Museums and Historic Buildings

**Smithsonian Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum, New York, NY**

Located in New York City, NY, on the Upper East Side, the Smithsonian Intuitions Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum underwent a complete renovation including restoration in addition to gallery and infrastructure improvements. JBC worked with the Contractor and Smithsonian completing a full conditions assessment, laboratory materials testing, in-situ materials testing, treatment recommendations and review for all historic materials including masonry, bronze, cast iron, wood, plaster, Caen stone, decorative paint and wall coverings.

We monitored and reviewed the work all through construction.

**Lower East Side Tenement Museum, New York, NY**

Jablonski Building Conservation has worked on a variety of conservation projects in the Lower East Side Tenement Museum since 1999. From 2004 to 2006 we worked with the Museum and its Architect to produce a Conservation Treatment Plan for the apartments as part of a Getty Grant. To produce this report, a comprehensive conditions assessment was produced for the apartments that included materials analysis and treatment testing. All conservation treatments recommended were in keeping with the conservation philosophy of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum. Every effort was made to identify and test treatments that are minimally invasive in order to preserve both the authentic historic fabric and the visitor experience. Monitoring and maintenance recommendations are geared toward identifying active deterioration as soon as possible which will allow time for minimally-invasive preventive treatments. A reassessment of each of the apartments along with monitoring, conservation and repair restoration was completed in 2014.

In 2009 and 2010, JBC worked with the museum on probes in the basement to determine the configuration of the original saloon. The probes included extensive paint archeology which entailed examining all of the found paint layers and comparing them to each other. This work was done to assist in dating and understanding the sequencing of the alterations was incorporated into the interpretation of the space. Between 1999 and 2014, JBC performed conservation treatments in the hallways and various apartments including stabilizing the failing paint and plaster at the hallway arch, paint, plaster, and wallpaper in three apartments on the newly opened 4th floor and wallpaper and ceiling plaster consolidation in several apartments as grant money becomes available. Working with a paintings conservator, two of the eight decorative roundels were restored in the hallway.
Gustav Stickley’s Craftsman Farms, Morris Plains, NJ

Jablonski Building Conservation completed a Historic Site Master Plan for Gustav Stickley’s Craftsman Farms. The Farm’s core has become a museum showcasing the life and times of Gustav Stickley and the property has become the quintessential Arts and Crafts site in the United States.

While the Log House had been recently restored, eleven additional buildings on the site were in need of preservation. Historic Structure Reports were produced for seven of the buildings and general conditions assessments were completed for the rest which with the landscape assessment were incorporated into the Historic Site Master Plan. The Plan included recommendations for interpretation, archaeological studies, reconstruction of the landscape, theme signage, adaptive re-use for empty buildings and possible new construction for future museum activities.

Louis Armstrong House, Corona, Queens, New York

In 1943 Louis Armstrong and his wife, Lucille, bought and moved into a modest house in Corona, Queens. This is where they lived for the remainder of their lives. After Lucille’s death, the house was made a National Historic Landmark and a New York City landmark. Extensive work was undertaken to repair the house that opened its doors to the public as a museum in 2003. JBC was privileged to work on the conservation of the house’s twentieth century finishes and furnishings. Both interior and exterior work was undertaken. This included conserving and recreating original fabrics, wall coverings, and other elements for the museum. The kitchen is an ode to top of the line 1950’s kitchens. Formica tops were repaired, losses filled, and sheets were adhered.

The Lefferts Homestead, Prospect Park, Brooklyn, NY

The Lefferts Homestead is one of a group of wood framed Dutch Colonial houses, also known as Dutch American farmhouses, that date from the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries. JBC completed a Historic Structure Report on this house. Extensive materials analysis was performed on elements of the house to determine early paint and plaster finishes as well as the original mortars and siding. A detailed investigation of the framing enabled us to date the construction of the frame of the house alterations of the house. A thorough examination of wood moldings, finishes, wallpaper and nails assisted in dating alterations of the house.
Dundurn Castle, Hamilton, Ontario
Dundurn Castle was constructed over a three year period and completed in 1835. Designed by a young English Architect, Robert Wetherall, Dundurn was built around the brick shell of Colonel Richard Beasley’s colonial home. Today, Dundurn Castle has been restored to the year 1855 when MacNab was at the height of his career as a lawyer, landowner, railway magnate and Premier of the United Canadas (1854-56). Over forty rooms, above and below stairs, have been furnished to compare the life of a prominent Victorian family with that of their servants.

Jablonski Building Conservation has worked on four projects at Dundurn Castle beginning with paint finish investigations of the interiors followed by paint reveals and plaster sounding.

Red Barn, Caleb Smith Park, Smithtown, NY
JBC was retained to perform an examination and evaluation of the barn to date the structure, assess its condition, and make repair recommendations. The examination of the barn included the original mortise and tenon framing, how the timbers were prepared, and how the structure was assembled. It also looked at changes made to the structure over time and used nails as a means to assist in dating these alterations. The history of English barns in the United States, and Long Island specifically, was researched in order to place the barn in its historic context. Based upon the information gathered, it was determined that the main body of the barn dates to 1790, with alterations dating to c. 1800, c. 1840, c.1850, and c. 1900.

Mary McLeod Bethune House, Washington DC
A finishes investigation of the interior and exterior of the Mary McLeod Bethune House was required for the Historic Structures Report. The purpose of this investigation is to determine the finishes for the house during its primary period of significance between 1943 and 1966. The house was damaged by a fire in the 1960s and underwent two renovation campaigns; the first in 1974 and the second in 1981. Efforts were made to locate samples on elements that were not replaced during these renovations.
Franklin Institute, Philadelphia, PA
The Franklin Institute Science Museum opened to the public in 1934. The Benjamin Franklin National Memorial, a rotunda designed by John T. Windrim and dedicated in 1938, features the 20-foot, 92-ton marble statue of Benjamin Franklin sculpted by James Earle Fraser between 1906 and 1911. JBC conserved the sculpture. Also as part of a plan to restore Franklin Hall and the adjacent Jordan Hall we assisted with the design for the exterior repairs and the cleaning of the interior masonry surfaces. For the interior of Franklin Hall, a series of cleaning tests were executed on the travertine and faux travertine in the Pendulum Stair and on different types of marble and the Akoustolith, acoustical ceiling panels in Franklin Hall. The purpose of the tests was to formulate effective, safe, non-destructive cleaning methods for removal of surface soiling on the interior masonry and finishes. As cleaning began, it was discovered that a number of the Akoustolith panels in the dome were loose. Working with an Engineer, JBC assisted in designing the repairs to reattach the panels. The preservation work at the Franklin Institute- won a Preservation Alliance of Philadelphia award.

Cloisters, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY
JBC performed a conditions survey of the thirteenth century limestone windows. The thirteenth century limestone windows originate from France, and were purchased for the collection in 1935. The windows are built into the granite walls of the building. Our conditions survey was part of the project to conserve the windows and install a new protective glazing system.

Additional Museum Projects:
- Philip Johnson Glass House, New Canaan, CT
- Ellis Island National Historic Site, Hospital Outbuilding and Annex, New York, NY
- Flushing Town Hall, Flushing, Queens
- Carter Woodson House, Washington, DC
- Boykins Tavern, Isle of Wight, VA
- PS 1 Contemporary Art Center
- Harmony Hall, Ft. Washington, MD