

# BENNE PERKINS

## Leaded Glass Transoms

In 1900, *“those who are qualified to judge, pronounce the plans as calling for the handsomest business block in Berkshire County.”* This was the description of the fourth major block development on Park Street and was construction by brothers Conrad and George Mausert from the profits of their ice business. Designed by Architect James Fleming, the building had the best design elements of the Victorian age.

One of those features was the leaded glass transoms, designed at the time to *“give a pleasing and handsome appearance to the outside and a charming effect from the inside.”* Each of the five-ground floor stores along Park Street and the main central entrance to the second floor had leaded glass transoms. However, over a century later in 2010, with ever changing retail storefront design and a declining building that had led to its condemnation, there were no leaded glass remaining in the building. Save for one solitary panel.



Deteriorated beyond repair, the glass panel was carefully removed and used as a template to re-create the architectural feature. A new lobby was created as the main entrance to the apartments to allow for the provision of artwork and requirements of modern-day living. The re-creation of the decorative stained-glass entrance was integral to the lobby and the building's award-winning historical restoration. Benne Perkins, a North Adams Artisan was selected to recreate the original design in consultation with Burnham & LaRoche Studios, a Boston specialist in preservation and restoration of historic stained-glass windows

Each of the four colored glass types were matched for color, texture, thickness. Leaded material and the structural supports were also faithfully recreated and selected with the assistance of Burnham & La Roche. Each batch of glass was individually made and rolled by The Paul Wissmach Glass Co. in West Virginia. With red glass being the rarest, the glass procurement process took over six months. Followed by many hours of hard work creating the hand-made panels. The restored stained-glass transom and new lobby was celebrated at a Grand Reveal.

