

Preserving Missouri's Historic Slate Roofs

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The availability of both federal and state tax credits have certainly encouraged investment in Missouri's historic structures across the state for many years now, but historic home building owners as well as those who manage and maintain them have not maximized the preservation potential due in part to a lack of awareness and understanding of the guidelines, process and assistance available to them.

For a home or building to be eligible for the state or federal credits it must be deemed historic, meaning either listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places, a contributing element of a historic district that is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or a contributing element of a Local Historic District that has been certified by U.S. Department of the Interior as substantially meeting National Register criteria.

A common misunderstanding when it comes to historical preservation is the role of the roof. Before any repair work or complete replacement is agreed to, the historic value of any materials to be used should be verified with a professional roofing contractor with specific knowledge of historic preservation to help ensure approval for tax incentives, as well as continued recognition from the Historic Preservation Committee. The installation particularly of slate roof systems requires patience, care, an eye for detail, and a true craftsman's skill. Roofing contractors who are experienced in this type of restoration work understand the requirements of vintage roofs for decking and underlayment, as well as when modern materials can be substituted without causing the roof to fail or leak. Many historic homes and buildings in Missouri still have their original slate or tile roof systems, and although both are designed to last over 100 years the underlayment can fail after the first 50 to 75 years.

Anymore, many historic home preservation committees will not allow a shingle substitute for slate, which happens to be the recommendation of most insurance claims due to the roofing contractor hired to perform the work not having expert knowledge in this area of specialty. Truly, the art of slate roofing seems to have been lost and unfortunately the only way Missouri's historic districts will remain as such is with restoration projects like those recently completed and currently underway by the team at Innovative Construction & Roofing (ICR). After early spring storms in 2011, residents in Shaw/Tower Grove, University City and South City are now seeing major transformations with 100+ year-old slate and tile roofs being fully replaced by insurance companies while maintaining their historical status thanks to the ICR team already completing 30 jobs in these neighborhoods and

with over 50 currently in process. Several more are planned throughout 2012 as well.

Headquartered in St. Louis and with satellite offices servicing Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma, ICR has installed the entire spectrum of slate roofing styles and systems. From custom graduations to the full palette of colors, custom sizes and the entire range of finishes, they have done it all. Founded in 2008 by Christian Larson (41 years old), Brian Benson (32 years old) and Patrick McNichols (31 years old), the team has more than fifty years of collective hands-on industry experience. By combining the latest in roofing industry technology with the craftsmanship and expert knowledge in restoring historic slate and tile roofs, ICR has quickly become the Midwest's premier provider of commercial and residential roof, gutter, and insurance restoration construction services.



After an impressive 2010 in which the company realized its highest earnings to date (\$6.15M), ICR was honored with the #85 overall ranking in Roofing Contractor Magazine's list of the Top 100 roofing contractors in America. Clearly not satisfying enough for this team of rising stars, they followed-up that recognition by more than doubling their previous record earnings the following year (\$15.1M). In 2012 ICR projects slate

and tile roofing jobs to exceed \$5M – 20% of annual revenue projections.

If you are considering pursuing a historical preservation tax incentive it is recommended you consult a qualified tax professional and the Missouri Department of Economic Development as soon as possible, and well before you begin the restoration project to ensure it follows the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in the Missouri Department of Natural Resources and the National Park Service works with property owners, developers and architects to provide advice on appropriate rehabilitation.

Once you have approval to proceed, if your project involves the roofing system please also consider Innovative Construction & Roofing. They are members of the National Slate Association and their crews are trained to inspect, assess damage level and rate the condition of your historic slate or tile roof – all at no charge to you. They can be reached at (314) 546.4047, or feel free to find out more about their lifetime labor warranty and so much more by visiting them online at www.InnovativeRoofs.com. You can find them on Facebook at www.facebook.com/InnovativeRoofs. ■