

Riverside Theatre, Hyde Park, MA

Comprehensive Repair of Historic Theatre Building

Owner: Inspire Arts and Music, Hyde Park, MA

Architect: Wessling Architects, Braintree, MA

Timeline: July 2024

Abbot recently completed a comprehensive masonry repair project at the historic Riverside Theatre located in the Cleary/Logan Square area of Hyde Park, MA. The three-story brick building was originally constructed in 1897, sustained a fire just 15 months later, and was immediately rebuilt surpassing its original size.

Completed in 1899, the new rebuild retained parts of the earlier façade, and included a 700-seat opera house auditorium, with a masonic hall on the third floor.



Now, the first floor is used for retail while the upper floors are used to provide a portfolio of fine arts programs for young adults in New England and throughout the United States.

The scope of the work focused on the deteriorated front and left sides of the building façade. The major portion of the project involved the replacement of the rusted steel lintels above the second floor windows that could only be accessed by taking out the decorative jack arches over each window. Abbot removed the rusted old lintels, replaced them with new matching galvanized lintels, and installed flashing on the lintels. The jack arches were then returned to their original position. Abbot also cut and pointed various locations on the facades.

Then, Abbot demolished and replaced the damaged brick primarily located around the step cracks that in some instances had formed as a result of the rusted lintels above the second floor windows.

Finally, Abbot performed minor repairs to the roofline where the rubber at the top of the barrel arch was stripped and the flashing along the ledge where the barrel arch meets the roofline was replaced.

The entire project went seamlessly and was completed on time to the satisfaction of the building owner.

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of the project was the difficulty in resourcing an appropriate color and size of the original older brick. In the end, Abbot was able to locate a sufficient number of bricks to mix into the facades along with the original bricks they were able to salvage. Combined with the use of matching pointing, the overall appearance is as if the work had never been done.

In October 1995, the Massachusetts Historical Commission announced that the building contributes to the architectural quality of the Cleary/Logan Square area thus making it eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.