

## Case Study

### RESTORING A BELOVED CATHEDRAL: CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

The Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine is a much beloved historic landmark in the heart of New York City. When the idea for the church was conceived, the founders insisted that it serve as a “house of prayer for all nations”. Built in phases starting in 1892, the Romanesque/ Byzantine design features a glorious 520-foot cathedral.

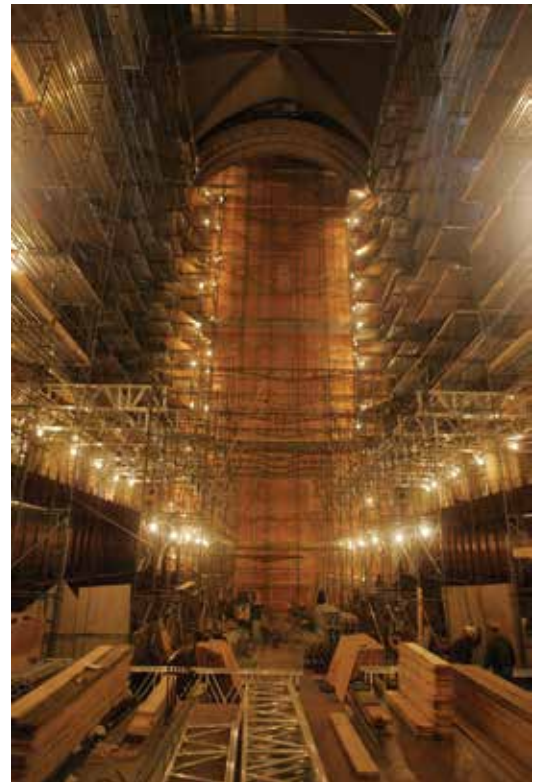
In December 2001, a five-alarm fire destroyed the cathedral’s north transept and gift shop, causing extensive smoke and water damage to the church’s ornate stone walls and ceilings. In addition to the structure, the fire also damaged several invaluable tapestries and a priceless Aeolian-Skinner organ.

#### THE CHALLENGE

Restoration of the church required a range of highly skilled artisans and tradespeople to apply their particularized expertise. The church's insurer, however, only offered limited settlement funds – well below what was necessary for proper restoration. The Aeolian-Skinner organ had to be removed and painstakingly renovated, for example, while the stone masonry had to be rebuilt and all the tapestries restored. Even the scaffolding required an enormous investment, because restoration teams required extra capabilities to access the extraordinarily high walls and ceilings within the church.

#### THE SOLUTION

Swerling Milton Winnick (SMW) worked closely with Stephen Facey, executive vice president of The Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine. Together they obtained bids on all aspects of the



SMW negotiated on behalf of the church to obtain the funds necessary for a complete restoration and cleaning, which commenced in 2004. Sections of the church – including the Chorus, High Altar, and Chapels in the East End and Nave – were closed to the public during restoration. Work on these sections was completed in 2006. In the fall of 2007, scaffolding was removed from the

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south tower, illuminating the additional 50 feet of the tower built by the Stoneworks Project in the 1980s and 1990s. In July of 2008, restoration of the Nave was completed and the Great Organ was reinstalled.

#### RESULTS

SMW's steadfast determination and commitment to the quality restoration of this historic landmark resulted in a settlement of \$42 million. The Cathedral was rededicated and the entire interior reopened to the public on November 30, 2008. The New York Times called it "...arguably the most significant (service) at St. John the Divine since its interior was dedicated exactly 67 years earlier."



*"It took an extraordinary amount of skill, knowledge and energy to navigate the impediments the insurers threw in the path of our goal to restore this beloved cathedral. We are grateful to you for persevering in helping us to negotiate a fair and ample settlement."*

STEPHEN FACEY | Executive Vice President  
The Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine