

16/07/2019

Nave Roof of St Sava Cathedral in New York City is completed



The installation of the new steel roof structure has been achieved, over the full length of the building's nave and, with that, this beautiful historic landmark has been stabilized at last, for the first time since the terrible fire that threatened to destroy it completely. What remains is to add a layer of wood over the steel and protect it with a special membrane until it can receive the final slate tiles in order to be fully restored. Our own church community and the broader community, in general, can finally breathe a sigh of relief. And by the end of the summer, the new steel-and-concrete floor structure, which now follows, will technically conclude the fully stable condition that will allow our pre-eminent project team to issue official notice to the NYC Department of Buildings, accordingly.

It was the vision of His Grace, our Bishop Irinej of Eastern America, which provided the original inspiration that led to the effort to save the Cathedral, even as other voices were proclaiming it unsalvageable, advocating strongly for its obliteration. And there were various difficult circumstances along the way that threatened, not unlike the fire, to bring it down again - but the inherent strength of the founding vision eventually prevailed. As the Bishop clearly explains, "in celebrating this year, the 75th Anniversary of the Orthodox consecration of St. Sava Cathedral, and commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the original consecration of Trinity Chapel at the hands of the founding Episcopalian Community; we are obligated before God, humanity and history to protect an invaluable testimony to the fortitude of our faithful, who acquired this magnificent Cathedral, those who lovingly built it, and the great Metropolis in which everything came together seamlessly. Truly, as is inscribed on the building of the National Archives in Washington, DC - 'past is prologue to the future'!"

The church, of course, is very grateful to the entire project team, led by the Executive Manager of the project, Architect Don Zivkovic; he, in many ways, saved the saving; and along with construction-management partners, Sciame Construction and O'Donoghue Contracting, each was instrumental, in their own way, in bringing to bear their many skills and special expertise, to assure that the

Cathedral was in fact saved.

Notably, Zivkovic and his partner, Architect Brian Connolly, have restored numerous historic NYC structures over several decades and, among other works, have designed and built what one prominent architectural critic and historian has called "... quite simply one of the best buildings in Manhattan in the last half century." Their engineering colleague on that latter project, Don Friedman of Old Structures Engineering, has not only literally written the book on Historical Building Construction, but has also been St Sava's structural consultant over a number of decades already and with respect to the roof restoration of the 1990s. In addition, the O'Donoghue firm's extensive past experience, including with dozens of churches and houses of worship, has allowed them to competitively bid our current stabilization and enclosure work so effectively as to absorb within its allocated reconstruction budget even significant additional costs imposed on our project for external reasons. In short, O'Donoghue and its subcontractors have performed admirably, as fully committed contributors to the interests of the church.

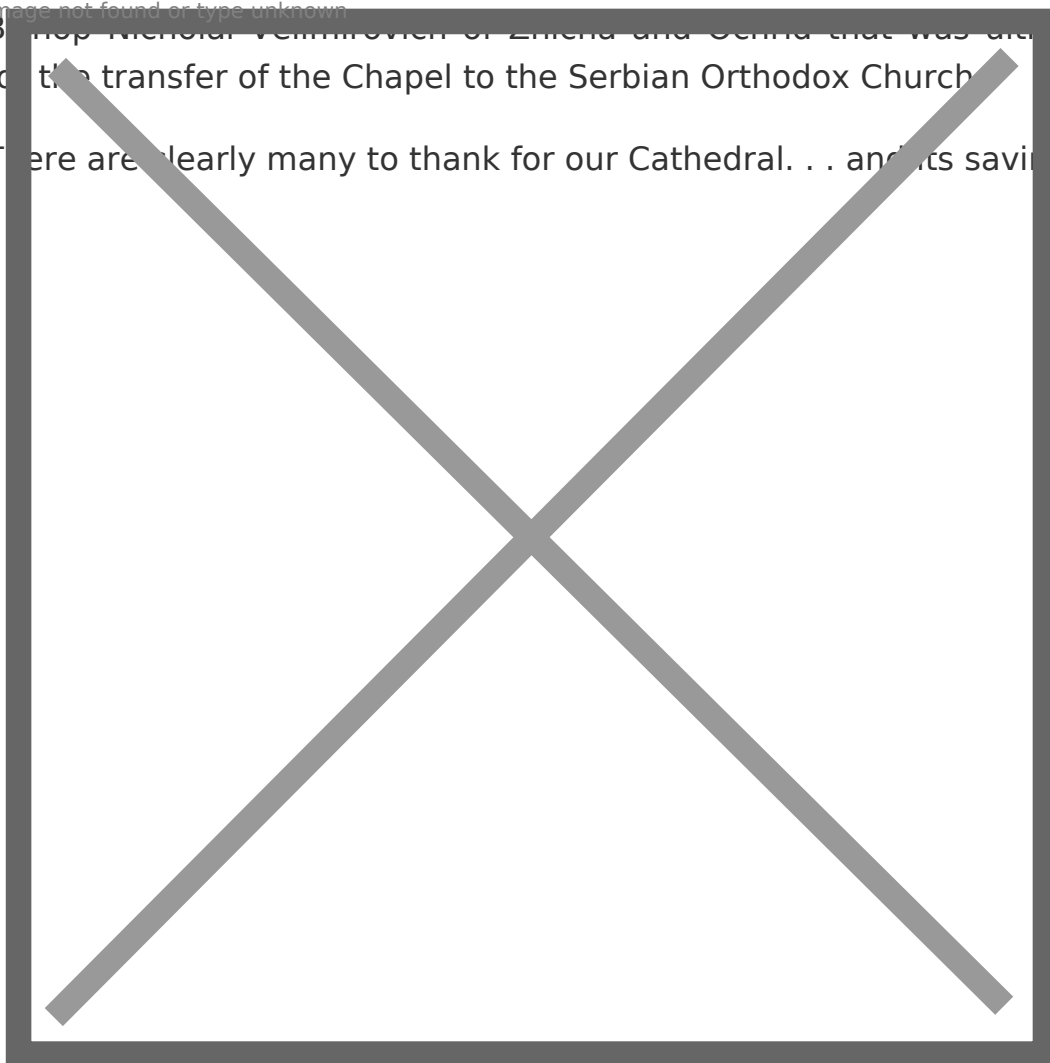
We are fortunate that the respect with which our team is held within the building industry, including by the municipal authorities issuing the approvals required for the work to proceed, has facilitated its progress at the highest levels of the Landmarks Preservation Commission and Department of Buildings.

Distinguished NYC builder, Frank Sciame, whose firm is in an oversight role with respect to St Sava's reconstruction, has remarked: "I know members of this project team and worked with them for years. I've also visited the site, observed the ongoing work and reviewed the documents. It is clear to me that the early planning for the design and engineering, as well as the site mobilization and logistics, has paid off. The way the complex geometry of the roof steel came together flawlessly and quickly, including the necessary structural shoring and bracing that was required to stabilize the existing historic structure, was impressive. The most difficult phase of this construction work has been successfully accomplished."

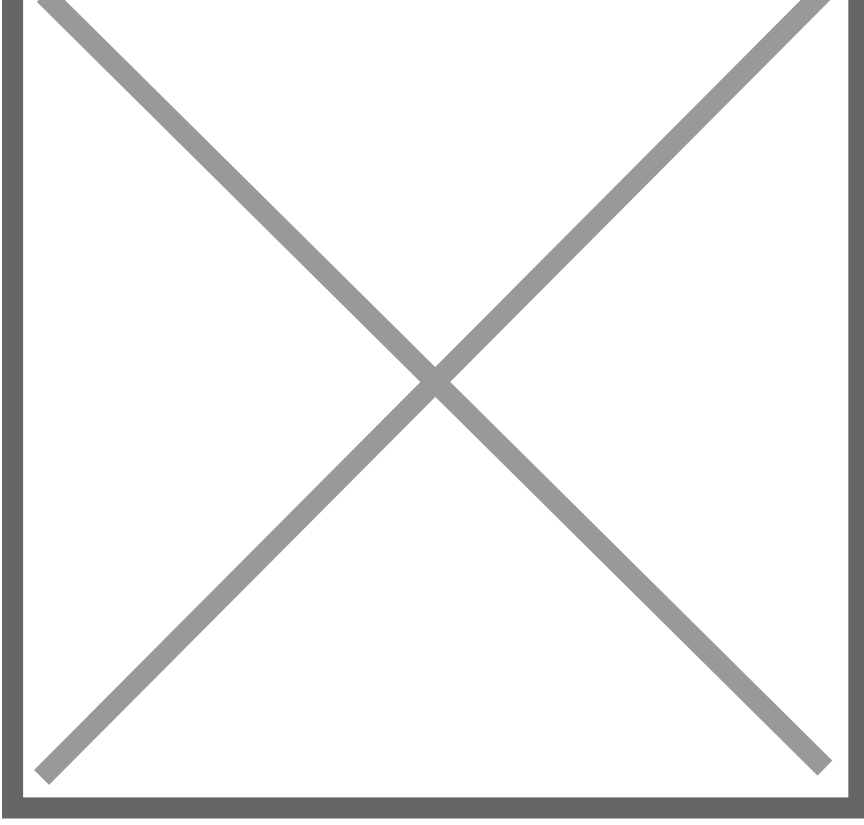
Interestingly, St Sava Cathedral, also formerly known as Trinity Chapel, was a parochial off-shoot of the same Trinity Church at the top of Wall St, at which Sciame Construction is currently undertaking a major restoration program. The original architect for both buildings was the noted Richard Upjohn.

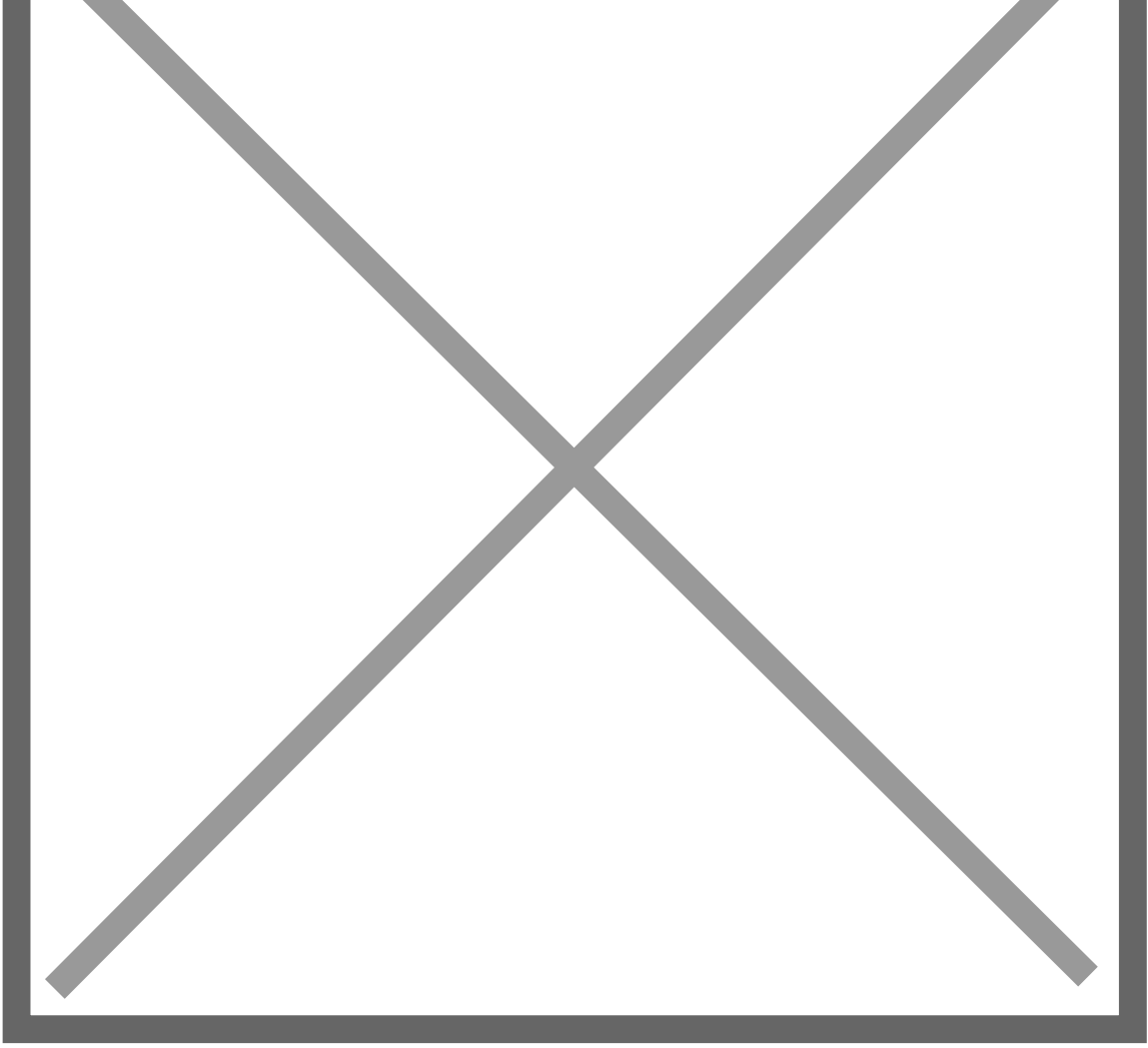
And it was the great friendship between Bishop William Manning, Rector of Trinity Church and subsequently Tenth Episcopal Bishop of New York, and our own holy Bishop Michael Vermorel of Zenna and Genoa that was ultimately responsible for the transfer of the Chapel to the Serbian Orthodox Church.

There are clearly many to thank for our Cathedral. . . and its saving.









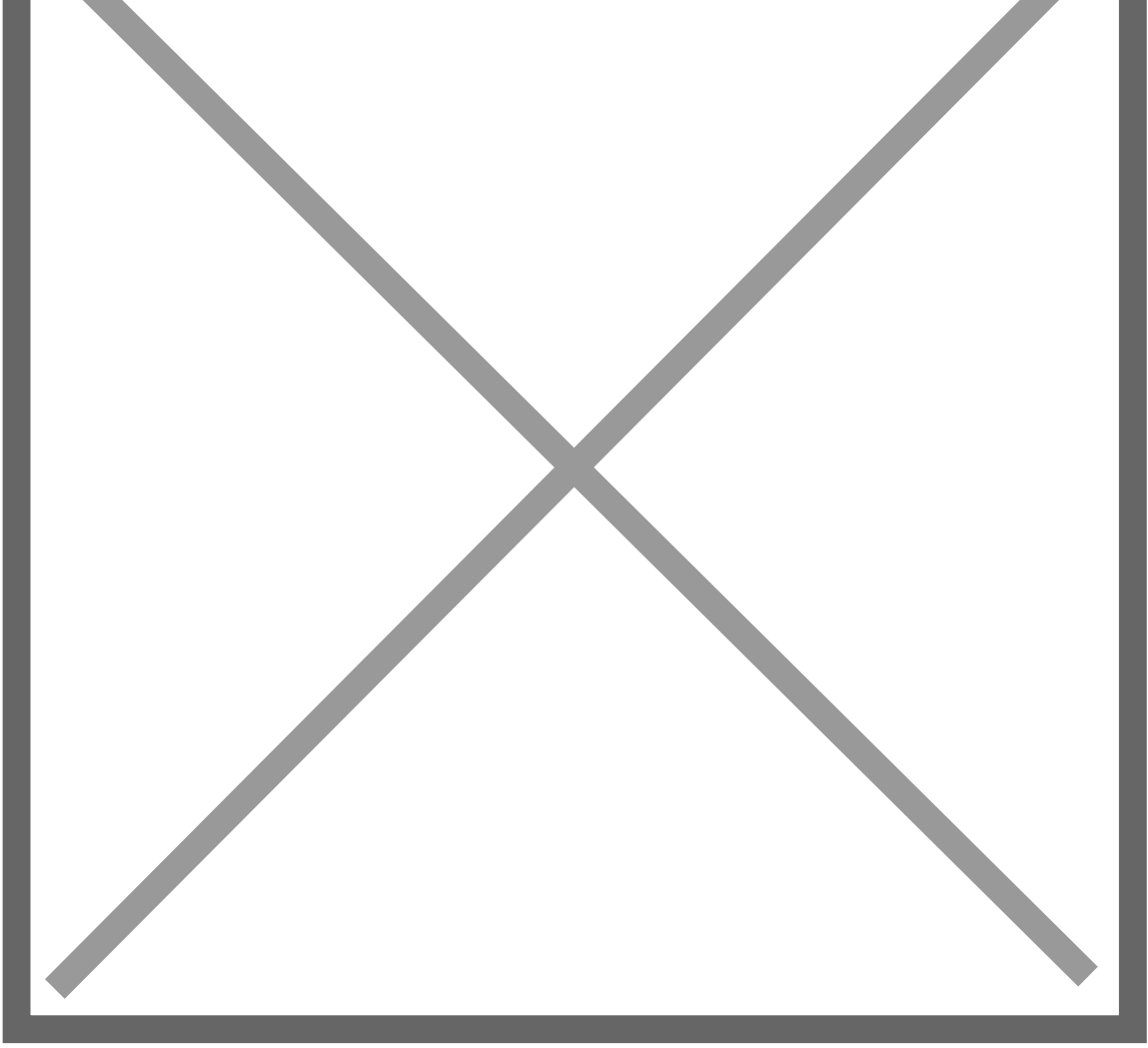
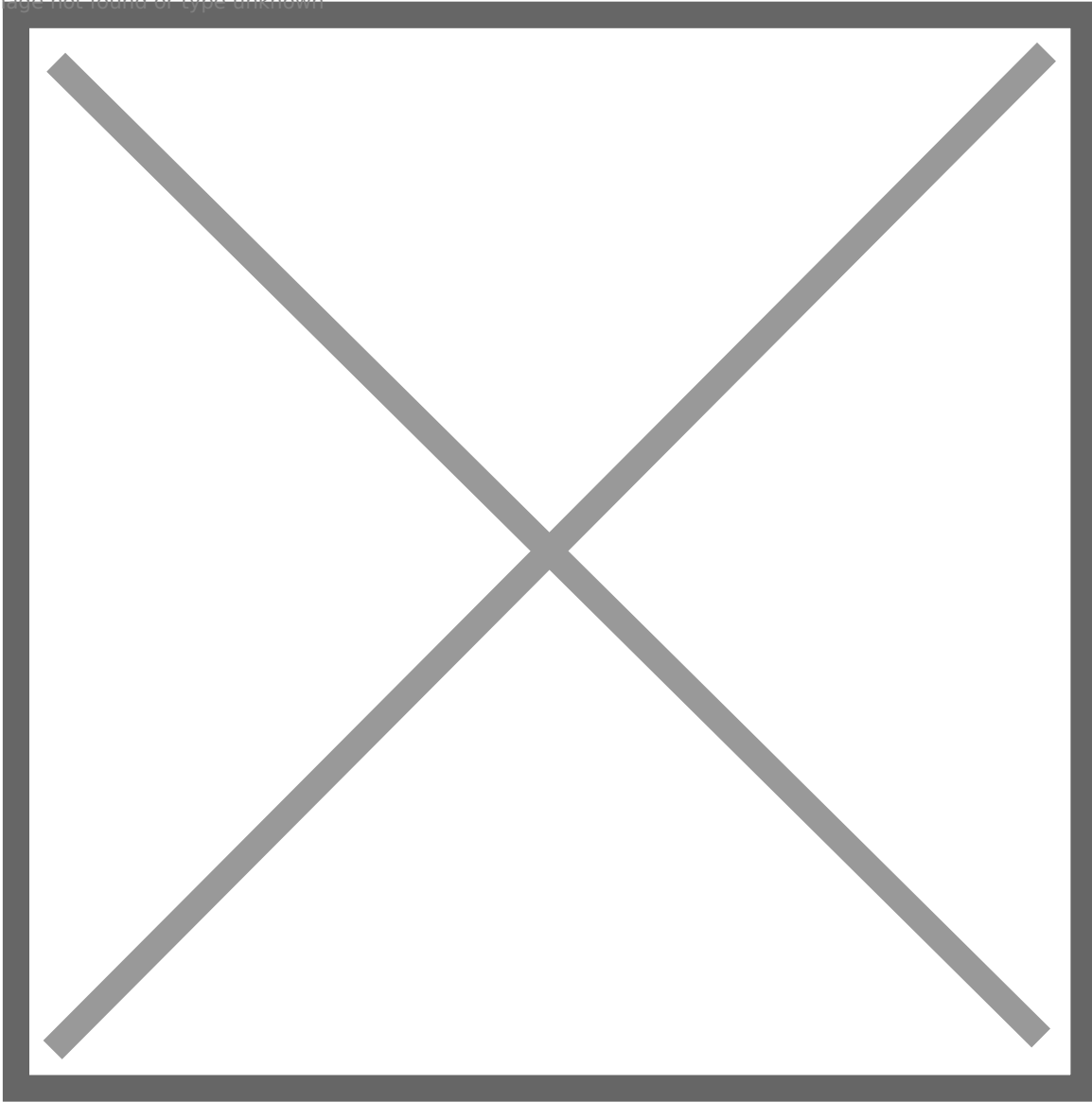


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- Source: [Eastern American Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Diocese](#)