

Cream of the Cream City Awards



IRON BLOCK BUILDING PARTNERS/ DENTAL ASSOCIATES



IRON BLOCK (1860) 205 EAST WISCONSIN AVENUE COMMERCIAL BUILDING RESTORATION

The Iron Block has been a fixture at the intersection of North Water Street and East Water Street since its construction in 1860. Designed by George H.

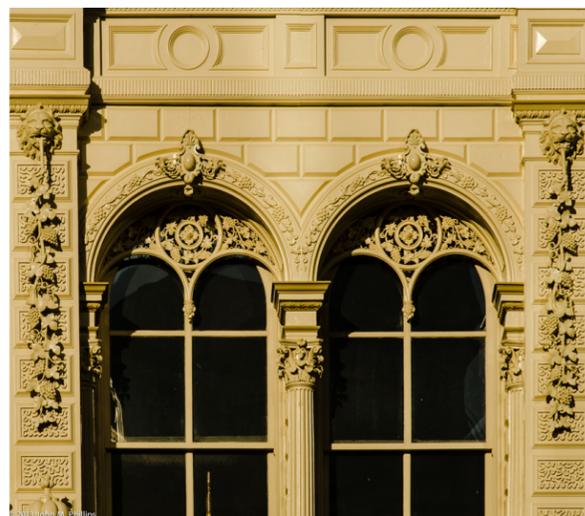
Johnson and manufactured by Daniel Badger's Architectural Iron Works of New York City, it has served tenants ranging from architects to Masonic lodges. Owners Dental Associates purchased the Iron Block in early 2012 and set about to renovate the building's interior as well as exterior. Although the Iron Block has local designation and National Register status, the building had begun to rust and architectural details, replicated in substitute materials during a 1983 renovation, were deteriorated and ornament was falling to the sidewalk.

The current owners went the extra mile in accurately recreating the missing details. With the assistance of H. Russell Zimmermann, patterns and molds were created from historic photographs and pieces of the original building. Over 4,200 new pieces were cast in Wisconsin foundries and included acanthus leaves, lions' heads, columns and capitals and even the garlands of grapevines. Some pieces weighed a few ounces. Others, like the columns at the original entrance on Water Street, weighed in at over 1,200 pounds. The entire iron façade was sandblasted down to raw steel and a three-part epoxy paint system was used to chemically bond with the ferrous surfaces.

New cornice and pediments were molded from fiberglass reinforced polyester and now match the originals. The 1899 south addition was stripped of its paint to reveal the Cream City brick. The building was unveiled on June 17, 2013 and the completely renovated interior will be finished in 2014. One of Milwaukee's most iconic buildings, the only extant building in Wisconsin with a cast iron façade, is once again a beacon for preservation at the corner of Water and Wisconsin.



before



after



1983 renovation



at the unveiling

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