

Structure blends with surroundings

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Although historic preservation does not often weigh in with opinions on new construction, occasionally a new structure fits so well within a historic landscape that it is noteworthy.

Such is the case with the Fort Wayne Newspapers printing facility at 824 W. Main St., which won the 2007 ARCHIE Award for Outstanding New Construction in a Historic District. ARCH awards outstanding restoration projects in Allen County each year and occasionally issues awards in other categories. The new construction award has been given three times.

Fort Wayne Newspapers went the extra step with this project and hired the nation's best architectural firm specializing in newspaper buildings. Dario Designs, of Marlborough, Mass., has designed exceptional structures in several communities, including Flint and Kalamazoo, Mich.

ARCH looks at a range of criteria in determining ARCHIE winners. In the new construction category, those criteria include the overall size of the building project, materials used, success in complementing the existing historic structures and the quality of the overall design.

Fitting new construction into an existing downtown streetscape is not a simple task. The use of an urban setback—placing the building at sidewalk's edge—is an important consideration. So too are such details as height, massing and the arrangement of windows and doors.



Details of the new printing facility include the massive window on the Main Street facade, designed to reflect the grand public buildings of Fort Wayne's past. The architects who designed the structure carefully studied other structures in the vicinity to create a good fit. The printing building window is based in no small part on the grand window of the Baker Street train station, a favorite local landmark. Architect David Hogan, vice president and co-owner of Dario Designs Inc., said the overall exterior design that blends so well with the historic district is the work of Gary Buono, lead designer for the project. He notes that Buono "is up and coming as a lead designer in our firm."

ARCH presented the ARCHIE awards at its annual meeting in June. ARCH has awarded ARCHIES annually since 1976 to promote good practice in the restoration and preservation of historic sites and structures in Allen County. ■

