



# Case Study

BALCONIES

21 KRISTIN DRIVE, SCHAUMBURG, ILLINOIS



*A face is like the outside of a house. It can beg us to explore what's inside.* This philosophy from one of America's great beauties – the actress Loretta Young – assumes great things await us within.

Searching for ideas to revitalize an aging 1970s apartment building in Schaumburg, Illinois, developer Castlebar Enterprises Inc. took Loretta Young to heart. The firm wanted to create a face that would take the building well into the new century and, at the same time, compel potential buyers to explore the beauty inside.

Fast forward to its completion in 2008, and the result is a remarkable makeover for the 21 Kristin Drive residential building, now a stunning and sophisticated 10-story dwelling of 327 condominium homes worthy of its new name – The Residences of 21 (XXI).

Transforming the building's exterior was an essential element in the successful makeover, a challenge that inspired creative thinking by two innovative companies – Accurate Perforating Company, Inc. and McNichols Company. Both are known for metal products that meet the discriminating needs of the design and building industries.

Decades before, the balconies of this brick apartment building were created with painted plywood panels attached to aluminum railings for safety, producing a dated outer shell and a barrier that obscured sunlight from the apartment interiors.

Understanding the building owner's need to creatively update the balconies with minimal disruption and within budget, Accurate Perforating and McNichols knew the importance of merging function, aesthetics and cost efficiencies. The goal was an open look that meets code and is just as appealing from the outside in as from the inside out.

McNichols, of Tampa, Florida, with 18 branches worldwide, including Chicago, is a leading supplier of metal with holes. The company features MCNICHOLS® Designer Metals, a collection of designer-grade wire mesh, perforated metal, expanded metal and gratings.

Chicago-based Accurate Perforating Company, Inc. is a leading provider of perforated materials for the design industry. Accurate Perforating designs, produces and fabricates perforated metal to meet precise specifications for the most demanding customers.

Together, Accurate and McNichols created custom panels of perforated metal with a 3/16" round hole on 1/2" staggered pattern with large solid borders. They combined this with a thinner, .125"-thick 5005 aluminum to meet the project budget without sacrificing safety or beauty.

A clear anodized finish was recommended for the balcony to retard the rust, peeling or fading that can occur with exterior metal product applications. Durability of the panels was also a key element, as condominium owners use the balconies as an extension of their daily living. Clear anodizing was an inexpensive solution in line with aesthetic preferences in the architectural community. Installation was made easy with screws and pop rivets. Because the existing railings were aluminum, no bushings were needed to prevent galvanic reaction.

The conversion to condominiums and re-branding of 21 Kristin Drive is now complete. Once a nondescript brick structure, it is now a sleek and eye-catching collection of luxury residences in one of Chicago's most popular suburban cities.

Also significant to the marketing is the beauty created inside the units from the sunlight that now passes through the small openings of the balcony panels – showcasing hardwood floors, contemporary kitchens and other upscale amenities. While allowing light in, the balconies also provide ample privacy, as the perforated aluminum appears almost solid from street level.

"Curb appeal is extremely important when marketing a project of this size," says Chris Feurer, president of CRF Marketing, the group within Koenig & Strey GMAC Real Estate that is handling unit sales.

"Replacing the panels in such a creative way was a significant improvement to the curb appeal, and it added the all-important ingredient of sunlight that appeals to buyers."

McNichols and Accurate Perforating played a significant role in making a large property exceedingly marketable in a challenging real estate market. Their large-scale design-and-implementation solution met all structural requirements of the project while providing an aesthetically pleasing look that was the right fit for the building and the budget.



**BEFORE**



**AFTER**



**BEFORE**



**AFTER**



**BEFORE**



**AFTER**



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