

2025 Governor's Award for Historic Preservation



Awardees: Bedrock; ODA; Kraemer Design Group; and Brinker-Christman Joint Venture

Rehabilitation of the Book Building and Tower, Detroit

The Book Tower rose in 1926 beside the earlier Book Building, along a booming stretch of Washington Boulevard in Detroit. Rising to 460 feet above the city, the tower was the tallest building on the skyline until it was eclipsed two years later. Long a prestigious address, the luster of the property eventually declined. When the final ground floor tenant moved out in 2009, it became one of the tallest abandoned skyscrapers on the continent.

Starting in 2015, Bedrock gathered a team of partners to jump start a large-scale adaptive reuse project. Exterior statues, masonry, and over 2,400 windows were cleaned, repaired, or replaced. On the interior, the most challenging rehabilitation work involved reconstructing an illuminated glass and steel atrium dome, which had been covered with modern

materials. Marble balustrades were recreated with handmade replicas and extensive plaster restoration restored original decorative elements throughout. A variety of financing tools supported the \$300 million rehabilitation effort, including Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits and the first-ever use of a Transformational Brownfield Plan in Michigan.

The renovated Book Building and Tower reopened in 2023 with 36 stories of restaurant, retail, office, hotel, and residential occupancies. The restored atrium, meant to be a public space now known as The Rotunda, features glass illuminated from overhead. The project has brought new residents and round-the-clock activity to a once-desolate corner. This signature building on the Detroit skyline is vibrant once again.

Book Tower

