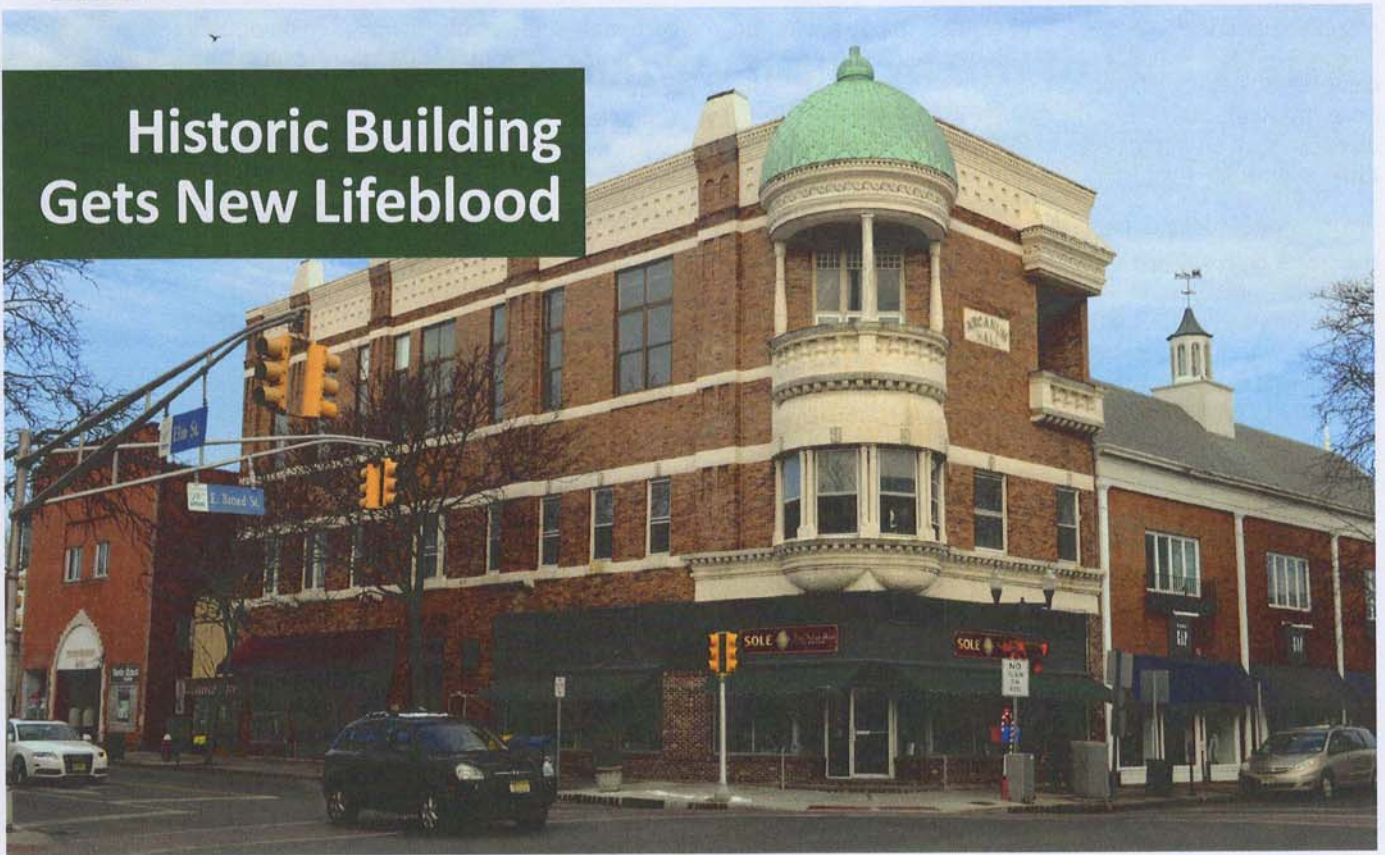


Historic Building Gets New Lifeblood



"I apprenticed in a shop that had three generations of plumbers in a business that started in 1905, A&M Khun in Elizabeth, NJ," said Scott Seib. "That's where I gained my heating expertise. We only work in Westfield and its surrounding area, and we do very little advertising, so word-of-mouth reputation that keeps our business going."

Scott Seib Plumbing & Heating specializes in fixing ailing hydronic and steam systems – whether the problem is a result of a poor installation, or the age of the system warrants a retrofit. For the six-person company in central New Jersey, their busiest time of year, without fail, is the first sub-freezing day of the year.

"In early winter, we get a

surprising number of calls to work on new boiler systems," said Seib, who's been in the industry for 40 years, 31 of which have been spent working for himself. "We see systems fail the first time the weather nears design temperature. More often than not, it's a control or piping issue, and all we do is trouble shoot it. Sometimes, it's a lot more than that."

Last year, Arcadia Hall, in downtown Westfield, fell under the "a lot more than that" category.

Progression

When the three-story brick building was built in 1905, fireplaces provided what was then considered heat. Each room of the historic meeting hall, including its huge theater, had its own fireplace.

(above) Historic Arcadia Hall, in downtown Westfield, NJ, retains much of its old-world charm. (below) Scott Seib (right) and Mechanic Jon Uzarski do 90 percent of their work in downtown Westfield, NJ.



Later – likely in the 1920s - a coal-fired steam system was installed and many of the 25 chimneys were sealed. Over the decades, coal was swapped for oil, and three oil-fired steam boilers came and went. Somewhere along the way, the building was

repurposed for retail space and apartments.

Each retrofit or remodel added complexity to the steam system, but there was never any attempt at zoning. Eventually patient – Continues, see "Seib", page 6