

St Sava in NYC begins roof erection



Builder Frank Sciame to oversee the largest post-fire ecclesiastical restoration in NYC in more than 165 years.

The Building Committee of the Serbian Orthodox Cathedral of St Sava in NYC announced today, the day following the Feast of the Transfer of the Relics of Saint Sava, that it has begun site work of the complex process to erect a replacement roof on the historic Richard Upjohn church which was originally built in 1854.

The final step of the current Stabilization & Enclosure Phase will result in new steel beams forming the structure of the Cathedral's original steep roof with associated metal decking and waterproofing membrane to follow. Concurrent with the roof, a new steel and reinforced concrete floor will be installed, as well as temporary windows and doors, for ongoing protection from the weather.

His Grace, Bishop Irinej of the Serbian Orthodox Eastern American Diocese said: "It

is with humble heart and profound gratitude to the Risen Lord, that we finally began the visible work of reconstruction on our Cathedral Church of St Sava in Manhattan. Despite the many obstacles along the way, this phase of the reconstruction effort truly signals the beginning of its resurrection from the fire, which consumed the church on Pascha, 2016. Importantly, this sacred task is being undertaken during the jubilee celebration of the 800th Anniversary of the Autocephaly of the Serbian Orthodox Church (1219-2019) and, with it, the consecration of Saint Sava as the First Archbishop of the Serbian Lands.”

One of the foremost builders in Manhattan and New York area generally, Frank Sciame will oversee the project. Sciame is former Chair of the NY Landmark Conservancy and was appointed by Governor Pataki and Mayor Bloomberg in 2006 to lead the effort to ensure a buildable World Trade Center Memorial.

Chairman of the St Sava building Committee, Mitchell Micich said: “The addition of Frank Sciame brings to bear significant additional construction expertise to an already noteworthy project team. Frank’s experience developed in his work with clients as diverse as Central Synagogue; Trinity Church; The Guggenheim; The Museum of Arts & Design; The New Museum; The Museum of the Moving Image; The Morgan Library; and Fordham University (Lincoln Center) has resulted in numerous awards and a unique reputation for restoring much of New York’s storied architecture.

This phase of the project has been coordinated in conjunction with the Landmarks Preservation Commission and the New York City Department of Buildings. It is planned to conclude in the Fall of 2019 and will be promptly followed by the next phase of Cathedral work, allowing for the return of its congregants and the use of the building for occasional religious services in the months thereafter.

“The Cathedral of Saint Sava is a sanctuary that belongs to all Serbs wherever they may reside, taking into consideration that this is part of the legacy bequeathed to us by the Holy Bishop Nicholai. Therefore, we take this opportunity to invite, with paternal love, all Orthodox Christian Serbs, and all persons of good will, having in heart and soul the joy of the Risen Lord, to prayerfully turn together to the renewal of our invaluable sanctuary, knowing that, in accordance with the words of our holy patron, Bishop Nicholai of Zhicha and All Orthodoxy, our Cathedral church can only resurrect if we Serbs are sanctified, unified and multiplied,” concluded Bishop Irinej.

The Cathedral (the former Trinity Chapel) was originally built by Richard Upjohn and a prominent individual Historic Landmark of the City of New York and on the National Register of Historic Places. The very helpful offices of both the Building

Commissioner and Landmarks Director, have been most important to the Church's ongoing and diligent efforts to return the Cathedral to its rightful place among the eminent family of great NYC houses of worship.

Upjohn, who is often considered America's greatest ecclesiastical architect and responsible for establishing the Gothic Revival movement in the USA, designed the current Trinity Church on Wall Street and soon thereafter proceeded to design and build Trinity Chapel for the uptown communicants of Trinity Church - located in and about the Madison Park area of Manhattan.

The parish thrived for decades, witnessing the first Orthodox liturgy in the US and the society wedding of famous local resident, Edith Wharton, among other things, until shifting demographics caught up to it again - and it was eventually acquired by the Serbian Orthodox Community of New York in 1943, at the urging of the Episcopal Bishop of New York and Rector of Trinity Church, Bishop William T Manning, when the name was changed to the Serbian Orthodox Cathedral of St Sava, in honor of the founder of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

The adjoining Parish House is the last remaining full standing building in the USA designed by Jacob Wrey Mould who was instrumental in bringing British High Victorian architecture to the USA and one of a number of architects of Central Park - responsible for its Bethesda Fountain and Belvedere Castle. Together with Upjohn, Mould was a founding member of the American Institute of Architects.









— Source: easterndiocese.org