



## PROJECT PROFILE

# Arcade-Wright Building

Facade Condition Assessment and Repair Design | St. Louis, MO



### CLIENT

Dominium

### BACKGROUND

The historic Arcade-Wright building was initially constructed in two stages beginning in 1906 with the eighteen-story Wright building and completed by the addition of the sixteen-story Arcade building in 1918. The resulting Arcade-Wright building occupies half of a city block in downtown St. Louis and was the tallest concrete structure in the world at the time of its completion. Featuring a two-story axial shopping arcade and multiple floors of office space above, the Arcade-Wright building was a well-known landmark of downtown St. Louis for many years before falling into disrepair. When Dominium acquired the property in 2012, it had been vacant for thirty years and had narrowly escaped demolition on several occasions.

Dominium retained WJE to perform a hands-on condition assessment of the exterior masonry of the Arcade-Wright Building, including glazed terra cotta ornament and face brick. WJE also conducted design peer reviews of the architectural drawings and specifications and provided conceptual repair recommendations. During the construction phase, WJE conducted multiple site visits to observe progress and respond to a number of specific instances of masonry distress that were uncovered during the renovation process.



### SOLUTION

Both original structures featured unique and historic masonry materials, including gothic revival terra cotta ornament along the street-level facades with buff-toned face brick above, and glazed brick in the light wells and facades facing the service alleys. Decades of vacancy, destructive vandalism, and minimal maintenance left the building in poor condition. WJE conducted two investigative site visits to assess the condition of the exterior masonry and ornament, compiling observations and repair recommendations in a written report. Following the assessment phase, WJE served Dominium as an advisor and worked with the architect of record to prioritize restoration work within the confines of the project budget and to develop repair strategies to retain as much of the remaining historic fabric as possible.

As repairs were being completed, the masonry contractor encountered significant issues related to hidden masonry distress, including severely corroded steel lintels at floor lines and window heads and newly formed cracks and load transfer in the face brick. WJE investigated these conditions and assisted the design and construction teams in the development of repair details to safely stabilize the exterior masonry. WJE continued to provide construction period services through the completion of facade restoration, which was successfully completed on time and within budget. The Arcade Apartments building has re-opened and is once again a vital aspect of downtown St. Louis.