



OZARK NATIONAL LIFE BUILDING BALCONY

OWNER: OZARK NATIONAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY
ARCHITECT: INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTS ATELIER
CATEGORY: CONSERVATION



BEFORE



BEFORE

THIS STRIKING EXAMPLE OF SECOND RENAISSANCE REVIVAL ARCHITECTURE, built in 1897, has housed the Kansas City Public Library, the Western Museum of Art (today, known as the Nelson-Atkins), the Kansas City Board of Education, and now Ozark National Life Insurance Company. It is a dear piece of Kansas City history, and as such was treated with great care by IAA.

After investigating the Northwest masonry balcony, our team discovered significant cracking and shifting of the elaborately decorated stones, indicating severe structural damage. In order to replace the deteriorated steel supports and salvage the balcony and façade, all stones were catalogued and removed, allowing our team to explore the existing structure beneath. After replacing the steel components with new members, the entire balcony and baluster spindles were carefully restored and reset. The restoration work was performed with the intention of preserving key building elements, as they were originally envisioned, to ensure another century of life for this local landmark.



AFTER

UNIFIED GOVERNMENT FIRE STATION

OWNER: UNIFIED GOVERNMENT OF WYANDOTTE COUNTY + KANSAS CITY, KS
ARCHITECT: INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTS ATELIER
CATEGORY: PRESERVATION PRACTICE



DESIGNED BY CHARLES E. KEYSER IN 1929, THE FIRE HEADQUARTERS IN DOWNTOWN KANSAS CITY, KANSAS DISPLAYS THE UNDERSTATED SOPHISTICATION AND ELEGANT RESTRAINT EPITOMIZING MUCH OF THE ARCHITECT'S BODY OF WORK.

IAA was commissioned to restore Keyser's design, and repair or replace all doors and windows. Our team recognized the significance, not only in restoring the structure, but also in preserving its original character. However, this presented unique challenges, considering the fire station is still fully functional today. Nevertheless, it was a situation our team was eager to take on.

Of the nearly 85 window openings, virtually all still held the original steel frame windows and single pane glass. Each were replaced with aluminum historic replica ones to match the originals. The six existing overhead doors (top left), installed decades after the building was completed and clashing with Keyser's design, were replaced. Through research and historic images, our team discovered that the original doors, seen in the two bottom images to the left, were of a four-fold design. Luckily, we were able to replicate them, but in a modernized, electric and highly-functional version. Ultimately, each repair and update was made with this primary objective in mind: maintaining the historic integrity of Keyser's original design in order to ensure authenticity and longevity for years to come.

Top: WYCO + KCK Fire Headquarters, Spring 2015 following restorations. Top Left: By 2000, most of the historical elements that remained were deteriorating. Those that had been replaced, like the doors and windows seen in this image, were not in keeping with the original aesthetic of Keyser's design. Middle Left: A 1937 image of the fire headquarters and several firefighters posing with their new American LaFrance fire equipment. Bottom Left: 1930 image of a firefighter in front of one of the four-fold doors.

