

## WATER WOES

Water was the source of all of the building's problems. As the wear and tear of weather eroded the brick and mortar, water penetrated through the walls and started corroding the underlying structural steel, causing the steel beams to twist. It became an accelerating cycle as the twisting caused the bricks to crack, letting in even more water.

# Restoring Main Hall

A closer look at the \$15 million project to save the face of Wagner College

## TOP SLATE

All new slate tiles were used to restore the roof. The roof now has a uniform look, as previous patch jobs did not match. No other roofing material beats slate, and the new stainless steel nails will not corrode like the old ones did. "It will last forever, probably," says StructureTone construction foreman Mike Calvello.

## GABLE TROUBLE

Cracked brick in the building's gables had allowed water to corrode the steel I-beams beneath. Those portions of the walls and the corroded ends of the beams were removed. New steel was welded to the intact portion of the old beams, and then the walls were rebuilt.

## RIGHT ON TIME

The clocks on the front and back of the building have been restored to working condition. The front clock had been non-operational since about 1950.

## TOWER FIX

Originally, only the dome was slated for replacement. Closer inspection revealed that the walls of the octagonal tower had separated; there wasn't anything solid for a new dome to sit on. Workers deconstructed about 30 feet of each tower, and rebuilt them using cinder block and brick with steel rebar reinforcement.

## CASTING STONE

Every original cast concrete piece that could be saved was saved, after being cleaned and repaired. Those pieces included the quoins (the decorative stones at the exterior angles), the crosses, and the trees of knowledge and life on either side of the front entrance. Pieces that were irreparably damaged were replaced with glass fiber reinforced plastic molded to exactly match the old shapes, including the dome on the west tower, the bay window, finials, the gargoyles, the coping stones along the parapets, and details in the clock area.

## BRICK & MORTAR

From about 1990 until 2005, ivy had been allowed to grow on the building. English ivy has aerial roots that can penetrate into existing cracks in weather-worn brick and mortar, accelerating Main's water problems. Throughout the building, cracked bricks were replaced and the mortar was repointed, matching the color of the old as closely as possible.

## STEPPING UP

The stair towers on either side of the building were slowly shifting away from the main structure, causing them to crack from top to bottom. With improved water drainage, new steel fastening the stairs (or "stringers") to the landings, and the addition of expansion joints where the cracks had been, the stair towers are now more secure and more flexible.

## SPOUTING DOWN

All down spouts, which had been leaking and only partly functional, were replaced with new copper ones.

## GRAND ENTRANCE

New stairs were built and the wooden doors were refinished.

## A SOUND FOUNDATION

To eliminate water seepage into the basement, workers dug trenches around the entire building, replaced the pipes and installed new footing drains, repaired cracks, and waterproofed the foundation.

## NEW VIEWS

All windows in the building — nearly 300 total — were replaced.

## SETTING THE STAGE

The theater roof was rebuilt, including the replacement or repair of steel support beams and reconstruction of the tops of the walls. Inside the theater, patrons can enjoy new seats, refinished flooring, and new curtains.

## WISH LIST

The College was not able to complete all desired upgrades to the building, such as:

- Adding an elevator and improving wheelchair access to the building.
- Installing central air conditioning.
- Further upgrading the theater by raking the seating area and modernizing all stage equipment.