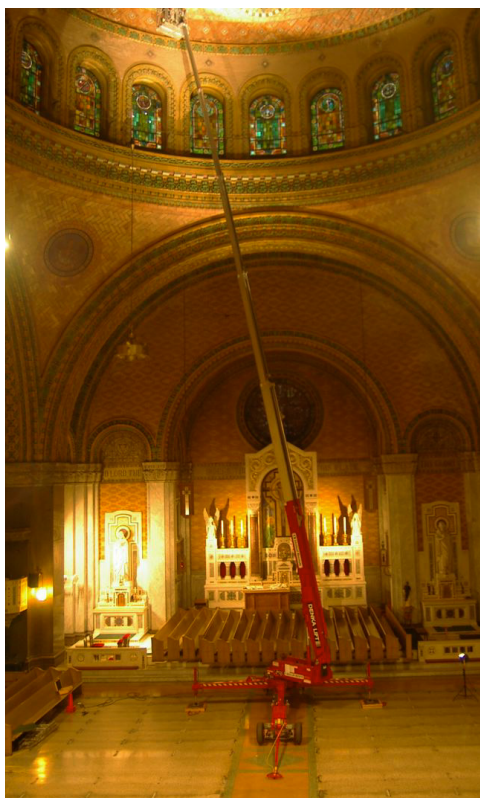


St. Francis de Sales Church Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



Photos: Kent Diebolt (interior) and Jon Reis (exterior)

Original architect:

Henry D. Dagit and the R. Guastavino Company (*completed 1911*)

Building owner:

Archdiocese of Philadelphia

In collaboration with:

- Historic Building Architects, LLC, architect
- Robert Silman Associates, P.C., structural engineer
- Jablonski Berkowitz Conservation, Inc., materials conservator
- Femenella & Associates, Inc., stained glass conservator
- Princeton Engineering Group, MEP engineer

Building description:

Built in a Byzantine Revival style, the plan of St. Francis de Sales Church consists of a large, domed central space with shallow transepts to the east and west of the crossing, the sanctuary situated to the north and the nave and gallery to the south. Two domed towers flank the south façade and domes top two smaller towers at the west transept. The exterior walls of the church are clad in rock-faced, white marble and the trim, window surrounds and figurative statues are carved in Indiana limestone. At the crossing of the church, brick walls form an octagonal base for the terra cotta and brick cylindrical drum and large tiled dome. The dome above the drum is clad in glazed ceramic tile, installed with a concrete substrate in 1955 to replace the original Guastavino finish tile.

The interior of the church is richly decorated with marble, granite and limestone at the lower walls, patterned brick surfaces and polychromatic terra cotta arches at the upper areas and a terra cotta cornice topped by a brick drum and Guastavino dome. The central dome, which has a glazed oculus

at the interior, has a diameter of approximately 60 feet and rises 108 feet above the floor level of the church. Guastavino vaulting is employed at the gallery, nave, transepts and sanctuary. Arched stained glass windows line the east and west walls of the nave and round stained glass windows perforate the brick walls at the gallery, east and west transepts and north wall of the sanctuary.

Scope of work:

- Surveyed and documented existing conditions at interior and exterior of church.
- Sounded Guastavino tile and masonry materials at interior and exterior to identify loose and hollow areas.
- Removed loose stone, brick and tile representing conditions of imminent hazard to public safety.
- Performed investigation of all subsurface drains and pipes using a fiber-optic diagnostic tool (the See Snake).
- Provided live-feed video to project team during inspection of representative exterior areas.