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Wayne County, Ohio, Courthouse restored to grandeur

Wayne courthouse standing tall, proud once again

By BOBBY WARREN Staff Writer Published: February 25, 2016 4:00 AM

After nearly all the exterior renovation work had been done on the Wayne County Courthouse, a construction superintendent said it looked like a castle that had been restored to its original beauty.

The courthouse might look like a majestic castle towering over the downtown landscape, but do you want to know a secret? It's actually a brick building at its base with a sandstone veneer.

At least, that's how Commissioner Scott Wiggam described it.

"If you look at the skeleton of the courthouse, it is a brick building," Wiggam said.

That was one of the things Wiggam was amazed to learn throughout the renovation project, which took up most of 2015.

The \$5.5 million project was a fluid one, with changes being made to the contract throughout the process, adding some things, taking other things away.

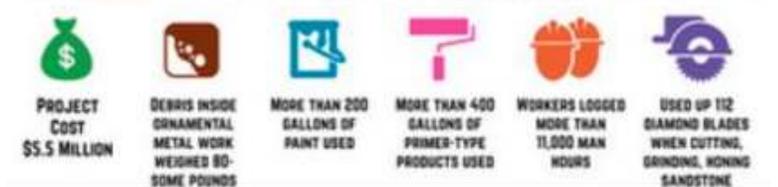
One of the earliest discoveries was just how bad the brick work was underneath the metalwork. Commissioner Jim Carmichael said many bricks were crumbled due to water damage.

Commissioner Ann Obrecht was surprised to see some early county commissioners had etched their names into the bell in the bell tower.

The third floor exterior is primarily metalwork, Wiggam said. It was designed to look like stone, but many of the ornamental figures actually are made of metal. When some of the original ornamental metalwork was removed, the insides were filled with all sorts of debris, including dead animals and feces, and weighed up to 80 pounds. The new ones should not face a similar fate.

Painting

When considering the painting that was done, from the multiple primer coats, stripe coats, intermediate coats and top coats of paint that were used on the project, more than 200 gallons of paint were used, said Marc Papasodaro of



Thomarios, the painting subcontractor. From epoxy primers to high-performance fluoropolymer top coats to paint stripper, another 400 gallons were used to get everything ready to paint.

Stone masonry

W.R. Restoration did the stone work, and its crew of foreman Mike Szuhy, stone masons Chris Hoagland, Mark Peters, Michael Goldbach, Tom Tindira, labor foreman John Baker, and laborers Eric Detwiler and David Zdanowicz logged in more than 11,000 man hours.

Here is what they did with their time:

- Installed 208 sandstone Dutchmen (where stone on the courthouse was carved out and replaced with new sandstone);
- Dressed back 380 square feet of sandstone to remove exfoliated/scaling stone face;
- Installed more than 10,000 lineal feet of tuckpointing;
- Used 700 lineal feet of stainless steel strap and thread rod to anchor stone; and
- Went through 112 diamond blades to cut, grind and hone sandstone.

Scaffolding

As for the scaffolding used, Doug Kauffman of Seaway Scaffold estimated the entire structure weighed 130 tons. To get to the bell tower, people had to take more than 160 steps up to it.

The commissioners said they are proud of the work done by their construction manager, Chris Bailey of Millenium Preservation Group. Obrecht added, "He knew every stone."

Jim Jones was the superintendent for Cleveland-based J.G. Johnson Construction Co., which was the general contractor for the project. He took a lot of personal pride in the work done by the artisans and the union tradesmen.

Obrecht said it is amazing to think the courthouse was built 13 years after the Civil War ended, and it is still in use.

And, for the same intended purpose, Wiggam added.

Carmichael, Wiggam and Obrecht are hopeful this major renovation will keep the iconic courthouse as a viable one in the heart of downtown Wooster for another 75-100 years.

Reporter Bobby Warren can be reached at 330-287-1639 or bwarren@the-daily-record.com. He is [@BobbyWarrenTDR](https://twitter.com/BobbyWarrenTDR) on Twitter.