

Building #8



Year Built: 1925
Historic Name: Western Catholic Union Building
Style: Beaux Arts
Architect: George Behrensmeyer

BEHIND CLOSED DOOR
OCTOBER 17, 1998

The 10 story Western Catholic Union Building was Quincy's first skyscraper! George Behrensmeyer designed the building which contains 110,000 square feet of floor space. Today marks the 73rd anniversary of its opening on October 17, 1925, which was described by Carl Landrum as being "like a movie premier." Originally the building was headquarters for the Western Catholic Union, a fraternal insurance organization which dates back to 1877.

506, 508 & 510 Maine Street



Seventy years ago, you could have taken a dip in the basement swimming pool of the WCU Building, or squeezed in a game of bowling there on your lunch hour...but not today. A roof-top garden where dances and receptions were held is another feature of the WCU Building that has disappeared. Also lost is the elaborate first floor cornice and the original stone arches, which were removed and replaced with porcelain enamel panels. The original brick pilasters, a common feature of early skyscrapers, still extend from the first floor base to the bottom of the former cornice.

The WCU Building is of the Beaux Arts style as demonstrated by the decorative garlands, the symmetrical design and the front pilasters. The original first floor facade had arched doors and windows - another Beaux Arts feature.

The 10th floor of this building is now the home of Architechnics, Inc., which is undertaking the renovation of the 7,000 square foot former banquet hall/ballroom. Architechnics removed the dropped ceilings, restored the windows, and reestablished the exposed plaster beams, pilasters and column capitals. Most of the wood trim was replaced with new trim in the original style. The walls of the corridors and offices were removed to return the atmosphere of the floor to that of its original open ballroom.