

'Like going to work in heaven'

Open house shows off old courthouse renovations

By JOSEPH MALDONADO
For the Daily Record/Sunday News
York Daily Record/Sunday News

Article Launched: 10/08/2006 02:33:27 AM EDT

Oct 8, 2006 — Allan Dameshek was all smiles Saturday morning as he made his way around the newly renovated York County Administrative Center.

"I knew what it was like working in here before," the former county administrator and chief clerk said. "Today, it must feel like going to work in heaven."

Dameshek and his wife, Nancy, were two of about 100 on hand for the center's open house and dedication ceremony. The former York County courthouse, at 28 E. Market St., recently underwent an \$18 million renovation.

The original building, constructed in 1841 and expanded in 1957, challenged the architects and designers at NuTec Designs in Springettsbury Township.

Because of the building's age and many different keepers, it had become a hodgepodge of styles and colors. In former Courtroom 1, the walls had been painted a robin's egg blue despite its clash with nearby tones of earthy browns and fall oranges.

Planners used warmer colors because the renovations were about preservation as well as historical enhancement.

"The beautiful colors you see were selected from a historically appropriate palette," Scott Butcher, NuTec's director of business development, told the crowd.

The palette was created after a study of existing colors and patterns in the building's marble.

"It's wonderful that they were able to keep all of the things that were beautiful about this building and enhance the rest," said Nancy Dameshek.

But President Commissioner Lori Mitrick said it was the people of York who deserve the building.

"The people should be proud that they were able to preserve so much history while creating a work space that belongs in the 21st century," she said.

Across the country, governments have been building offices that are more utilitarian in nature.

"Most governments will never again be able to afford to construct grand buildings like this," said James Weiler, with Wohlsen Construction, an early participant on the project.

Weiler couldn't stop shaking his head as he looked around at the marble, oak and decorative plasters that were saved.

"What would the costs be today?" he asked.