

CASE STUDY

PROTECTING THE PAST, BUILDING THE FUTURE

THOMAS JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL HISTORICAL RENOVATIONS

Founded nearly a century ago in 1932, Jefferson High School opened as the third high school in San Antonio, Texas. Designed in the Baroque style, the school became part of the National Register of Historic Places as well as an official Texas Historic Landmark. Today, it serves nearly 2,000 students for the San Antonio community. Recognizing the historical significance of the building and the community it serves, the Rogers-O'Brien team is working to restore the campus, preserving the integrity of the original design while equipping the building for its students and staff for many years to come.

DISCOVERING CHALLENGES BEHIND THE WALLS

Restoring historical buildings often means existing conditions that don't align with original drawings. If the drawings even exist.]During the initial phases of renovating Thomas Jefferson High School, RO coordinated and adjusted designs on-the-spot to meet current codes and safety standards after finding structural, mechanical, and electrical discrepancies.

To help our team get ahead of potential project hurdles, our in-house Virtual Design & Construction team performed early point cloud scans of key areas, including the auditorium, adjacent corridors, and library. These scans supported both design accuracy and restoration efforts, particularly aiding Evergreene Architectural Arts, our historic preservation partner, in the replication of ceiling tile patterns. In addition, a scan of the auditorium ceiling post demolition allowed us to create a 3D model with the updated ductwork layout providing San Antonio Independent School District a valuable reference tool for future maintenance.

PRESERVED WITH PURPOSE

Our team is actively working to preserve historic, architectural elements of the school, both inside and out, while making the building a safe and engaging environment for students, faculty, and staff. On the exterior, RO is restoring the 275,000-square-foot masonry façade, replacing all 500 windows, and refreshing the campus grounds with upgraded landscaping and parking lots. Inside, the auditorium and the library are two of the most intricate and historically significant spaces and require a high level of detail and craftsmanship from our team.



Original corridor photo, different ceiling tile designs than auditorium.

In the auditorium, the most notable feature is the ornately painted tiled ceiling, which is being replaced as part of the renovation. Together with Evergreene, we are ensuring historical accuracy as well as cost effectiveness for the project by printing the tiles with a hand painted effect to closely match the original tiles. To ensure precision and accuracy for install, Evergreene is replicating the tiles using a grid system, applying multiple tiles to pre-defined sections and placing them in sequence to match the original patterns. This process requires extensive pre-planning and coordination with our team and installation trades to ensure the correct alignment and order of every tile. Additional auditorium features being preserved are the original plasterwork, wood elements, and lighting to maintain its theatre character.

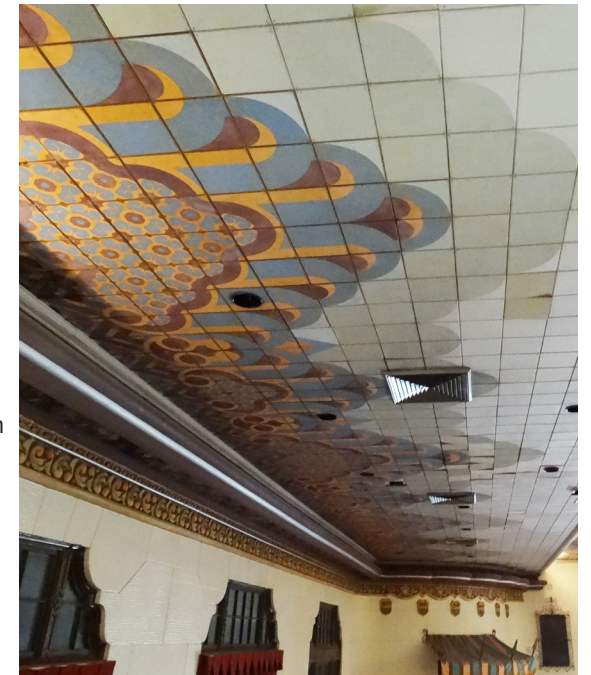
WORKING ON AN ACTIVE CAMPUS

Safety is always our top priority. For our team and most importantly for the campus. For this project, we have implemented temporary construction barriers, scaffold enclosures, ladder security systems, and spotters for mobile equipment, all to ensure the safety of students passersby. Our team is also carefully sequencing work and taking advantage of breaks in the school's schedule to target work in high-traffic areas like stairwells, corridors, and restrooms when the campus is mostly empty. This approach allows us to move the project forward efficiently, while keeping the campus the safest.

Class is still in session, but our team is diligently working with the faculty, staff, and students to make sure their day-to-day carries on with minimal disruptions. Replacing all of the windows requires our team to have phased access to classrooms as we move around the building. To accommodate this work, we communicate frequently with the school and students are being temporarily relocated to modular classrooms located in the school's parking lot. RO works closely with SAISD's project manager, by providing updates throughout each phase and notifying of disruptive activities, such as noise, relocation of students, and closed off areas.



Masonry crew cleaning exterior masonry while maintained within boundaries during school operation hours.



Hand painted ceiling tiles located throughout facility.



Original auditorium photo.