



FACT SHEET - RENEWAL PROJECT **CANADIAN MUSEUM OF NATURE** **VICTORIA MEMORIAL MUSEUM BUILDING**

On May 22, 2010 – International Day for Biodiversity – the Canadian Museum of Nature will celebrate the Grand Reopening of its public exhibitions and programming site, the Victoria Memorial Museum Building. This exciting milestone follows a \$216-million phased renewal project that began in spring 2004 and ended in 2010.

❖ HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Victoria Memorial Museum Building was specifically built as Canada's first national museum. Core construction was completed in 1910 (this year marks its 100th anniversary) and the doors opened to the public in 1912. From 1916 to 1920, it housed Canada's Parliament.

It has served as home to numerous national institutions: the Geological Survey, the National Gallery, the Museum of Man, and the Museum of Natural Sciences (now the Canadian Museum of Nature).

This venerable 100-year-old Beaux-Arts institution is designed in Tudor-Gothic style, complete with castle-like turrets. It is a designated national historic site and boasts the distinction of being among the Federal Government's most important heritage buildings.

❖ PROJECT OVERVIEW

As part of the Canadian Museum of Nature's new vision of national service, a major renovation of this historic, heritage building was undertaken starting in 2004. The work was completed in conjunction with the prime consultants, PKG Joint Venture Architects, and the general contractor, PCL Constructors Inc.

This important renovation served to:

- upgrade mechanical and structural systems to remain in step with current building codes.
- preserve the historical and heritage integrity of the building;
- allow the building to safely accommodate the CMN's public programming, exhibitions and collections by adapting the layout and infrastructure to better meet modern museum standards;
- improve visitor access and amenities, both inside and outside on our grounds

These changes result in a fresh look inside, with new galleries and exhibition spaces, while maintaining the building's unique heritage characteristics.



❖ **HIGHLIGHTS OF PLANS**

- Addition of new architectural features including:
 - a "lantern" that evokes the building's early tower over the main entrance, but more importantly, will permit easy circulation of visitors from the second to the fourth floors.
 - Consolidation of visitor amenities (e.g. boutique, café and group entrance area) on the first floor to make visitor access and use of the building more efficient.
- A major upgrade to the building's infrastructure including electrical, water, heating and ventilation systems.
- Reinforcement of the structure of the building to ensure the building meets seismic codes.
- Installation of an interior wall to create a "dynamic buffer zone" that will maintain required conservation settings (e.g. temperature and humidity) for display of specimens in exhibitions. It will also protect the exterior stonework from the effects of high humidity.
- Restoration of significant heritage elements (e.g. stained glass, marble, mosaic floor, plaster, bronze railings, wood doors).
- Landscaping of the building's grounds to improve use of green space for outdoor presentations, activities and recreation.

❖ **NEW GALLERIES**

With funding from the Museum's Natural Partnerships Campaign, a number of innovative, new galleries have been installed with associated programmes and travelling components for national outreach. There will also be a future Discovery Centre, for visitors to explore the wonders of the natural world through hands-on activities.

- May 22, 2010: RBC Blue Water Gallery, Vale Earth Gallery, Animalium
- 2006 and 2007: Talisman Energy Fossil Gallery, Bird Gallery, Mammal Gallery, Discovery Zone

❖ **TIMELINES**

The work was undertaken in phases, with the museum remaining open throughout the project.

- 2004-2006: Closure and rehabilitation of the building's West Wing; construction of the new South Wing with loading dock, workshops, live animal care area.
- October 2006: Reopening of the West Wing and new galleries
- 2007-2009: Closure and rehabilitation of the building's East Wing, Atrium and Apse
- 2010: Installation of RBC Blue Water Gallery, Vale Earth Gallery and Animalium; completion of new amenities and heritage restoration
- May 22, 2010: Grand reopening of the entire museum.

NOTE: The museum's West Lawn will be landscaped in 2011.

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