



PROJECT PROFILE

Illinois State Capitol

House Chamber Lay Light Restoration | Springfield, IL



CLIENT

Vinci Hamp Architects

BACKGROUND

The Illinois State Capitol was constructed from 1868 to 1888 to the design of architects J. C. Cochrane, George Garnsey, and Alfred Piquenard. The primary interior spaces include a variety of elaborate decorative elements, including multiple types of marble, stenciled and gilded plaster, and leaded art glass.

Historically, both the House and Senate chambers included interior leaded art glass lay lights in the chamber ceiling. However, the lay lights were subsequently removed and replaced with a plaster ceiling. As part of recent interior renovations of the capitol, WJE was asked to review the structure of the House chamber ceiling and roof and to develop a design for the restoration of the lay light.



SOLUTION

WJE architects and engineers developed the design of a new curved steel structural frame to support the plaster and concrete planks of the chamber ceiling at the location of the laylight opening. The team designed new light-gauge metal walls and ceiling for the “light box” enclosure in the attic. For the laylight itself, WJE designed a new stainless glazing frame and new laminated and art glass glazing panels, the design of which was based on historic photographs. The glazing design needed to combine traditional lead coming and art glass (to reproduce the original aesthetic) with laminated glass (to meet current codes) as well as include new details to diffuse the electric backlighting and to allow for future cleaning and maintenance of the laylight.



WJE’s innovative design was recognized with the Illinois Capital Development Board’s Executive Director’s Award for Pride in Partnership and Landmarks Illinois’ Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, Preservation Project of the Year.

