

WEATHER VANE

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WESTERN CONSTRUCTION GROUP

America's Master Craftsmen in
Building Restoration and Preservation

Connecting the Past With the Future of Downtown Dallas


From 1916 until 1948, the Interurban Building in downtown Dallas served as the hub for four light rail lines that connected outlying areas, such as Plano and Denton, with the burgeoning city of Dallas. The rail lines offered farming families and small town residents easy, affordable access to opportunities and amenities available to urban populations.

The advent of the automobile spelled the end of the interurban rail lines and, eventually, the useful life of the Interurban Building. The structure at 1500 Jackson Street had stood vacant, abandoned and crumbling, for nearly 20 years when a resurgence in urban living brought it to life again.

In November 2004, construction began on redevelopment of the eight-story, brick and limestone-clad reinforced concrete build-

ing. And Western's Dallas branch was tapped to restore the building's exterior, which had been stripped of ornamentation in the 1970s, to its original appearance. The scope of work included exterior cleaning, tuckpointing, brick and concrete masonry unit replacement, stone setting, and granite and paver installation.

"As with most historical buildings, our challenge was to match our work to existing material," said Kim Smith, Western's Project Manager. "And do it in the most cost-efficient way possible."

Last summer, the Interurban Building reopened as a 134-unit collection of lofts and penthouses with a 20,000-square-foot grocery store in the ground floor, making a new connection between the past and the future of downtown Dallas. 



The Interurban Building served as a hub for light rail lines.

Top left: The building in its heyday.

Middle right & above: The building fell into disrepair and was stripped of exterior ornamentation in the 1970s.

Middle left & far left: Restored to its original appearance, it's now a mixed-use (residential/retail) structure.



Owner: City of Dallas
Barker-Nichols, LLC
General Contractor: Andres Construction Services, LLC
Architect: Merriman Associates Arch., Inc.

PROJECT TEAM

Project Manager: Kim Smith
Branch Manager: Bob Scheelar
Superintendent: M. D. Gresham

Historical Society Preserves Its Own Past

The Brooklyn Historical Society Building is a four-story, Queen Anne-style structure built by the society in 1881. The 33,000-square-foot museum, library and education facility houses 9,000 artifacts, 155,000 bound volumes, 100,000 graphic images, 1,700 linear feet of manuscripts, and over 2,000 maps and atlases. Among its holdings are an honorable discharge given to a soldier by George Washington and the 1955 Brooklyn Dodgers world championship pennant.

But perhaps the Society’s most visible artifact is the building itself, which is one of the few examples of the 19th century genre of a combined museum and library still in existence. The Brooklyn Historical Society Building was designed by renowned architect George B. Post. Its masonry façade of unglazed terra cotta and repressed brick was the first building in New York City to use locally produced terra cotta. The façade was sculpted by Olin Levi Warner and is adorned with heroic busts of


figures from history, interspersed with representations of American flora by Truman H. Bartlett.

Brisk Waterproofing Company was selected to restore the building’s masonry façade to its original warm red appearance while preserving the unique and orange terra cotta, as well as the irreplaceable pressed brick units.

Both the brick and terra cotta were laid with “battered” joints, typically 1/16” to 1/8” wide. Raking the narrow joints for repointing required both precision and skill to avoid damaging adjacent masonry. Matching materials and workmanship to the late 19th century original also was crucial. Gray mortar was carefully formulated for the brick masonry, while designed red mortar was used to repoint terra cotta masonry.

The façade cleaning also required extreme care, with close attention paid to dwell times. The terra cotta was masked and protected from the Prosoco project formulated Restoration Cleaner used to clean the brick masonry. After the brick masonry was cleaned, an alkaline poultice was used to clean the unglazed terra cotta.

Working closely with the owner, architect and conservation consultant, the Brisk Waterproofing Company successfully restored the masonry façade while preserving its historic and unique materials.

The project received an esteemed Lucy G. Moses Preservation Award from the New York Landmarks Commission. 



Owner: Brooklyn Historical Society
Architect: Jan Hird Pokorny Architects
Engineer: Heideman/Associates, Inc.

PROJECT TEAM

Project Manager: Jim Rogers
Superintendent: Tom O’Donovan
Field Foreman: Tim Rogers

Western Welcomes Role in Boulevard-Saint Louis Success




Redevelopment in St. Louis has turned heads and garnered headlines in recent years. Vibrant, new neighborhoods—many paying tribute to the city’s legendary past—have come to life where abandoned structures once stood. Few, however, have received the attention of Boulevard-Saint Louis, Pace Properties’ new walkable, mixed-use development.

The Boulevard, as it is casually known, is located on a 14-acre site in the center of the metro area, across from the Galleria. The first phase includes four separate structures and a three-story parking garage. Already home to top restaurants and retail stores, the new urban village offers upscale office space and residential living with more facilities to come.

Western Waterproofing Company’s St. Louis branch was selected by BSI Contractors to be a major contributor to the development. The initial contract, awarded in Summer 2004, included the roofing package as well as work on the four structures and garage.

“The roofing package consisted of 75,000 square-feet of fully adhered EPDM roofing,” notes branch manager Bob Gender, “and the timeframe was aggressive. Having numerous other trades working at the same time made for a rather congested job site, which impacts both schedule and safety. But we’re used to that.”

Western was also awarded the contract for deck coating, expansion joints and penetrating deck sealer for the parking structure.

Developers of The Boulevard fully expect the urban village to become a landmark of the new St. Louis. From the attention it’s drawn to date, it appears that has already happened. 



Owner: Pace Properties
Architect: ACI Boland Architects
General Contractor: BSI Constructors, Inc.

PROJECT TEAM

Project Manager: Mike Boyle
Branch Manager: Bob Gender
Superintendent: Pat Carney

Remembering



T.D. “Mac”
MacLeod, Sr.
1918 - 2006

Ultimately, a company *is* its people. Their drive and decisions shape its character and set its course. And the relationships they build with customers become the lifeblood of the business.

For 40 years, Western Construction Group was fortunate to count Thomas Daniel “Mac” MacLeod among its people. A native of Butte, Montana, Mac graduated from the Montana School of Mines in 1940 and became an underground mine safety engineer.

In 1944, with the country at war, Mac joined the U.S. Navy. He was sent to a PT boat training squadron in Florida and later served as a PT captain in the Pacific theatre. It was during his training in Florida that Mac met a young man from St. Louis named George Bishop, Jr., now chairman emeritus of Western.

When the war ended, Mac moved his family to Kansas City and joined George in the latter’s family business at the Kansas City branch. It was a place where both Mac’s engineering knowledge and his leadership skills were put to good use. He quickly moved into management, serving as executive vice president until his retirement in 1985. His expertise continued to benefit the company thereafter, as Mac served as a Western consultant.

Colleagues and customers will long remember MacLeod’s sense of humor, integrity and work ethic. As Mac’s obituary would remind us, “he was an avid outdoorsman and only caught big fish.” He was, as well, a par golfer and an active member of the Elks Club, Rotary, American Legion and RONS (Navy Organization).

Mac passed away in Dallas on May 25, 2006. He was preceded by Marie, his wife of 62 years, and will be missed by “the 45 members of the MacLeod Clan.”

He will be missed, as well, by his family at Western.

Thanks, Mac, for helping make this company all it is.

Western’s Iowa Pool Project Beats the Heat—and the Deadline

When summertime heat hits the Heartland, no spot in town is more popular than the local pool. It’s certainly true in Colfax, Iowa, the fast-growing community just 20 miles east of Des Moines on I-80. So when town leaders awarded Western Construction Group’s Des Moines branch its pool restoration project, the contract came with a firm Memorial Day deadline.



Western’s evaluation confirmed that decades of use and Iowa temperature extremes had taken their toll on the facility. Pool managers had reported dropping water levels in prior summers, a strong indication that floor cracks were significant. Scaling and peeling were prominent, with spalling evident around the perimeters of the pool’s built-in drain system. Given the stringent schedule, the five-man restoration crew had a challenge on their hands.

The scope of work developed called for floors to be shotblasted and walls sandblasted to remove old, non-adhering coating. The concrete was then sounded, with areas of delamination marked. Once deteriorated materials were removed, vertical areas were repaired with air-placed concrete (gunite) and horizontal areas with 4,000-psi ready-mix concrete.



A two-coat epoxy coating system was applied to the fully cured concrete, with a light-aggregate broadcast employed to achieve an anti-slip surface. Per the customer’s request, pool floors were returned to their original white with decks receiving an emerald blue coating. With the application of floor striping and upper-deck safety warnings, the project was complete, and the start-of-summer deadline more than met.

Western Waterproofing project manager Jason Burgin credits the timely completion to the branch’s people and processes. “We have years of experience working on projects such as this,” he notes, “and we have the crew size necessary for fast-turns. That’s an important benefit for our customers.”

Restoring the community oasis in Colfax, Iowa, first meant resolving leaks caused by deteriorated concrete. With trouble spots corrected, Western’s five-man crew returned it to one cool pool with white decks and emerald blue accents true to the original.



Owner: City of Colfax

PROJECT TEAM

Project Manager: Jason Burgin

Superintendent: Randy Redman

Performance Scores Western A Second Invite to Muskogee Indian Bowl

It was nearly a decade ago that Western Waterproofing's Tulsa team first tackled Muskogee Indian Bowl football stadium.

The initial project came as the result of a district-wide facility study led by Wayne Johnson, Director of Maintenance and Facilities for Muskogee Public I-20. Johnson's findings resulted in the school board's hiring an architectural/engineering firm to determine which facilities would receive priority attention.

"The stadium was built in 1939 using concrete, a lot of river rock and a lot of rebar," Johnson begins. "To someone of my background, it didn't appear to be in jeopardy. But the architects said we had only three years' of usage left. Moisture inside had caused the rebar to deteriorate."

Western's role in the stadium-saving action included correction of concrete problems and application of deck coating to prevent future infiltration. "That last coating we'd applied was still in great shape when we were asked back this time," states Western branch manager Eric Birch. "So it was agreed that we'd apply a new urethane top coat."

Color-matching the new top coat applied to vertical surfaces and the elastomeric coating used for vertical walls resulted in a crisp, coordinated look and prime protection for Muskogee's landmark stadium.



This engagement, Western crews power washed the old coating, repaired damaged areas, and recaulked expansion joints. They then applied over 500 gallons of new top coat with sand back-rolled into it. Next followed an application of a color-matched elastomeric coating to all vertical walls.

Planning and scheduling proved critical to project success as the Indian Bowl is used by multiple teams at the middle school, high school and college level. "The stadium had to remain in use throughout," Birch continues, "and bleachers could not be removed. So we worked closely with the school superintendent during the winter months to make it happen."

Now the stadium is approaching its seventh decade of service, looking better than ever. 🟢



Owner: Muskogee Independent School District
Engineer: Graber & Imel Architects

PROJECT TEAM

Branch/Project Manager: Eric Birch



Michigan Ornamental Craftsmanship Key to 40 Tiemann Restoration



When New York City’s 40 Tiemann Place was built in the late 1930s, designer Philip Birnbaum’s use of elaborate metal cornices assured the Renaissance Revival Style building character. Replicating that cornice work would prove a premier challenge in restoring the six-story structure some seven decades later. Tapped for the task was Michigan Ornamental Metals, a member of Western Construction Group.

Collaborating with general contractor Brend Renovation Corp., Michigan Ornamental set forth a plan for producing the 144 lineal feet of cornice required.

“We were able to obtain a full section of the existing cornice,” notes department manager Jim Barton. “That allowed us to develop drawings with proper measurements and integrate minor design improvements.” To further assure authenticity, Michigan Ornamental fabricated and installed an eight-foot mock-up for contractor and architect approval.



The new cornice was constructed of galvanized metal in eight-foot lengths, the industry standard for production and installation efficiency. Each piece was 48 inches high and constructed from five horizontal sections with different configurations. Some 80 panels contained spinnings.

To expedite restoration, Michigan produced the sections in three groups of six, allowing placement to begin while fabrication concluded. The crew also crafted and attached 84 brackets to a section of the upper cornice, along with 350 dentils, to speed installation.

Deciding whether or not to paint the cornice was difficult, says architect Alaina Johnson. “We could see the unpainted sheet metal cornice from the elevated train station across the street, which was great,” she recalls. “That little eight-foot section of unpainted metal looked so much better than what had been there that we toyed with the idea of leaving it that way for a little while. In the end we opted for an off-white color.

“It really brightened everything up and made the building look complete.”



Seventy years of wind and weather had compromised the intricate beauty of 40 Tiemann’s distinctive metal cornices. Craftsmen from Michigan Ornamental fabricated 144 lineal feet of design-enhanced replacements to restore the building’s original elegance.

Architect: Architecture Restoration Conservation (ARC), P.C.
Contractor: Brend Renovation Corp.

PROJECT TEAM
Department Manager: James Barton
Fabrication Supervisor: Ian Capdevila

Michigan Ornamental, a Western Construction Group affiliate, is a foremost fabricator of metal detailing for restoration, preservation and new construction. To learn more, visit www.michiganornamental.com.

Western Partners in Restoration of Historic Cliff House

In 1863, Masters Butler and Buckley completed a modest structure overlooking San Francisco's Ocean Beach. Aptly named Cliff House, it became a destination point for prominent Bay Area families out for a day of horse racing and recreation. When fire claimed both the first structure and the elegant facility built to replace it, a third Cliff House of neoclassic design rose from the ashes. This 1909 structure was acquired by the National Park Service (NPS) in 1977 and is now preserved as part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

In late 2002, Western Waterproofing's San Francisco branch was asked to partner with Nibbi Brothers Construction and C. David Robinson Architects to restore portions of the Cliff House and expand the entertainment areas. Extensive research revealed that the building was constructed of concrete with details of putty parging.

Since the NPS would like the project to be on the register of national historic building, the U.S. Department of the Secretary of the Interior Standards was used for the reconstruction. An historic architecture firm, Architectural Resource Group, was contracted to oversee reconstruction.

Plans called for rebuilding structural concrete base shapes and then applying putty to create column capitals and bases, cornices and other architectural elements. All of the products used would be stringently



evaluated to confirm compliance with 1909 products and the Historic Standards.

A structural engineer was consulted when subsequent problems surfaced. Western performed the structural repairs indicated and added galvanic anodes to further reduce the effects of corrosion of the steel structural elements. Western was also asked to handle the temporary relocation and replacement of an historic Camera Obscura located on the edge of the cliff.

Completed in September 2004, the Cliff House project has received numerous outstanding reviews commenting on the attention to detail of the historic restoration. [👉](#)



Owner: National Park Service
Golden Gate National Recreation Area
General Contractor: Nibbi Brothers Construction Services, LLC
Architect: C. David Robinson Architects
Restoration Architect: Architectural Resource Group

PROJECT TEAM
Branch Manager: Matt Dutrow



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