



WIRELESS FIRE DETECTION IS THE NEW STANDARD FOR HISTORICAL BUILDINGS IN BALTIMORE

Honeywell Gamewell-FCI S3 Series®
SWIFT™ Smart Wireless Integrated Fire Technology

After surviving the Great Baltimore Fire of 1904 and a century of changing fortunes, this icon of historic architecture has set a new benchmark for innovative fire safety – one that the City of Baltimore has now established as its official standard for historic buildings.

Needs

- Install a reliable, modern fire-safety system, yet avoid invasive alterations to key areas.
- Maintain the grand Romanesque Revival lobby and atrium as featured attractions.
- Preserve the building's historic designation to safeguard valuable tax credits.

The Solution

By integrating the reliable control of a Gamewell-FCI S3 Series® system with wireless SWIFT smoke detection, they could install a modern, reliable fire safety system in the Vault without damaging the marble, custom oak carvings, crown molding, or other historic elements. After many months of meetings, LS Systems educated city officials and fire marshals on the benefits of the proposed Honeywell technologies.

This solution would protect occupants, preserve the building's historic status, and safeguard hundreds of thousands of dollars in tax credit.

City officials were so impressed with LS Systems' diligence, the innovative Honeywell technology, and the ultimate success of the Vault installation that they established a new citywide mandate: Honeywell SWIFT wireless smoke detection should become the standard for future installations in historic buildings.

Honeywell



Benefits

- Innovative wireless solution provides non-intrusive fire safety, preserves historic areas.
- Advanced “Class A” wireless mesh network eliminates single points of failure.
- Cost-effective to install and maintain.
- Digital control panel simplifies training and use for property staff.
- Adopted by Baltimore as the new standard for historic renovations.

The History: Trial by Fire

Baltimore has long been a home to American history, but in 1904, it was devastated in a great fire. One building that survived, the Central Savings Bank, has since been admired as a monument to Romanesque Revival architecture. Built in 1891, the CSB building is part of the National Register of Historic Places. Yet as of 2015, the building had fallen into disrepair and was virtually abandoned.

The Poverni Sheikh Group (PSG) sought to change that, restoring the building to its historic grandeur as a vibrant mixed-use space named “The Vault.”

“The Vault represented an opportunity to turn a distressed, vacant asset into a unique property containing beautiful apartments and a fully activated ground-floor slate of retailers,” explained Ibrahim Sheikh, Principal of PSG.

First, however, the building needed a modern fire safety system – and it had to be installed without changing or damaging the unique historical elements.

To solve that challenge, PSG enlisted the help of LS Systems, an authorized distributor of Honeywell Fire Systems. The resulting solution wasn’t just a win for the building’s new owners – Baltimore has since adopted it as the citywide standard for installing fire-safety systems in historic buildings.

Preserve History, Save Taxes

Despite its long vacancy, the CSB building still had the power to wow, with grand elements such as a marble lobby, 20-foot pocket ceilings, and a breathtaking five-story atrium with custom oak carvings and craftsman crown molding. Traditional “invasive” installations might work in some spots, but for historic areas, a uniquely non-invasive approach was needed.

For PSG, preserving the iconic elements was vital for maintaining the building’s appeal, and its historic designation – a status worth hundreds of thousands in tax credits. Those credits were a core part of the project’s financing, which made it essential to get the city’s confirmation in advance that any proposed renovations would fulfill both safety and preservation requirements.

The challenge for LS Systems: Install a fire-safety system without altering the historic highlights. Other contractors had proposed invasive changes, such as raising the lobby ceiling or re-engineering the first-floor substrate to permit the wiring of a typical fire-safety solution. For the city, these proposals were non-starters. Fortunately, LS Systems had a better plan.

Wireless Safety with Honeywell

LS Systems proposed a Gamewell-FCI S3 Series® control panel from Honeywell as the “brains” of the system. The S3 Series is highly reliable, flexible, and scalable, making it ideal for small- to mid-size buildings. The panel also features a digital display that makes it very easy to learn and use.

Next, to protect the historic areas, LS Systems proposed Honeywell SWIFT™ wireless smoke detectors. These smart detectors communicate via an extremely reliable mesh network, where each detector connects to every other nearby unit.

SWIFT detectors are also easy to install and cost-effective to maintain – so, unlike fire sprinklers or wired smoke detectors, neither their installation nor their maintenance posed a threat to historical elements.

With these Honeywell technologies, LS Systems could propose a complete solution: Using one S3 control panel, four SWIFT wireless gateways, and 16 wireless SWIFT photoelectric smoke detectors, they could cover the historic atrium and lobby areas as well as stair landings, with no cutting, no wires. For the basement and apartments, they would add a wired network to integrate eleven S3 manual pull stations, 14 photoelectric smoke detectors, three heat detectors, and one addressable beam detector.

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Honeywell Gamewell-FCI

12 Clintonville Road
Northford, CT 06472
800-328-0103
www.gamewell-fci.com

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