

# A GLORIOUS RESTORATION CASE STUDY

THE ATHENAEUM OF OHIO  
CINCINNATI, OH



**GRAHAM**  
ARCHITECTURAL PRODUCTS





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*-Bill Watson, Principal, Watson Architects, Inc.*

## + PROJECT SNAPSHOT

### Architect

William L. Watson, Watson Architects, Inc.

### Window Design Consultation

Tim Davis, AR Design

### Assignment

Replace nearly 1,000 original windows in an 85-year-old, 275,000 SF mixed use facility.

## + CHALLENGE

**As challenges go, this was huge.** Directors at The Athenaeum of Ohio, home of the third-oldest Catholic seminary in the United States, sought to replace nearly one thousand windows of various shapes and sizes. In phase one, the imposing granite stone building required the replication of the original steel window profiles and sightlines in the replacement windows. Phase two required meeting similar objectives, and more, in replicating wood double hung windows. After discovering that replacing the phase one windows in steel was cost-prohibitive, Bill Watson, the architect, began to explore an aluminum window solution based on a Graham product.



## + A THOUSAND REASONS TO TRUST GRAHAM

Architect Bill Watson had worked with Tim Davis, window design consultant for AR Design and a Graham Architectural Products (GAP) rep, on a number of occasions.

So Tim’s name popped immediately to mind when Bill was in the midst of the library renovation at The Athenaeum of Ohio, which required one louver to be replaced with a window. Seeing an opportunity, Tim asked Graham to donate the window as an example of what could be designed.

Recalls Tim, “Bill contacted me and said, they’re going to replace a lot of windows at some point in the next several years and I have a louver I’m pulling out. Would you like to put in a window mock-up?”

It was a no-brainer. At Tim’s request, GAP donated the window, demonstrating Graham’s product and design capabilities, as well as its commitment to Bill and The Athenaeum’s long range vision.

The plan worked. Three years later, Bill was overseeing the \$2.5 million window and door replacement project and Graham got the job.

But not just because of the demo window. It was the complexity of the project, the daunting challenge posed by hundreds of replacement windows, each with unique characteristics. And it was Bill’s high level of

comfort with Tim and Graham – a team with the expertise, experience and willingness to do what it takes to get the job done.

And what a job it was. In addition to the historical replication objectives, phase one goals included providing operable design for ventilation purposes, enhancing thermal efficiency, and designing minimally invasive removal/installation/anchorage for nominal impact on varied interior finishes.

With the help of Jim Hicks, director of engineering at Graham, Tim helped finalize the details for the windows, a task that took nearly a year. Not only were there nearly a thousand windows, but as an 80-plus-year-old mixed-use building, conditions varied dramatically on the inside.

Says Tim, “You look at the windows across The Athenaeum, there’s a little bit of everything. Not one size fits all, so you not only have to have a diverse product offering, you have to be able to make custom modifications without charging exorbitant fees. There may be three or four attempts to solve a problem that all fall short of what the architect or owner wants. But you can’t lose sight of the long road because that long road is what builds your reputation.”

In the end, Graham’s capabilities not only satisfied phase one requirements, they enabled us to land the phase two contract as well. Same building. Same owner. But a whole different set of design challenges.

Bill wanted to minimize loss of daylight opening; preserve interior wood casework by designing window, panning and custom anchorage so that it could be replaced from outside; enhance thermal efficiency; and provide a two-color finish design so the exterior color could match the other windows, while the interior color could approximate the dark wood casework.

Again, Tim and Jim collaborated on a design scheme fully acceptable to Bill.

Though challenging, working side-by-side with Graham made it possible. Says Tim, “With Graham, there are no standard sizes. No standard hardware. No standard glass. Those limitations, so common with commodity window products, are not in the way. You can design anything you want, and Graham can make it happen.”

In addition to the extensive collaboration on the design concepts, Graham’s fabrication and manufacturing capabilities ensured that the delivered product did not disappoint.

Says Bill, “Tim Davis and Graham were instrumental in helping me achieve my design goals, from the appearance and function to the most minute detail considerations. Consequently, I will continue to look to Tim Davis and Graham for assistance developing my designs to realization.”





1551 Mt. Rose Avenue + York, PA 17403 + 800.755.6274 + [grahamwindows.com](http://grahamwindows.com)

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