

Ben Hur Apartments

Category: **Preservation/Adaptive Reuse/Renovation**
Project Type: **Multi-Family Housing**
Project Cost: **\$13,000,000**
Project Address: **227 E Main St, Crawfordsville, IN 47933**
Substantial Completion: **June 2025**

Architect's Statement

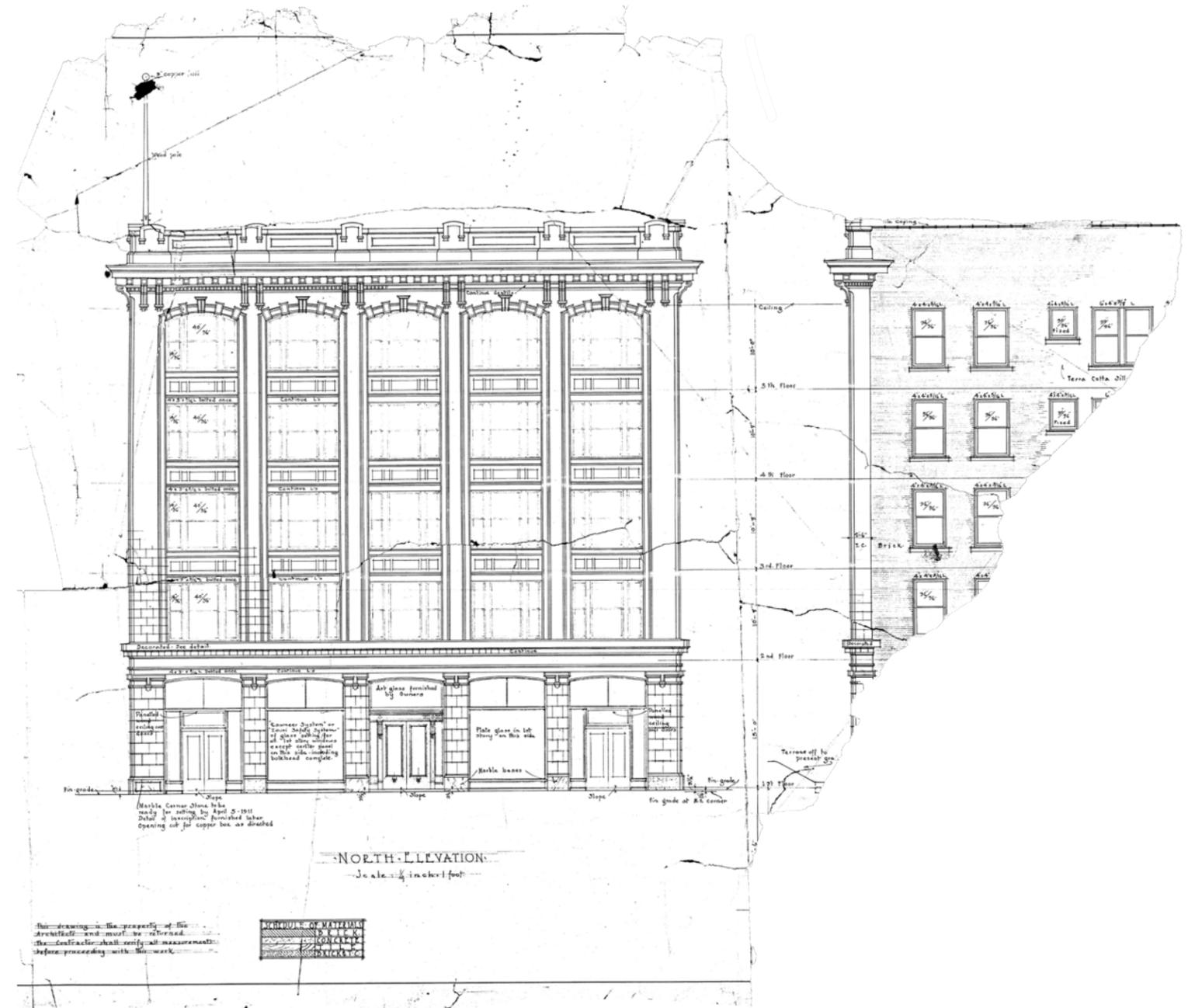
The Ben Hur Life Building is located in downtown Crawfordsville, Indiana. The building has served many purposes since its construction in 1911 by the Tribe of the Ben Hur as their national corporate headquarters. Last in use in 2006, the building was fully and finally vacated and has suffered from neglect and deferred maintenance since. The structure was listed on the endangered building list from Indiana Landmarks in 2003. In 2021, AP Development took possession of the structure with the express purpose of restoring and re-purposing the structure into market rate apartments.

Given the nature of the building as originally conceived, the building's construction is heavy and largely concrete or masonry. Heavy steel encased by concrete, and unit masonry made modifications difficult. As such, the distribution of services throughout the building while maintaining many of the historic features of the building, most notably the building's corridors, became especially challenging.

Historic interiors that remained largely intact were restored. Such was the case in the building's original main lobby. A combination of marble floor and wall finishes, and brushed aluminum metal features (such as door hardware, handrails and elevator finishes) were preserved while complimenting those historic finishes with modern materials and patterns to create a cohesiveness in design while illustrating different chapters in past versions of the building.

While the majority of the details of the exterior remained intact, the glazed terracotta exterior was suffering from neglect and maintenance concerns. This material in these specific shapes and patterns was cost prohibitive to recreate so the use of fiberglass reinforced resin shapes based on scans of intact examples were used to replace damaged or missing exterior masonry elements.

Finally, a failed roof left unchecked over time resulted in the loss of significant portions of the hardwood floors; most significantly on the upper floors of the building. Additionally, a large amount of wood trim was also lost as a result of the damage caused by the roof failures. By taking an extensive inventory of original building materials that could be harvested and used in other, more visible locations, we were able to best replace the material losses across the interior of the building.



Original North Elevation & Partial South Elevation

Throughout **The Years**



1911
(Under Construction)



1920



1940
(Remodel)



1957



Late 1960's



1993

Before **Restoration**









