

BEST OF
2007
AWARDS

Darwin D. Martin House Restoration Phase 3

AWARD OF MERIT: Rehab/Restoration/Renovation

The Darwin D. Martin House was once the residence of millionaire business executive Darwin D. Martin and his wife. Martin worked for Buffalo-based Larkin Soap Co. and built the prairie-style house in Buffalo, N.Y., in 1903.

After Martin's death, the house was abandoned and over the next decades went through several different owners. In the 1960s part of the complex was demolished and replaced by apartments. In 2004 the owner and developer of the house, the Martin House Restoration Corp., a nonprofit group and member of the Lloyd Wright Foundation, ventured to replace the three portions of the complex that had been demolished.

The Darwin D. Martin House is part of the Martin House Complex that encompasses the Darwin D. Martin House, the George F. Barton House, the Pergola, Conservatory, Carriage House and Gardener's Cottage. The main building is the Martin House, which covers 10,000 sq ft excluding the basement.

The house's layout is based on cruciform floor plans, an architectural motif seen in Gothic churches where the building is in the shape of a cross.

Construction manager LP Ciminelli, which is based in Buffalo, assessed pre-existing conditions for the site that had undergone various construction and demolition. Ciminelli had to identify original foundations that remained below the apartments' foundation.

The \$6.2 million renovation was completed in March. The Conservatory, Darwin Martin's lavish greenhouse; the Pergola, the walkway connecting the main house to the sun-lit Conservatory; and the Carriage House, which functioned as a stable, garage and the chauffeur's apartment, were all renovated as close as pos-



sible back to their original designs by Frank Lloyd Wright.

The main design goal was to re-create the historic buildings to what they were a century ago. Clay roof tiles imported from France were handmade to match the original material, as were the ceramic mosaic tiles from Arkansas. Approximately 80,000 new custom-made Roman face bricks were used in all of the reconstructed buildings, including the interior and exterior of the conservatory.

The focal point of the Conservatory was a skylight and a 9-ft replica of the Nike of Samothrace statue. The team used an aluminum frame for the copper-clad skylight, originally framed in steel, in order to match the original profile while still meeting contemporary structural load requirements.

In 1975, the Martin House Complex was entered into the National Register of Historic Places, and in 1986, it was named a National Historic Landmark along with the area it is located, the Parkside East Historic District. <<

Key Players

Owner: Martin House Restoration Corp., Buffalo, N.Y.

Architect: Hamilton Houston Lownie Architects LLC, Buffalo

Construction Manager: LP Ciminelli, Buffalo

Structural Engineer: Robert Silman Associates, PC

MEP Engineer: Landmark Facilities Group, Norwalk, Conn.

Civil Engineer: Watts Engineers, Buffalo

Site, Concrete: Masonry King Bros. Construction, Elma, N.Y.

Carpentry: Building & Beyond Inc., Marilla, N.Y.

Wood Trim: Infinity Architectural Windows, Buffalo

Plumbing and Fire: W.C. Roberson Plumbing & Construction Protection, Buffalo

Electrical: Frey Electric Construction Co., Tonawanda, N.Y.