



DRUID HILL CONSERVATORY | NEW OLD ELEGANCE



“Marvin took the architect’s vision and worked out all the details. Accomplishing this required various field visits, design meetings and brainstorming sessions with the team.”

—John Diehl, Southway Builders

DRUID HILL CONSERVATORY | *Baltimore, Maryland*

Druid Hill Conservatory is the sole survivor of several fanciful conservatories built in 19th century Victorian Baltimore. The Palm House at Druid Hill Park, designed by George Frederick, architect for the Baltimore City Hall, was built in 1888. A \$4.8 million renovation of this conservatory was undertaken in 2004 and included the construction of two new smaller greenhouse structures. These north and south pavilions were designed to be compatible with their historic surroundings, harmonizing with the elevated style of the Palm House. They were symmetrically sited, connected with the original buildings and provided more visitor-friendly meeting space.

Specifications for the new greenhouses were written from the Palm House renovation window specs in order to echo the dimensioning, design and rhythm of the older, main conservatory structure. As a municipal project for the city of Baltimore, the project underwent a public bid process and Marvin Windows and Doors was awarded the contract, pending proof of their ability to meet performance criteria and to match the custom clad color, Druid Hill Cream.

Details were not well defined in the architectural drawings. They established basic dimensions, sight lines, and profiles, but the manufacturer was charged with filling in the details. Custom flashing and panning needed to be worked out. The anchorage and structural system needed to be engineered. Specifications called for tempered insulated glass with simulated divided lites, and window performance had to stand up to thermal changes inside buildings that were adjusted based on seasonal exhibits. It was especially important that the installed units be absolutely water tight.

A series of shop drawings went back and forth several times among architect, Marvin Signature Products and Services architectural department, dealer and contractor, until a workable solution was accomplished. The project included true round tops, large fixed units and awnings at the base.

Prior to the renovations of 2004, the Druid Hill Conservatory was ranked the least visited attraction in Baltimore. After construction, it won the Baltimore Heritage Preservation Award. The complex was later renamed The Howard Peters Rawlings Conservatory and now enjoys a healthy stream of visitors year round. According to the architect, the folks at the city offices of Baltimore have been very pleased; they accomplished what they’d set out to do and - with help from Marvin Signature Products and Services - successfully revitalized a significant local landmark.

