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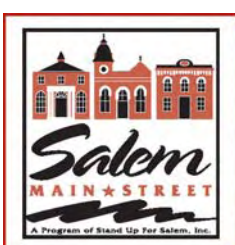
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The Finlaw Building - Restoring A Vision

SALEM, N.J. – Seven years ago, after decades of deterioration and neglect, Salem City's historic Finlaw Building found itself among the 10 Most Endangered Historic Sites in New Jersey. Preservation New Jersey, Inc., author of the 2002 endangered list, said "loss of the Finlaw Building would put a large hole in Salem's two most important street-scapes."

Today, thanks to the efforts by Blue Rock Construction and Stand Up for Salem, the



a long period of time that is very important in making our city vibrant once again," said Jim Waddington, Vice President of Stand Up For Salem, a non-profit group whose focus is to restore downtown Salem. "The city should be proud of it. This was a well thought-out project strategically approached by providing adaptive reuse of a property that was functionally obsolete."

when its roof collapsed in 2002. Stand Up for Salem, which purchased the building in 2001, was determined



to save the site, and, in particular, the historic facade.

"People on any issue are divided and some thought it was silly to prop-up the historical facade instead of just knocking it down and making it into a parking lot," said Waddington.

Fortunately for Salem, Blue Rock Construction, a Burlington-based company, carries plenty of experience when it comes to adaptive reuse and historic restorations. Blue Rock began its construction phase of the \$17 million project in September 2008. (continued)



five-story building with its historically-renovated facade once again stands as a prominent landmark and central symbol to the city's revitalized downtown district.

"This has been a project we've been working on over

Originally, the Finlaw Building was built in 1891. The upper level was home to William P. Finlaw's pants factory while various other stores occupied the ground floor. Preservation New Jersey described the building as one of five elegant, Victorian-era commercial buildings that once graced downtown Salem.

Unfortunately, three of those five buildings disappeared and the Finlaw Building was on track to make it four

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The Finlaw Building - Restoring A Vision (cont.)

"Basically, it was a hole in the ground and it looked like a scene from a western movie with just a facade standing up," said Brenden Smith, Project Manager for Blue Rock.

"It was definitely a challenge. You had the east and west party walls and they also had

when it was originally built," said Ghosh. "You have to create some of the terra cotta, finials and scrolls that were completely gone. And to do that we used sheet metal and made it appear like it was terra cotta or some kind of old limestone. From the ground level, it does look like the original."

help stimulate interest in shopping and tourism in Salem's historic district.

"There is no single key to revitalize downtown, but this is a significant step and certainly a block-defining property," said Waddington. "It's a very important building that helps define the whole block as a retail center."



While the front projects a 19th-century appearance, the building inside provides all the modern amenities of a 52,000-square foot office.

"It's a huge lift. It wasn't an easy project to accomplish. Fundamentally, it was difficult from the outset, but cooperation from the contractor and all interested parties kept it moving forward. It says a lot about the partnership put together. Blue Rock has been a very good construction partner."

to be supported. The bracing itself you would have thought was a building. There was a lot of time and effort to make sure the walls were not going anywhere."

"What's particularly interesting is the development of a 52,000-square foot structure on a footprint that accommodated 15,000-square feet," said Waddington.

Janet Sheridan, a Salem resident and board member of Preservation New Jersey, calls the Finlaw restoration a true success story.

Also, Blue Rock realized how important the structure meant to the residents of Salem. "This is the centerpiece of their redevelopment project," said Avi Ghosh, Vice President of Blue Rock. "It's just not a plain, vanilla building. Our architect had to be very creative in maintaining the appearance of the facade even after the new building was completed."

Back in March, it was moving day for the Finlaw Building's new tenants. Most of the first floor is home for the Motor Vehicle Commission, and three floors are being leased by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families.

"It's always nice to see an endangered property come back to life," said Sheridan.

"It's a huge joy when that happens. And it's a great success story to see the beauty of it revealed as it originally looked. It's also great to bring

"So I think you need that kind of designer to be on board in order to have this project be successful. By the same token, you also need to have a builder like Blue Rock who can envision the architect's intent and at the same time maintain the structural and architectural integrity of the building."

The fifth floor holds the public defenders office and the basement is being used by Salem County Improvement Authority.



Also on the first floor facing East Broadway is the office for the Third District Legislators, including Sen. Stephen Sweeney.

a key building back to life after it looked like it was past that point. It's a joy to see it put to use."

In order to restore its 1891 appearance, Blue Rock reproduced some of the missing terra cotta and other detailed pieces while maintaining a historically-accurate front.

In addition to the new office building and historic renovations, Blue Rock constructed a 275-car parking garage adjacent to the building. The garage is available to Finlaw Building employees and also offers paid public parking to

A building dedication and open house reception is scheduled for May 21 to coincide with the seasonal opening of the Salem Farmers Market.