

Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Eastern America: St. Sava Cathedral Secure & Enclosure Phase Completed



“At this rather notable point in the history of the Cathedral”, according to Project Executive, Don Zivkovic, “with the substantial completion of the current phase of the reconstruction work just achieved”, we are “such a very long way, in many respects, from where it all started”.

The Secure & Enclosure undertaking consisted of securing the walls, including rebuilding segments of the roof line; installing new roof and floor beams; putting up the roof, all save the final slate layer, originally replaced in the years preceding the fire; pouring the floor, except for the final layer, which is to be determined by other factors, such as heating and finish; framing the doors and windows; and installing temporary fireproof metal doors and plexiglas windows.

Mark Cupkovic, Board of Trustees liaison to the construction team and Building Committee chair, who oversaw the entire reconstruction effort with regular site visits, following the restart of the work, now reports that the Secure & Enclosure Phase has been brought to a successful conclusion. The removal of interior scaffolding is concluded, and the sidewalk “sheds” on West 25th and West 26th Streets, to either side of the Cathedral, are now replaced with a construction fence, and a newly installed alarm system.

Missing slate has also been replaced and snow brakes added on the roof over the Parish Rectory, which consisted of a Gothic Revival office, school room (original

vestry), former organ room, and the one time Pupin Memorial Chapel, Similarly, 105 holes that were left in the floor by the removal of the original scaffolding have now been solidly filled, and all of the welding and fireproofing have been successfully accomplished.

According to His Grace Bishop Irinej of Eastern America, “with the removal of the interior scaffolding completed, once again the steeply pitched roof, which soars to the height of nearly two stories above the roofline, covering the broad expanse of our magnificent Cathedral, appears likened unto hands stretched forth in prayer”. Spanning an entire city block, “the vast grandeur of this edifice, stands before God and humanity, likened unto the very image of Christ’s Resurrection”. According to the Bishop’s vision, “our Cathedral promises to be a perfect harmony of East and West, where, in the timeless words of our Holy Bishop Nicholai (Velimirovich), ‘the light of the East and the Light of the West will rest at their noon’.”

The exterior scaffolding, for now, will remain until the roof is completed, as mandated by the Landmarks Commission, given the national historic landmark status of the Saint Sava Cathedral, with a faithful replica of the original slate roof. In like manner, the exterior Italianate brownstone will be repaired and restored to its original, incorporating all of the fallen decorative elements from both the exterior and interior walls, which have been salvaged during the cleaning process.

Following such, there will be an interim phase, consisting of specialized work, as required by the New York Department of Buildings, in order to take into consideration allocation of the Cathedral for occasional liturgical services for the Great Feasts of our Holy Serbian Orthodox Church. With the issuance of a temporary occupancy permit, our faithful will be allowed to return to their house of worship, the St. Sava Cathedral, which is now saved for posterity.

[Source](#)