

The Journal Gazette

Preservationists laud FWN for press building design

by Sherry Slater

ARCH Inc. will present Fort Wayne Newspapers on Wednesday with the 2007 ARCHIE Award for Outstanding New Construction in a Historic District for the design of the new press building at Main and Van Buren streets.

Fort Wayne Newspapers will receive an award for the design of the new 46,000-square-foot building to house its printing operations.

ARCH Inc., the local historic preservation organization, will present the ARCHIE Award for Outstanding New Construction in a Historic District to 2007 Fort Wayne Newspapers on Wednesday for the six-story, red-brick building at Main and Van Buren streets.

Fort Wayne Newspapers previously received a Hard Hat Award from the Fort Wayne Downtown Improvement District for investing in a project that improves downtown.

The ARCH designation is one of five primary awards and 16 total awards the non-profit group will present at its annual meeting at the University of Saint Francis. "The remaining winners will be announced Wednesday. At that time, the group will also release its new list of endangered historic structures.

Michael J. Christman, publisher of The News-Sentinel and the chief executive officer of Fort Wayne Newspapers, called it a "great award."

Fort Wayne Newspapers is the business agent for The Journal Gazette and The News-Sentinel. It is formed through a partnership between The Journal Gazette Co. and Ogden Newspapers, which owns The News-Sentinel.

"As a newspaper, we believe in the community," Christman said. "And (the press project) was a nice opportunity for us to be a participant in downtown. We're a strong believer in downtown, and this is an example of it."

Angie Quinn, ARCH executive director, said two buildings were nominated for the award that recognizes new construction in a historic area. Fort Wayne Newspapers will be the third recipient of that particular award since 2000, she said.

Several criteria were considered in the category, including the overall size of the building project, materials used, the quality of the overall design and the placement on the lot. Downtown buildings tend to be tall and sit close to the sidewalk, Quinn said. By building with those guidelines in mind, Fort Wayne Newspapers created a building that blends into the neighborhood, she said.

"You could have done something that didn't go with any of the other buildings in the area," she said. "When those (details) aren't right, it doesn't matter if the light fixtures are cute and historic."

Don Orban, historic preservation planner for the city of Fort Wayne, agrees that the building at 824 W. Main St. meets the award's criteria.



"In terms of new construction, it's just exceptional — the attention to detail, the materials, the attempt to blend in," he said. "You don't have to do a Disneyland replica of a historic building."

Orban said the newspaper company probably could have saved money by choosing a Spartan design. Instead, "they went the extra mile," he said. "Sometimes, when you see construction of that size, it's little more than a pole barn,"

David Hogan, vice president and co-owner of Dario Designs Inc., the Marlboro, Mass.-based firm that created the design, said the building's large front window allows the public to see the massive machinery housed inside. But that peekaboo plan was not meant to be completely unique in the community. "We took the genesis for the original design from a local train station there," he said Thursday afternoon from his Massachusetts office.

The effort, headed by lead designer Gary Buono, included a one-year planning process before starting the building's technical construction drawings. During the research phase, the firm looked into local materials, took photos of area buildings and considered how the building would relate to those surrounding it. "The massing of the building tapers down as it approaches that historic neighborhood," Hogan said.

Jill Downs, historic preservation specialist for the West Central Neighborhood Association, worried when the project was first announced that the press building wouldn't fit into the surrounding community. But her fears were calmed by the final architectural drawings. "It's big, but it is nice. It's a nice addition," said Downs, who also serves on ARCH's board.

The \$35 million press project is on schedule to produce some sections of The Journal Gazette and The News-Sentinel in late summer or early fall, Christman said. The newspapers will eventually convert to all their sections being printed on the 60-foot-tall, Japanese-made press. The new equipment will print newspapers faster and with more and better color. Orban said he's grateful the newspaper company decided to house the new press downtown. "The fact they did a beautiful design of it," he said, "is just icing on the cake." ■