



Terra Cotta Condition Assessment— Hopewell Museum

PARIS, KY

Designed in the Beaux Arts style by the Supervising Architect of the Treasury in 1908, this former federal Post Office is a brick building with significant terra cotta details at the cornice/balustrade and entries. Extensive efflorescence has developed on the exterior brick walls, indicative of moisture-related problems. We were tasked with evaluating the building to discover the sources of moisture and determine the extent of deterioration, especially in the decorative cornice/balustrade.

As constructed, the building had a standing seam metal roof on a wood frame that drained via an internal, cast iron drainage system. Later, a new roof with K-style gutters and rectangular leaders were installed above the original by the city of Paris. Our conservators examined the exterior of the building using an aerial lift and carried out a walkthrough of the entire building. They found that moisture penetration due to the inadequate drainage system is saturating the terra cotta and mortar. This is leading to severe deterioration such as oxide jacking, corrosion of the terra cotta anchors, spalls and loss of nearly all the mortar in the joints in the cornice.

We provided an assessment report with recommendations for replacing the gutter system and conservation of the terra cotta elements. The museum was also given guidance on prioritization of these repairs to help staff and supporters plan for the restoration work and allocate their resources in the most effective way.

MORE INFORMATION:

<https://evergreene.com/projects/terra-cotta-condition-assessment-hopewell-museum/>

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