

Restoring history

Wagner Roofing repairs Jewett House's tile roof system

by **Ashley St. John**

Jewett House, a four-story English Georgian mansion, was built in Washington, D.C., in 1905. It was purchased by Marjorie Merriweather Post in the 1970s for the Boy Scouts of America and then by the Bauman Family Foundation in 1987. The building currently houses the foundation and its tenants.

The Bauman Family Foundation was initially funded by Lionel R. Bauman, a lawyer and businessman who was a partner in the real estate development firm Eugene M. Grant & Co., New York. The foundation—which provides funding for local, state and national organizations with a focus on the arts, economic development, education, the environment, public policy and research—currently is managed by Bauman's daughter, Patricia.

Patricia and her husband, John Landrum Bryant, had previously hired Wagner Roofing Co., Hyattsville, Md., to replace the leaking roof on their Washington townhouse and had been pleased with the work. So when Jewett House's roof system needed to be replaced in 2003, Wagner Roofing submitted a bid and won the project.

Matching an original

Wagner Roofing began the design-build project in November 2006.



"We began with replacing the clay tile roof, 14 dormers and copper built-in gutters," says Lee Simon, Wagner Roofing's estimator. "All existing tile that was still in good shape was salvaged for reinstallation. What was not salvageable was replaced with weathered Ludowici French interlocking tiles to match."

Wagner Roofing scraped, repaired and painted all existing metal and wood surfaces, including a decorative cornice below the gutter and decorative galvanized iron metal trim on the dormers. The 16-ounce copper built-in gutters were replaced with 20-ounce copper built-in gutters. All seams were soldered, and expansion joints were installed in between outlets.

"The cornice detail at the bottom faces of the radius standing-seam dormers was deteriorated, so we replaced them with field-fabricated double-lock lead-coated copper to match the original historic stamped metal," Simon says. "We then painted the dormers white."

Wagner Roofing also replaced the separate low-slope roof system on a lower part of the building with a Firestone Platinum 90-mil-thick fully adhered EPDM roof system with a 30-year warranty. The company installed 1/4-inch-thick tapered polyisocyanurate insulation with 1/4-inch-thick DensDeck Prime® Roof Board.

As work progressed on Jewett House, Wagner Roofing also ended up replacing all framing, sheathing and molding on the building's shed dormer with Spanish cedar custom-milled to match the historic profile. Additionally, Wagner Roofing repointed the building's four brick chimneys.

"On one chimney, we had to take the brick down about 25 courses and rebuild the chimney one side at a time so we wouldn't have to remove the precast lime capstones," says Bob Coberly, Wagner Roofing's project manager.

Photos courtesy of Wagner Roofing Co., Hyattsville, Md.

Wagner Roofing employee Randy Herald solders the built-in gutter

And Wagner Roofing replaced the deteriorated 1997 pine dormer windows with Spanish cedar, as well. Bob Wooldridge, Wagner Roofing's working superintendent, built the windows in a cabinet shop in the evenings, on Saturdays, and when it was too cold or wet to work at the job site.

Rising to the challenge

Jewett House's historical significance presented some hurdles for Wagner Roofing. One particular challenge was the district's Historic Preservation Office, which was insistent on the reuse of as many of the original tiles as possible.

"The project's historic aspect was its most unique feature," Coberly says. "Acquiring the historic permit—which was a project in itself—and matching 1905 wood molding and stamped metal, as well as acquiring specialized material, such as old clay tile and historic moldings, to match the existing tile were challenging.

"Keeping the building watertight while the tile and many different deteriorated structural components were removed also was difficult," Simon continues. "We installed a No. 30 felt underlayment and Grace Ice & Water Shield."

The building's location also posed an obstacle.

"Because of Jewett House's high-profile location at a crowded intersection, the entire building had to be scaffolded with safety netting below the walkboards and on the safety railings," says Chuck Wagner, Wagner Roofing's president. "Where the scaffold extended over the sidewalk, a pedestrian tunnel was erected."

Parking and access to the building also were difficult at the crowded intersection, so Wagner Roofing used an electric hoist to move materials up and down the scaffolding.

"Because of the scope of work on the chimneys and the multiple crews that needed access, the entire chimneys were scaffolded off the sloped roof," Wagner continues. "The crew size ranged anywhere from one five-man tile crew to multiple carpentry, painting, tile, EPDM and sheet metal crews."

The culmination

Wagner Roofing finished its work on the Jewett House in June 2007.



Jewett House's finished clay tile roof system

"The project took much longer than we originally anticipated because of the deteriorated condition of the substrate, dormers, windows and chimneys," Simon says.

However, Wagner Roofing's hard work has paid off.

"The most rewarding part of the job was having such a good relationship with the owner, who was willing to do what it took to restore the building's integrity," Simon says.

Ashley St. John is Professional Roofing's associate editor.



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Project name: Jewett House

Project location: Washington, D.C.

Project duration: November 2006-June 2007

Roof system type: Clay tile and EPDM

Roofing contractor: Wagner Roofing Co., Hyattsville, Md.

Roofing manufacturer: Ludowici Roof Tile, New Lexington, Ohio, and Firestone Building Products, Indianapolis



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