



First Bank Tympanum

PHILADELPHIA, PA

EverGreene prepared an assessment of the wood eagle and tympanum panel on the pediment of the First Bank of the United States in Philadelphia during November 2018. The goal was to assess the current conditions, compare them with previous reported conditions and make recommendations for treatment. The First Bank, c. 1797, is one of the great buildings in Philadelphia constructed in the early Federal period. Built of white marble, the pediment is of wood painted to match the stonework used elsewhere. It features a carved tympanum, consisting of elaborate mahogany carvings of an eagle, shield, olive branch, cornucopia and arrows. It is thought that this carving may be the earliest example of this iconic imagery that still today represents the United States.

Our conservators assisted Mills + Schnoering Architects for the National Park Service (NPS), to assess the condition of the tympanum carvings and woodwork and develop plans for conservation treatment. Historic documentation of this 18th century carving that amazingly remains intact was studied prior to on site inspections. The structure was inspected and documented from a lift and from within the pediment. Paint samples and small fragments of wood were collected and prepared for study in our DC-based conservation lab. The samples were studied in cross section to identify historic paint stratigraphy and to select the appropriate paint type. The wood was identified as Jamaican mahogany which is consistent with the period and the carver's other work in boat building. The findings were incorporated in an assessment report that became the basis of treatment plans developed by the architect.

MORE INFORMATION:

<https://evergreene.com/projects/first-bank-tympanum/>

SERVICES PERFORMED

Architectural Sculpture & Bas Relief
Finishes Investigation
Paint Studies
Research & Documentation
Surveys & Condition Assessments

PROJECT DETAILS

Client

National Park Service

Architect

Mills + Schnoering Architects, LLC

