After Lansing’s Ottawa Street Power Station stopped generating power in 1984, the building sat inactive for nearly two decades. Considered a unique example of a utilitarian building designed to complement the downtown environment, the Art Deco building faced an uncertain future. Multiple uses, including conversion to theaters or condos, were proposed over the years—as well as demolition—but nothing materialized. Finally in 2008, the Christman Company and the Accident Fund (and its parent company Blue Cross Blue Shield) partnered to rehabilitate the building as the Accident Fund’s national corporate headquarters using Federal and State Historic Preservation Tax Credits and other incentives. Collaboration between Christman, the Accident Fund, the city of Lansing and the Lansing Economic Development Corporation, as well as the Lansing Board of Water and Light were critical to the project’s success.

The rehabilitation involved environmental remediation, detailed stone and brick work, plaster replication, conservation of stainless steel and bronze doors, replication of historic steel sash window details with new energy efficient thermally broken sash units, and the conversion of vast open space to office space. The project also involved the construction of a contemporary addition north of the power plant. The rehabilitation and new construction represents millions of dollars of investment in Lansing. The project sparked additional investment and development downtown, and it has energized the riverfront. In addition, the Accident Fund will remain an anchor business and major employer in downtown Lansing.

Christman Capital Development Company, Accident Fund Holdings, Inc., City of Lansing and the Lansing Economic Development Corporation, Lansing Board of Water and Light, HOK and Quinn Evans Architects

The rehabilitation of the Ottawa Street Power Station