

THE D.A. BLODGETT BUILDING

grand rapids, michigan

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This building in Grand Rapids, Michigan, has a rich history as its original dedication ceremony in 1908 attracted throngs of people who wanted to see the premiere philanthropic facility in the state. The Blodgett orphanage was a leader in the care of orphans in its day. It was from this facility that the practice of placing children into the community through foster care began. As foster care replaced orphanages the building then provided residential care for children with polio. Eventually the hospital outgrew the facility and moved in 1976.

Saved from the wrecking ball after being empty for 12 years (and only partially occupied for 18 years before that), the building was renovated in 2006-07 by the Inner City Christian Federation, and now it serves as home to the charity's offices.

New elements had to be created, and matched perfectly to the remaining parts of the building that had survived. This called for a complete rebuild of the original portico. The frieze where the name was carved across the entrance had to match the existing material as well as the original carved lettering. From there every element was matched; cornice, brackets, egg and dart, dentil and frieze. Exacting detail by exacting detail, Stromberg's team took on the meticulous task of recreating the building in the image of its original opening day. As well, the columns and pilasters that line the portico also had to be recreated as the originals were long removed.

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