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DIVINE INTERVENTION
THE RESTORATION OF THE
DIVINE LORRAINE HOTEL

ON THE
COVER





DIVINE INTERVENTION

THE RESTORATION OF THE DIVINE LORRAINE HOTEL IN PHILADELPHIA IS BRINGING THE BUILDING BACK TO ITS ORIGINAL GLORY.

BY ERIK HIGHLAND





This gorgeous abandoned building from the Gilded Age has come back to life. And what a life it's had! This is all part of the economic revitalization of the North Broad Street corridor in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Built in 1892, the Divine Lorraine Hotel had gone back to its original function - apartments. The hotel once housed some of Philadelphia's wealthiest residents and, as of January, does again.

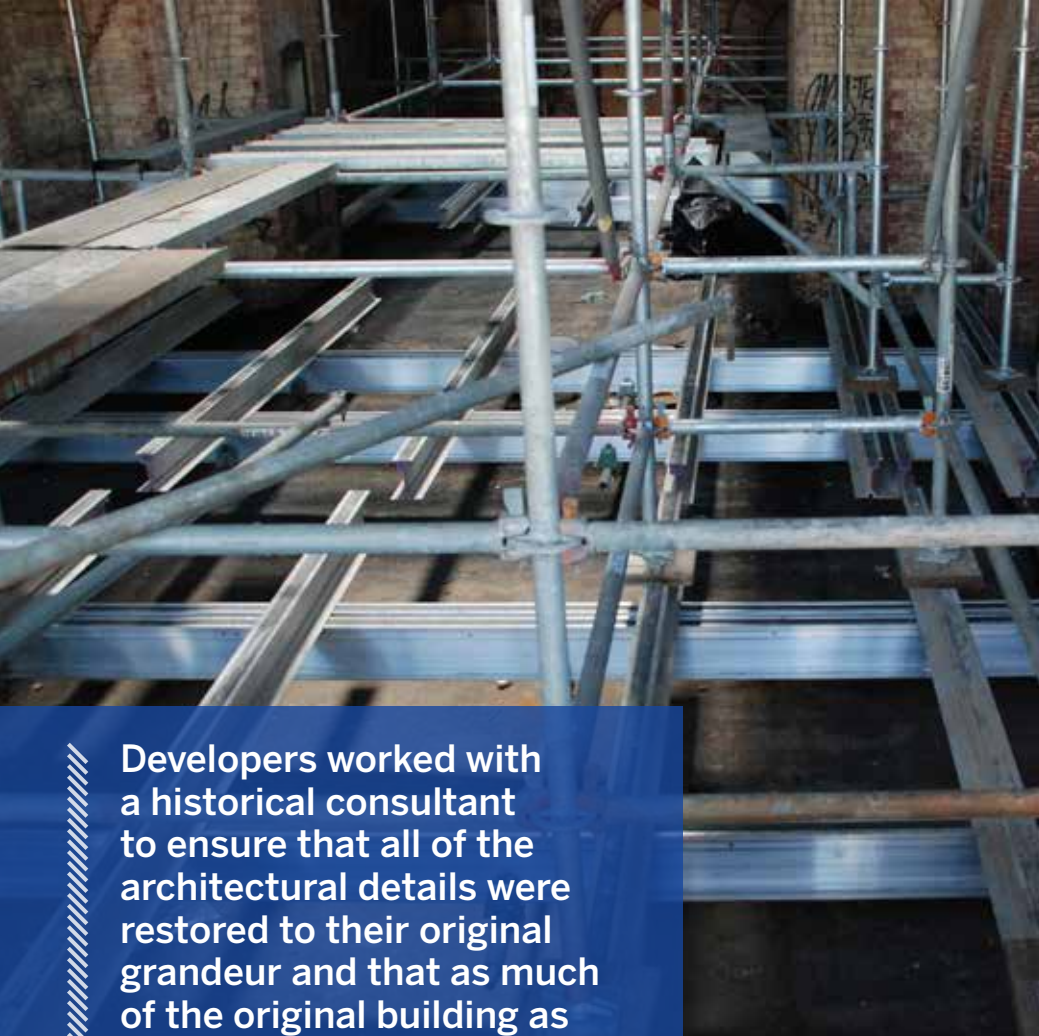
The building holds a rich history and was used as a hotel from 1900 to the Great Depression. Then, in 1948 it became Philadelphia's first racially-integrated hotel under Father Divine, founder of the controversial International Peace Mission, which PBS described as "one of the most unorthodox religious movements in America." After Divine's death in 1965, his worshipers continued to run the property until it closed in 1999.

Superior Scaffold was brought in by the general contractor as part of the \$44-million redevelopment to provide the scaffolding and shoring support to give crews complete access to the exterior of this 10-story structure. The renovation created over 100 luxury apartments and 20,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space. Developers worked with a historical consultant to ensure that all of the architectural details were restored to their original grandeur and that as much of the original building as possible was kept intact.

Scaffolding

The west side went up first and included approximately 120 linear feet of system scaffold. The scaffold was roughly 128-feet high by 120-feet long and ran the entire length of the building on Broad Street. It had a work deck for crews every 6.5 feet and a Beta Max Maxial Track hoist to lift equipment. The scaffolding was completely covered in debris netting.





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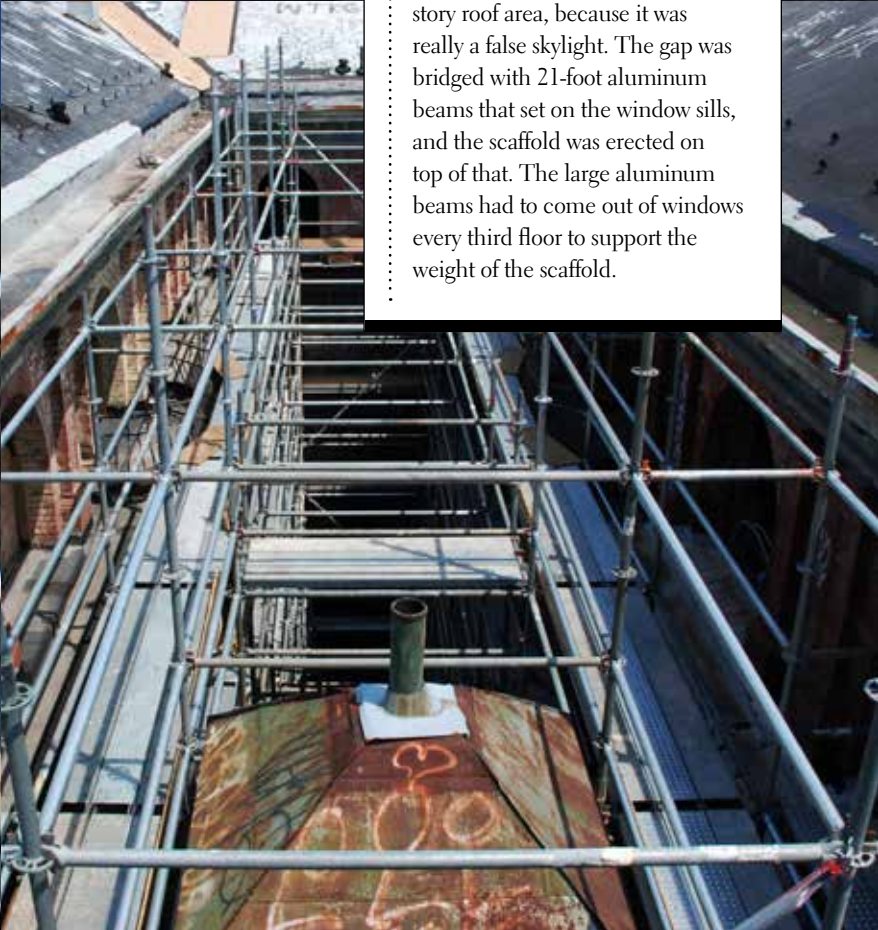
The scaffold provided restoration crews complete access to the exterior for renovations, repointing, surface cleaning, parapet and soffit work, brick replacement, balcony repair, and window painting and replacement. The scope was essentially the same on each of the sides.

Shoring

There was shoring underneath the sidewalk on three sides. The post shores and aluminum beams supported the weight of the scaffold, crews, and equipment. The West wing was set on top of aluminum beams, on top of the sidewalk/canopy, and was supported by post shores and hi-load shoring frames underneath where the subway runs along Broad Street. Superior also erected two stair towers to access three sides.

The Courtyard

The courtyard was roughly 90-feet long by 80-feet high. The scaffold could not be set on the second-story roof area, because it was really a false skylight. The gap was bridged with 21-foot aluminum beams that set on the window sills, and the scaffold was erected on top of that. The large aluminum beams had to come out of windows every third floor to support the weight of the scaffold.





Chris Ricketts



Some of the other challenges presented by the courtyard included loading materials into the courtyard area, up and over the canopy, and building the scaffold and stepping back into the balconies in the courtyard. The resulting structure was very stable and allowed renovation crews safe access to the building.

Thomas Creighton, estimator for Superior Scaffold, said, "This was one amazing project, and Superior Scaffold is proud to be a part of this Divine renovation." •

About the Author

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