

Leventhal-Sidman Jewish Community Center 333 Nahanton Street, Newton, MA

Restoration of Clock Tower and Grand Staircase

Owner: Combined Jewish Philanthropies, Boston, MA

Design: D.M. Berg Consultants, Needham, MA

Timeline: November 2004-June 2005

Cost: \$413,000

The Leventhal-Sidman Jewish Community Center was originally a 4-story Victorian structure and gymnasium with a 7-story square clock tower at the right front wing. Constructed in 1886, the building was used as the Working Boys Home Industrial School run by the Archdiocese of Boston, and then later as a Novitiate for the Xavarian Brothers Clergy until it was purchased by the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston (CJP) in 1979, and renovated for use as an office and community recreational center in the early 1980s. The renovation included a 4-story addition that linked the existing structures by a skylighted walkway.



Due to budgetary constraints by the CJP, minimal maintenance and repair work was done to the building at the time of renovation. In 2004, an architectural firm (D.M. Berg Consultants, Needham, MA) was contracted to evaluate the structural integrity of the clock tower due to concerns by the CJP. During the evaluation, vertical cracks were discovered in the brick corners and the passage doors leading to the perimeter copper-clad balcony were severely deteriorated. Further, the overall condition of the masonry joints was poor.

Abbot was contracted to completely rebuild one of the brick corners, replace deteriorated brick on the other corners, and repoint all four sides of the tower. Also as part of the project, Abbot replaced all four sets of passage doors with heavy-duty metal and glass doors that were engineered to withstand severe weather conditions. In addition, Abbot replaced the copper panels on the turrets and installed screening to protect the eaves from birds and other predators that could create an environmental hazard.

During the construction process, the wood floor of the balcony was found to be deteriorating badly. Abbot removed the old floor, reframed the balcony, installed a new wood floor, covered the floor with a waterproof EPDM roofing material to protect it from the elements, and repaired the copper perimeter of the balcony to restore its original appearance.

As an added touch, Abbot restored the clock face and replaced the Roman numerals with Hebrew letters at the owner's request.

As the final phase of the project, Abbot power washed the horseshoe-shaped grand staircase located at the bottom of the tower, and completely repointed the stone joints.

