

# Preserving a Landmark: Saving a Historic Masonry Landmark with Cost Saving Restoration Construction Practices

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## Abstract:

The Commerce Bank Building is a local landmark in Peoria, Illinois. The structure has a twelve-story base with a set-back six-story tower, pyramidal sloped roof, walkaround balustrade, and lantern. The two street facing facades and entirety of the tower are clad in Neoclassical-style terra cotta. The remaining facades consist of brick masonry with terra cotta accents. Overall, the exterior of the building, particularly the tower, was in disrepair throughout the facade and a terra cotta fragment had recently fallen from the building. A multi-phase approach to preserve the iconic building was used and included an evaluation of the terracotta facade and development of temporary and long-term repairs. With a downturned economy during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, a cost-effective approach to repairing and saving character-defining features of the building became the forefront challenge. Due to access challenges during the evaluation phase, the project team used drone photography and GigaPan (robotic panoramic photography) to assess the condition of the facade and develop a preliminary repair scope. The design team also worked directly with a restoration contractor to create an access plan and sequencing plan that would combine the hands-on portion of the investigation with the facade repairs in a design-build type approach. Overall, this method of project delivery, along with locally sourced alternate terra cotta replacement materials, was favorable to the owners' budget and allowed the project to be completed in a shorter duration. The cost savings from this project approach allowed the project team to prolong the life of the structure and preserve more of the character-defining features on this landmark building.

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