

COLUMBUS BUSINESS FIRST

Rogers Krajnak to evaluate Newark's Sullivan-designed 'jewel box' for redevelopment

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The Licking County Foundation owns the Old Home Bank Building designed by American architect Louis Sullivan in downtown Newark.

The Old Home Bank Building on Newark's courthouse square will get another look for redevelopment this summer.

The Licking County Foundation has commissioned Columbus-based Rogers Krajnak Architects to give the 100-year-old, bejeweled building a close look after a private development effort fell through a couple years ago.

The property is one of two "jewel box" community banks in Ohio, and eight in the Midwest, designed by noted American architect Louis Sullivan.

Rogers Krajnak principal Peter Krajnak told me the building has a terra cotta exterior with glass mosaic tile decorative panels and opalescent glass windows that let in less light than traditional windows.



A historic postcard shows the building when it served as the Home Building Association Co. bank.

“It’s a real national landmark,” Krajnak said. “We were intrigued by the history and its potential for what it can become to serve the community.”

The property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. The courthouse square earned a place on the register 13 years ago.

The Old Home Bank Building, which also features interior murals, first served as the Home Building Association Co. Since then, it has housed a butcher shop, jewelry store, architect’s office, apartment and ice cream shop.

The previous owner received a \$431,260 Ohio historic preservation tax credit to help pay for a \$2.2 million rehab project nearly four years ago, but plans for offices and retail space never materialized.



An interior shot of a geometric mural inside the building.

Krajnak said the design firm will come up with a preservation plan and help determine how to redevelop the property, with a report to the foundation expected in August. The community foundation “is interested in finding a community use,” he said.

“It should be shared and enjoyed by a variety of people,” Krajnak said, “not just a specialized organization or business.”