

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Quinn Evans Architects**

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## **Knapp's Department Store Restored in Downtown Lansing; Wins 2015 Governor's Award for Historic Preservation**

### ***Adaptive Use Transforms Art Moderne Landmark into Distinctive Mixed-Use Center***

5.28.15 – Knapp's Centre, a \$36 million urban renewal project that transformed the iconic Knapp's Department Store in downtown Lansing, Mich., into an acclaimed mixed-use development, has been recognized with a 2015 Governor's Award for Historic Preservation. Designed by Quinn Evans Architects, the adaptive use project modernized the circa-1937 landmark while preserving much of the building's celebrated Streamline Art Moderne architecture. Knapp's Centre now features Class A offices, restaurant/retail space, and 23 top-floor loft residences.

Quinn Evans Architects led a multidiscipline design team for the ambitious renovation, completed for the Lansing-based Eyde Company. Strict preservation guidelines structured the architectural response, which retained the five-story building's historic integrity and limited modern interventions. The Knapp's Department Store, also known as the J.W. Knapp Company building, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983, which noted that the building was "a landmark in the progress of the modern movement in architecture in Michigan."

Throughout the project, the architectural team remedied failing systems, materials, and technology in the 190,000-square-foot building with innovative concepts to repair, restore, or replicate key elements. A major challenge involved the restoration of the building's signature blue and yellow tile façade. An experimental technology in the 1930s, the enameled steel and cast-in concrete panels, known as "Maul Macotta," had deteriorated due to age and moisture. The panels were replaced with a state-of-the-art rainscreen system, with the original, emblematic "K" panels preserved along the replicated façade. The Streamline Art Moderne façade, one of the largest examples of this classic Art Deco treatment in the U.S., now consists of a two-inch aluminum panel rainscreen system layered over six inches of insulation and a thermal barrier.

The building's prismatic glass block windows, also failing due to moisture, were replaced—an improvement that enhanced views to the outside while maintaining the historic integrity of the building skin. Quinn Evans Architects ensured that the judicious updates to the crumbling exterior would meet preservation requirements to qualify for federal and state tax credits.

The building's original interiors—with deep, inwardly focused floorplates suited to welcoming crowds of department store shoppers—were carefully adapted to high-end office space on the second, third, and fourth floors. A skylit atrium was inserted to brighten the interior and create efficient new floor plans for

office configurations. Raised floors heighten windows for outward views and allowed for under-floor installation of HVAC system and network cables.

Restaurants and stores occupy the first floor, and 23 one- and two-bedroom apartments are located on the fifth floor and penthouse level. The residences each have access to a private outdoor roof deck.

“It had been incredibly fun to return the Knapp’s building to its role as downtown Lansing’s iconic Streamline Moderne landmark,” says Elisabeth Knibbe, FAIA, LEED AP, principal-in-charge for Quinn Evans Architects. “There were many challenges, but with creativity and persistence, our team solved problems and took advantage of opportunities to create a modern mixed-used building that will enliven the downtown for future generations.”

Quinn Evans Architects is being recognized with a Governor’s Award for the second consecutive year. The firm received a 2014 award for its design of the restoration of the McGregor Memorial Conference Center at Wayne State University. The Minoru Yamasaki masterpiece was originally completed in 1958.

#### **About Quinn Evans Architects**

Established in 1984, Quinn Evans Architects specializes in architecture, planning, urban revitalization, and historic preservation, including sustainable preservation and stewardship. The firm has more than 60 professionals in offices in Washington,

*All photos by James Haefner*

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