

THE ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER

04.21.2014

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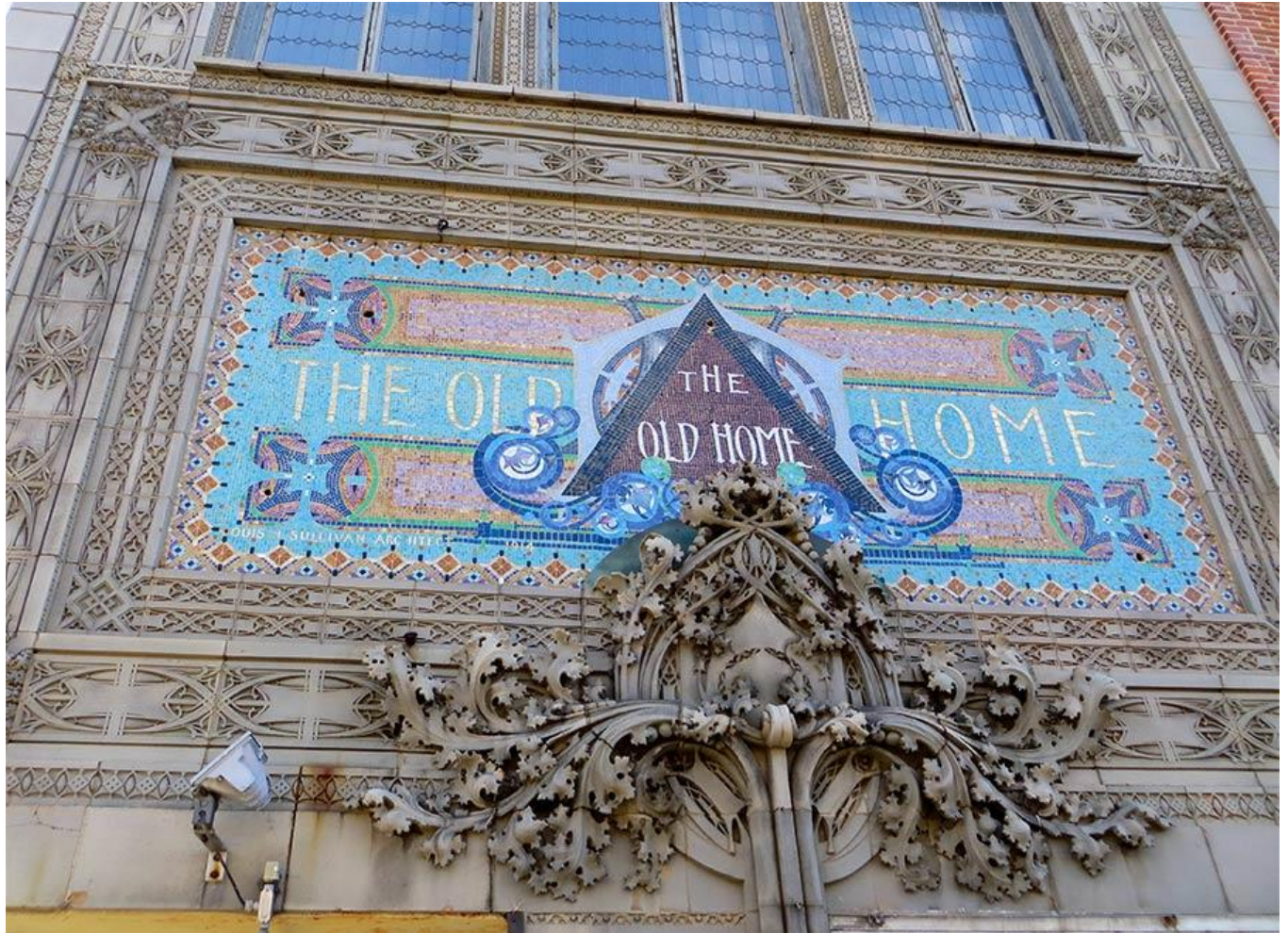
Louis Sullivan's Ohio "Jewel Box" in the rough gets polished.



THE BUILDING IS SET FOR A \$1.3 MILLION RENOVATION.
COURTESY THE LICKING COUNTY FOUNDATION

Architects and historians alike will be pleased to find that one of Louis H. Sullivan's "Jewel Box" bank buildings is slated for restoration. Recently donated to the Licking County Foundation of Newark, Ohio, "the Home Bank building will help to rejuvenate Newark's townscape and be available again to the public for its enjoyment and education," said Connie Hawk, Director of the Licking County Foundation and the Sullivan Building Preservation Fund. The bank building, originally named the Home Building Association Company, is located at One North Third Street in downtown Newark—approximately a 45-minute drive east of Columbus, Ohio.

Toward the end of his career, Sullivan designed a series of eight bank buildings scattered throughout the Midwest, affectionately referred to as the “Jewel Box” banks. The Newark bank was designed in 1914, and built in 1915 for approximately \$50,000. The building now faces a \$1.3 million-plus restoration project, according to Joe Tebben, emeritus professor at The Ohio State University and author of a forthcoming book entitled *The Old Home: Louis Sullivan’s Newark Bank*.



Prior to 1973, when it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places, retailers made changes to the building, including removing the important stone corner to broaden the entranceway. At one time, the second story of the interior space was obscured by a drop ceiling. The lower windows were enlarged for a jewelry store. While architects travel specifically to Newark seeking the Home Bank, interior access has been largely obscured. Fortunately, the building’s recent donor, Stephen Jones, began restoration on the building’s structure in preparation for a more careful, comprehensive renovation.

Sullivan wrote about his “jewel box” bank designs within a series of articles entitled *Kindergarten Chats*, where he described how bank buildings ought to articulate their democratic function within American society. As such, an open floor plan would allow

patrons to have physical and visual access throughout. His bank design motif was so purely democratic that there were not even any offices wherein employees could hide. At the time, classical architectural styles were prevalent, promulgating from Wall Street's stoic stone buildings. Sullivan was so strongly against the idea of "a Roman Temple" for an American bank that he noted, "I am going to insist that the bank manager wear a toga, sandals, and conduct his business in the venerated Latin tongue."



The Home Bank Building in Newark, like the other "Jewel Box" banks, has a facade inspired by the surrounding built environment. Unlike his other one-story bank designs that boast red brick, Sullivan's Newark bank has a greenish-gray terra cotta tile and is two-stories tall. Historians theorize that The Home Building Association bank building's exterior cladding was inspired by the nearby courthouse and the two stories helped to blend the corner bank building into its adjoining Italianate buildings.

It is important to American architectural history that this building be beautifully restored and again made accessible to the public eye, preservationists contend. Sullivan was not simply a genius at design; his societal theories had a significant impact on American architecture

moving forward. Sullivan, who led the way for his apprentice Frank Lloyd Wright, broke away from what was the “norm” for prevalent types of building designs. As a result, his architecture had a depth of meaning that still leads the way.

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