

## Historic Rehabilitation Advisor December 2003/January 2004

### “Architect Turns Developer To Preserve Springfield, MO Landmark”

By Darryl Hicks

Allen Casey has built a solid reputation for himself as one of Springfield, MO's most successful architects. Although he has no plans to give up what has been his day job for the past 30 years, Casey is quickly gaining equal acclaim as a property owner and developer.

#### Holland Building

Casey's father, Harold, himself a retired architect, encouraged his son to start looking at properties in the downtown area that had redevelopment potential. Beginning in the late 90s, the local downtown has seen a dramatic upsurge in commercial/retail redevelopment activity, much of it involving existing historic buildings.

Because his practice, The Casey Associates, specializes in advising developers on proper restoration techniques for properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places and compliance with the federal rehabilitation tax credit program, assuming the role of developer wasn't too big a leap.

"It's something that I've grown to enjoy," added Casey, who has already identified 12 other properties in Springfield that are ripe for redevelopment. Casey is nearing completion of his first project, the Holland Building (circa 1914), which is undergoing a \$2.6 million restoration into class "A" office space and retail.

Much of the lobby work is now finished and new entry glass walls and doors will be added soon. The first floor is being planned for an up-scale restaurant with a sidewalk cafe on the southwest corner and a retail shop or similar business on the southeast and northwest corners.

Renovations include the installation of a complete sprinkler system, refinishing of all of the wood windows with the addition of low-e insulating glass and contemporary shades, upgrading of the elevators, the installation of a new central air conditioning system and the restoration of all of the corridors back to the original design.



The transoms over all of the wood doors are being exposed and refinished and new contemporary lighting fixtures are being installed that emulate the original fixtures. Plaster ceilings will also be restored. High-speed Internet service will be available for tenants, with fiber optic cable serving all floors.

An alleyway entry will be constructed at the northeast corner of the building which will provide both quick access to all of the building from the Holland and city-owned parking lots as well as a high-character, very noticeable "urban charm" entrance, said Casey.

#### Project Financing

Casey secured financing for the deal through Montgomery, AL-based syndicator Tax Credit Capital, which provided \$285,605 from the sale of federal historic rehabilitation tax credits. Another \$400,810 in equity was raised from the sale of Missouri historic rehabilitation tax credits, a portion of which was sold to St. Louis-based Commerce Bank, while Casey claimed the balance for himself.

Other financing sources included a \$792,831 construction loan and a \$325,420 permanent loan provided by Great Southern Bank, a \$110,100 low interest loan provided by the City of Springfield, \$406,720 in developer equity and various other smaller funding sources.

#### Fifth Floor Restoration

One of the notable challenges faced by Casey and his project team involved working with an existing tenant-The Law Offices of Robert Palmer PC-to complete a full renovation of the fifth floor this past summer.

The law offices had occupied a portion of the fifth floor since 1990. The firm, which has a staff of 11, including four attorneys, now occupies the entire 5,260-square-foot fifth floor.

"What led to this is (that) we were just going to put in new carpeting, maybe repaint our offices and Mr. Casey came to us and said, 'How would you guys like to have the whole fifth floor,'" said Nancy Bell, the law firm's office manager, in a

recent interview published in the Springfield Business Journal.

The renovations retained many of the building's original features, including the inch-thick marble corridor walls. For the office walls and most of the ceilings, plaster was used to keep with the historical look. Many of the items, such as light fixtures, aren't original, but they are authentic replications.

The original tile was kept on the floors, and most of the woodwork, which was stained and refinished, is original to the building.

"At some point in the history of the Holland Building, lowered ceilings were put in," Bell said, "likely to compete with newer buildings. But when those ceilings were taken out during the remodeling process, transom windows were uncovered.

"When they re-exposed the transom windows, which were all original, they were all there; we did have to replace some of the glass, because they'd been broken through the years," Bell noted in the article.

For help with the interior design concept, the law firm turned to Jennifer Robison of Kansas City-based Dumas Designs.

#### Researching Period Décor

Research was key to finding the appropriate décor for the firm's 1920s look and feel. Robison told Historic Rehabilitation Advisor that she found some of what she was looking for on the Internet.

"At the time the building was constructed in 1914, some areas of the country were into Art Deco while others were into Arts and Crafts, so I blended the two styles somewhat," added Robison. "Rob's law office has more of an Art Deco feel, while the public areas have more of an Arts and Crafts motif."

Robison obtained additional information from Sherwin Williams Corporation—the global producer of household paints and coatings—to research what color combinations and what types of color were popular at the turn of the century. The fifth floor color scheme features shades of pink, green and blue, and uses the natural wood paneling and the refinished woodwork.

Robison said this was her first job involving design from a historical aspect, which she said wasn't without challenges.

"One of my biggest challenges was finding carpeting and fabrics that were in keeping with the style of the time without being too busy or too much of an outdated look. So I tried to find patterns that kind of reflected the time period but have sort of a modern feel," Robison said.

She found a fabric collection from a manufacturer that represented the desired time period, she said, and that fabric was used for the seating in the reception area and in Palmer's office. The carpet is patterned and gold.

"The color and the pattern ended up blending pretty well with the finishes and furnishings that we selected," Robison said.

#### Building Updates

In contemporary buildings, Casey said he often sees an exterior that looks nice paired with an interior that is fairly standard.

"But in a building like the Holland Building, in a historic building, you get the chance for the nicer treatment in the corridors. The Holland building has the marble walls and the historic ceramic tile floors and we had the opportunity for the great mahogany finish on all the wood trim, crown molding, floor molding and what-not throughout the individual office spaces," Casey said.

The building's wood windows are all operable, Casey said, which is unusual. However, the glass in the windows was replaced with energy-efficient insulated glass. Many of the fixtures, such as those in the restrooms, are restored, and the light fixtures are more high-character than contemporary, he added. The building also boasts decorative iron railings.

Other updates include central air conditioning and new valves with thermostats in the radiators.

While the second through fifth floors are essentially full, Casey said he's still searching for a retail tenant to occupy about 3,000 square feet on the first floor, which also will house Riad, a Greek restaurant. Also on the first floor, Casey said, there will be a 600-square-foot space adjacent to Riad's that can be used for meetings and private functions.

Casey also said he would very much like to see an Irish pub go into the basement of the Holland Building.