a modern gothic style; in its center stands a 175-foot masonry bell tower
- ◆ The courthouse's mass masonry walls are constructed of multi-wythe brick and stone backup, with Ohio Massillon sandstone exterior
- ◆ The sandstone's original coloring was a warm sunny buff, with some stones a peach color; pollution and weathering have turned the stone greyish in color over time
- ◆ Many decorative embellishments and carvings were incorporated into the building's facade

PROJECT CHALLENGES

- ◆ Decades of water infiltration, lack of preservation-level maintenance, and lifecycle decline had led to leaks, aesthetic concerns, and historic interior finish damage—a comprehensive building review was warranted
- ◆ Careful planning, phasing, and noise/dust control were required to maintain judicial operations
- ◆ Unsafe conditions with select sandstone components were discovered during initial evaluation and quickly and carefully mitigated
- ◆ Coordination of work with commissioners, architect, engineers, consultants, and conservators was crucial in executing the work in a historically appropriate, effective, and timely fashion
- ◆ Sandstone material, absorption, and accelerated weathering testing was required before repairs could commence

PROJECT APPROACH

- ◆ If proper forward-thinking repairs were not implemented, further irreversible deterioration could jeopardize the long-term viability of the building and cause excessive maintenance and operations costs; this was understood early, and a phased repair approach was followed
- ◆ Large gable copings were removed and replaced, and new through-wall flashing was installed to ensure sliding stones and water penetration were addressed for the long term
- ◆ Numerous sandstone dutchman repairs were completed as well as extensive mortar joint repointing in an effort to protect the historic sandstone elements
- ◆ Repairs were designed to limit water intrusion and future masonry deterioration; the temptation of short-term repairs was avoided

"From their detailed study of the materials, construction, and failures of the historic structure, to developing the specifications, products, and techniques for the work, to finally executing the repairs and cleaning with consummate skill and artistry, the technical expertise and artisan-quality performance MPS brought to this project was invaluable."

David Albright, AIA, LEED AP

Architect
The Albright Studio

Crafting a higher standard for preservation, Masonry Preservation Services is recognized throughout America for our unique approach to masonry preservation and building envelope diagnostics. MPS has been specializing in architectural maintenance and restoration since 1985.



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