

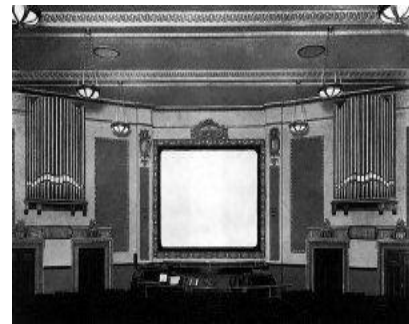
Atlas Roofing Contributes to Crowning Achievement at Chicago's Historic Biograph Theater



Chicago's old Biograph Theater has seen its share of drama, including the real-life kind. It was in front of the Biograph that the FBI gunned down gangster John Dillinger on July 22, 1934. Over seventy years later, the historic movie house is about to create new drama, this time as a home for live theater. The Biograph will soon be the new performance space for Victory Gardens Theater, a small venue with a big reputation. The larger Biograph will provide greater versatility and accommodate larger audiences.

Occupying the new venue, however, is by no means a turnkey proposition. Like the FBI's encounter with Dillinger, the Biograph's glory days were history. It needed a lot of renovation. Tracy Nicholas of the Alter Group, the owner's representative for the renovation project, says even they were a bit surprised by the extent of deterioration in the building. "Inspectors found that the supporting structure of the marquee was so badly rusted," says Nicholas by way of example, "that they said if we didn't shore it up or remove it within two days, they were afraid it would fall."

Every part of the building needed work, and Victory Gardens Theater, a not-for-profit organization, knew that the restoration wouldn't be cheap. They had to balance their need for a high-quality space with the constraints of their budget. Fortunately, they had friends; one of them was Charley Reynolds. Reynolds lives in the north side neighborhood where the Victory Gardens Theater stands, and has been a fan of the theater for years. He also happens to be a roofing consultant. "I knew they had bought the Biograph, just a few blocks away, and that it was going to need a lot of work, and I wanted to help," says Reynolds. He offered to act as the project's roofing consultant, pro bono. He found out that some companies were donating materials for the restoration, and he knew that, with his contacts, he could talk a few roofing materials providers into doing the same.



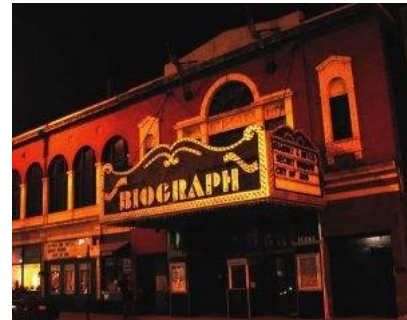
"For the roof, the original plan was to save money by simply repairing it," says Tracy Nicholas. "But Charley was able to talk enough companies into donating materials that we were able to do a complete replacement for the same amount of money we had budgeted for the repair job."

Atlas Roofing Corporation was among the companies Reynolds contacted. Atlas, the manufacturer of ACFoam®, was eager to help with the worthy cause.

They donated most of the 14,000 square feet of ACFoam-II® insulation needed for the job. ACFoam-II® is a polyiso insulation with a high R-value, an important consideration in a city like Chicago, which goes through a huge temperature swing from August to January and back again.

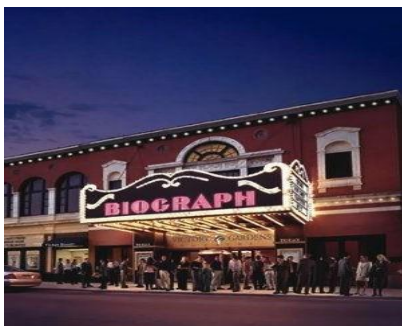
In its current form, the Biograph Theater is actually two buildings joined together. When the restoration is completed, the masonry theater itself will have 299 seats. The second floor will feature a black box studio, a 50-seat room in which seating and other structural elements can be moved in accordance with production requirements. In addition, a rehearsal room will also double as a reception room.

Over the two original buildings are two different roof structures. Over the theater itself is a barrel shaped roof with a concrete substrate, a little over 9,000 square feet in size. On this roof, USG's Securock™ roof board was fully adhered to the concrete deck using OlyBond™, an Olympic Manufacturing Group product. Atlas's ACFoam-II® was fully adhered to that; then GAF's 45 mil white TPO membrane was fully adhered to the ACFoam-II®. A Leister Varimat walker welder was used to hot air weld the seams of the membrane.



A 4,000 square foot low slope roof with a wood substrate was also replaced using the same materials. On this roof, the three layers of the roof's composition were mechanically attached to the substrate. Other features of the roof include termination bar, counter flashing, and new gutters.

Acoustics had to be considered in choosing the materials for the roof, as it did in every other aspect of the restoration. "In building or restoring a theater, you have to filter out as much noise as possible," says Tracy Nicholas. "An average office building has a noise coefficient of about 40. We were looking for something in the range of 22 to 24." The Biograph wound up at 25, not bad considering all the elements they had to deal with.



In addition to equipment noise (such as from HVAC units) and impact noise (like rain and hail), the restorers of the Biograph Theater had to deal with more than their share of ambient noise. Lincoln Avenue, on which the Biograph sits, is a busy urban street awash with the sounds of cars, trucks, and sirens. A children's hospital nearby has a landing pad for helicopters. Those aren't the sounds theater-goers pay to listen to.

All the materials and construction details, including those on the roof, were chosen with the help of an acoustician. ACFoam-II® was chosen not only for its ability to insulate against the weather, but also for its role as a component in the sound dampening system.

From the outside, John Dillinger would still recognize the old Biograph Theater. The building's façade, a registered historic landmark, is being preserved as it appeared in Dillinger's day. The marquee is being recreated in historic detail by White Way Signs. The original face of the marquee is being donated to the Chicago History Museum. But under the roof that good neighbor Charley Reynolds helped build, with a contribution from Atlas, everything is new. And that sounds great to Victory Gardens Theater.

Project:
Biograph Theater
2433-43 N. Lincoln Ave.
Chicago, IL 60614
Project Size: 14,000 Sq. ft.

Architectural Firm:
Daniel P. Coffey &
Associates
233 S. Wacker, Sears Tower
Suite #5750
Chicago, IL 60606
312-382-9898

General Contractor:
Pepper Construction Group
643 N. Orleans
Chicago, IL 60610
312-266-4700

Roofing Contractor:
Solaris Roofing Solutions,
Inc.
31 W. 023 North Ave.
West Chicago, IL 60185
630-639-5400

**Atlas Sales
Representative:**
Androit Marketing
Paul Mullins
915 Napa Ln
Aurora, IL 60502
630-885-5447

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