

# Roofing around the clock

## Renaissance Historic Exteriors helps restore Green County Courthouse in Wisconsin

by Chrystine Elle Hanus

**L**ocated on Courthouse Square in Monroe, Wis., Green County Courthouse was designed by G. Stanley Mansfield in Richardsonian Romanesque Revival-style and built from red brick and limestone in 1891. The 2 1/2-story building features a 120-foot-tall clock tower and limestone porches on two main entrances.

Considered the “crown jewel” of downtown Monroe and a beloved favorite among locals, the building has served as the county’s seat of government for 135 years. In 1978, it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In March 2020, Green County representatives contacted Renaissance Historic Exteriors, Belvidere, Ill., to investigate and report the conditions of the roof and gutter systems. A detailed report was submitted to the Green County Board of Supervisors, which used the findings and recommendations to create a scope of work and publicly advertise for bids.

Renaissance Historic Exteriors subsequently won the contract to restore the slate roof and copper gutter and cornice systems.

### Scope of work

In August 2021, Renaissance Historic Exteriors began work on Green County Courthouse. The team removed the existing 13,300-square-foot asphalt shingle roof system that had replaced the original slate roof down to the plywood roof deck. While removing the asphalt shingles, the team fully demolished and rebuilt the upper half of the

**Project name:**  
Green County  
Courthouse

**Project location:**  
Monroe, Wis.

**Project duration:**  
August 2021-March  
2024

**Roofing contractor:**  
Renaissance Historic  
Exteriors, Belvidere,  
Ill.

**Roof system types:**  
Copper and slate

**Roofing  
manufacturers:**  
GCP Applied Tech-  
nologies, Alpharetta,  
Ga.; MBTechnology,  
Fresno, Calif.

**Slate distributor:**  
North Country Slate,  
Stouffville, Ontario,  
Canada

**Copper distributor:**  
Revere,™ Rome, N.Y.

Photos courtesy of Renaissance  
Historic Exteriors, Belvidere, Ill.



Left and above: Thousands of slates were installed on the courthouse roof.

clock tower to original specifications and rebuilt substantial areas of the gable parapet walls.

“The typical process of removing and replacing the roof all at once was not possible because of the intricacies involved in various aspects of the masonry and architectural sheet metal coordination, which was accomplished with detailed planning and coordination with the county,” says Robert Raleigh, president of Renaissance Historic Exteriors.

Masonry restoration involved significant interior shoring and engineered support solutions.

“This included installing large steel members that required additional access openings and prolonged temporary waterproofing solutions during roofing work,” Raleigh explains. “Our work also included demolition and structural modifications required to eliminate a large chimney no longer used on the east side of the roof.”

Safely removing and lowering the clock tower roof structure required coordination among Renaissance Historic Exteriors, the crane company, and city and

county personnel. The structure was stored on courthouse grounds for several months while being rebuilt by Renaissance Historic Exteriors craftsmen. Once initial work on the clock’s structure was complete, it was lifted and placed back into position on the roof where workers completed the clock structure renovation with new slate.

Thousands of North Country slates in Unfading Black were installed on the roof with copper slating nails to build the courthouse’s new roof that included MBTechnology TU43 Layfast SBS Underlayment and Grace Ice & Water Shield® self-adhering roofing underlayment.

“Two steep-slope round turrets required detailed and careful tapering of slates,” Raleigh says. “And one steep-slope pyramid turret was difficult to access, requiring significant fall protection, planning and monitoring.”

All copper elements were fabricated by Renaissance Historic Exteriors craftsmen with Revere™ copper. This included gutters, downspouts and cornices.



Above and left: All copper elements were fabricated by Renaissance Historic craftsmen.



Above: Snow guards were incorporated into the roof system.



Left: Aerial view of newly completed courthouse roof

Working in Renaissance Historic Exteriors' in-house copper studio, the team of artisans used existing components and historical photos to guide them as they carefully replicated sheet-metal cornices, finials, modillions, dentils and spires to match the originals. Several of the fabricated pieces required aerial lifts and crane services to install on the roof.

To protect the newly restored gutters and architectural sheet-metal cornice, the team incorporated Alpine Snow-Guards® into the roof system.

"Throughout the two-year project, the work performance by Renaissance Historic Exteriors was exemplary," says Richard Marti, maintenance director with Green County Wisconsin. "Employees worked on elevated platform decks and in various weather conditions with no safety incidents. With regard to worker safety, property protection and general housekeeping, Renaissance Historic Exteriors was top-notch. They ensured employees and the public were able to safely access the building at all times."

## Public safety

Because the courthouse is located in the middle of Monroe's downtown square, significant attention was given to public safety. Pedestrian canopies and handicap ramps were assembled for daily access to the entire building, providing limited interruption to public access.

"Renaissance Historic Exteriors' internal planning and coordination of the scaffolding design and build allowed for multiple trades and operations to take place at the same time, providing the county with optimum flexibility, planning and budgeting timeframes and greater value for the owner," Raleigh says.

Detailed coordination when using the man-lifts and crane was required at multiple key points throughout the project.

"Maintaining pedestrian and worker safety as well as proper material handling and accessibility was a significant challenge to the project's overall success," Raleigh explains. "Using a local crane and rigging service, as well as having personnel trained in crane and aerial operations and safety, allowed for multiple mobilizations and cost-effective usage of crane services as needed during the project."

## Back in time

Although Green County set high standards for detailing, methods and materials, Renaissance Historic Exteriors exceeded project requirements.

"As with many historical renovations, this was not an easy project," Marti says. "Renaissance Historic Exteriors rose to the challenge and exceeded expectations in returning the building's roof and clock tower to its original historical and authentic state with slate roof tiles."

For its work on Green County Courthouse, Renaissance Historic Exteriors received a 2025 NRCA Gold Circle Award in the Outstanding Workmanship: Steep-slope category.

"Being selected as the contractor to restore the Green County Courthouse was a rewarding experience for our team at Renaissance Historic Exteriors," Raleigh says. "It is a huge honor to have revitalized this cherished 1891 landmark in Monroe so the community can enjoy its beauty and history for another century." 🏆🌟

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