



Yates Exterior Restoration restores 31-story landmark office tower

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Manhattan, NY Yates Exterior Restoration Services, LLC, a full-service construction company specializing in exterior building restoration services, has recently completed a complex, two-year restoration project at 17 Battery Pl., a 31-story landmark office tower built between 1904 and 1910.

Formerly known as the Whitehall Building and once the city's largest office tower, 17 Battery Pl. has undergone a restoration of its Neo-Renaissance pediment by Yates Exterior Restoration Services and a design team that included GACE and Thornton Tomasetti. In the course of the two-year project, The Moinian Group, which owns and operates the mixed-use commercial and residential Financial District property, made a significant commitment to maintaining the highest quality materials during a period of uncertainty in the city's real estate market.

The restoration incorporated over 3,000 new pieces of ornamental terracotta, and involved the replication of massive, carved limestone in glass-fiber reinforced concrete (GFRC), which was approved by the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission. Yates also replaced the modillioned arched cornice using GFRC, which required the design and installation of a prefabricated steel outrigger and armature assembly and reinforcement of the building's existing steel structural framing and backup masonry. The restoration required a combination of ingenuity and artistic craftsmanship and was delivered to a successful conclusion by the project team in December 2023.

The 3,000 pieces of precast terra cotta molding for the arch were produced by Gladding McBean and the GFRC paneling was sourced from Towne House Restoration.

Technical challenges included the design and installation of new steel framing, achieving fit among various types of replacement materials, and managing the size and weight of the replacement

stones, which required the design and implementation of a custom hoisting system to manage stones weighing as much as 1,500 pounds.

“Due to our specialization in this type of work, we were brought in by the construction team after an ordinary F.I.S.P. project revealed substantial structural deterioration requiring extensive restoration and replacement of the building’s defining architectural elements,” said Michael Yates, president of Yates Exterior Restoration Services. “Naturally, we had a great respect for the architectural significance of the building and the monumental scale of the elements we were being called upon to restore, so we were very pleased at the opportunity to become involved with this project.”

Yates said, “Fortunately, we were working with a stellar design team in GACE and Thornton Tomasetti, and a building owner who not only respected the rich history of the property but encouraged the use of best-in-class materials and construction methods. We are very proud of our association with this project.”

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