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HISTORIC PLASTER CONSERVATION SERVICES

Ceilings in both of the Colonial Building's former legislative chambers have been restored.

Newfoundland's historic Colonial Building to undergo restoration

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Newfoundland's Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation is spearheading restoration of the historic Colonial Building, the first permanent home of the legislature.

The building opened in 1850.

The restoration will reflect significant stages in the evolution of the building, a designated provincial historic site.

The front façade and lobby will reflect the 1850s period, while the legislative chambers will be restored to the 1880s era.

To date, the ceilings in the two legislative chambers have been stabilized and two highly-decorated murals restored. Future plans include roof replacement, restoration of several interior and exterior design features and installation of a wrought-iron fence which once surrounded the property.

Once restored, the building will serve as an interpretation centre, featuring the political history of the province.

It also will house provincial Historic Sites staff and a number of heritage-related, not-for-profit organizations.

Restoration costs are estimated at upwards of \$10 million.

The project is being undertaken by a team that includes the PHB Group Inc. of St. John's, an architectural and interior design firm. PBH is currently preparing construction drawings and tender documents.

Tenders are expected to be called this spring.



JABLONSKI BUILDING CONSERVATION

Mural restoration was done by a New York-based firm.

Stabilization of the ceilings and mural restoration work was carried out by Historic Plaster Conservation Services (HPCS) Ltd. of Port Hope, Ont.

The firm has developed specialized techniques for stabilizing and strengthening fragile plaster in historic buildings.

HPCS President Rod Stewart said a 1939 fire left several inches of charred wood and other debris in the attic. That debris had to be removed prior to "consolidation" of the plaster in the ceilings.

The Port Hope company teamed up with PowerVac Services to clean up the "very dirty but delicate" attic space. A temporary support system was installed under the ceilings before this work was done.

The murals, originally completed in 1880 by a Polish fresco painter, had to be cleaned and repaired as well. This was performed for HPCS by the New York firm of Jablonski Building Conservation.

Stewart, whose firm had an Ontario staff of eight on site during the course of the 2.5 month project, said the work also involved "a good deal of" repairs to plaster ornaments.

The restored building is expected to open to the public sometime in 2013.



DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND RECREATION

The restored building will serve as an interpretation centre.



HISTORIC PLASTER CONSERVATION SERVICES

Highly decorative ceiling murals date from 1880.