

# FATHS & FORM

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Annual Awards Issue

## Historic Building Architects, LLC

St. Bernard's Church » Bernardsville, New Jersey



St. Bernard's Church, designed by Napoleon Le Brun & Sons in 1897, sustained fire damage in 2004. The stained glass windows were removed immediately and cleaned to prevent corrosive carbon damage, dehumidification was installed to prevent the wood floors from suffering water damage, shoring was erected to support the remaining roof structure, and a tarp was placed over the open roof to prevent further damage. The philosophy behind this approach included stabilizing the structure; halting deterioration; retaining, cleaning, and restoring the surviving historic fabric; integrating upgrades sensitively; and ensuring that this architectural jewel be restored wisely, cost-efficiently, and authentically.

The many materials required specialized restoration techniques, which warranted extensive material analysis and cleaning tests, including mortar analysis and finish analysis to identify the original historic colors and shellac varnish finishes. Colors were restored on the exterior doors and window frames, as was the decorative faux wood grain on the wainscoting. Plaster walls were low-pressure cleaned with fine powder to remove the carbon but retain the textured finish.

The stained glass rose window, designed by the English studio of Clayton & Bell, was nearly a total loss. Using an enlarged perspective-corrected photograph, salvaged fragments, and research from the V&A Museum in London, the window was recreated. The project included HVAC and lighting upgrades. New lighting was concealed behind the sanctuary trusses, while the chancel was reconfigured for barrier-free access. A second means of egress and a barrier-free lavatory were added. Balconies to hold the new organ pipes were installed and acoustics were improved.

### Jury Comments

*The respectful restoration of this venerable church has allowed it to rise like a phoenix from the ashes, as strong and vibrant as ever. The congregation has made a commitment to historic stewardship, and this product of a variety of architectural restoration and construction professionals has renewed and refreshed this community resource.*



#### Architect

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Manager)

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### Schiller & Plevy

#### Structural Engineer

### Robert Silman Associates

#### MEP Engineer

### Princeton Engineering Group

#### Wood Scientist

### Anthony & Associates, Inc.

#### Stained Glass Contractor

### The Art of Glass

#### Stained Glass Consultant

### Femennella & Associates, Inc.

#### Cost Estimators

### Daedalus Projects

#### Photography

### Richard Trenner