



What's good enough for the Pharaohs...

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The Telegram

Confederation Building's facade being anchored by renowned system

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What does the Confederation Building have in common with one of Egypt's oldest pyramids?

Pharaoh and mummy jokes aside,

both structures are undergoing serious preservation work.

As well, the British-based company contracted to save

the 4,600-year-old Pyramid of Djoser has also been

enlisted to help with the 51-year-old Confederation

Building. Cintec, which uses a unique anchoring

system to hold buildings together, has an impressive track record.

Its past restoration projects include Windsor Castle, the White House and

the Parliament buildings in Ottawa.

"Probably most of the major, historically important structures in the world, Cintec has participated in at some point," said Gene Quesnel.

He was in St. John's last week teaching the masonry contractor working on the Confederation Building how to install Cintec's anchoring system.

Here's the Coles Notes version of how it works: stainless steel anchors are placed in predrilled holes, and attached to each anchor is a sock that is injected with a special grout which expands to fill any voids.

"It's virtually impossible to pull out," Quesnel says, calling the anchors' lifespan "virtually indefinite."

Thousands of these anchors are being placed in the brick exterior and along the window surrounds of the Confederation Building.

The system is just one part of a multimillion-dollar makeover.

The building's facade hasn't been upgraded since its completion in 1960, and three years ago consultants discovered



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significant deterioration in the windows and masonry.

It's reached the point where there's been water seepage through the windows. The first phase of the face lift began in September 2009 and focused on the north face of East Block's west wing.

That saw windows and panels replaced, and bricks cleaned and repaired.

The work also determined the building's flat roof needed to be replaced and that some of the masonry required extensive repair.

The second phase began this past fall and is what's going on behind the white, tent-like, structure that's blanketed the west wing these past few months.



The current work involves replacing the rest of the window systems and flat roofs, plus the cleaning and repair of the remaining brick.

Olympic Construction of St. John's is the main contractor on the \$34 million project.

Cintec is a supplier for Limen, the company subcontracted to do the masonry work.

Transportation and Works Minister Tom Hedderson said the makeover is important.

"It is our seat of government and we're very, very pleased to be at a point where we can invest in making sure this remains what it should be — a good edifice, a good institution, a building that will stand the test of time ... We need to make sure it's wearing well."

The minister noted that the pricetag on the upgrades is far less than what the cost of replacing the building would be.

The works that's currently underway is expected to be finished by 2013.

Hedderson pointed out the Confederation Building will look a little different when it's done.

The windows will be tinted, and the colours of the roof and the domes over legislature will be different.

"It is a different look, but the main thing is that it is tinted and the (windows) are energy efficient," the minister said.

The interior of the building could also be getting some work.

Hedderson said upgrades are needed there, too.



"The electrical systems are 51 years old, and when we go to replace parts and that, they're virtually obsolete," he noted as an example.

In January, Cintec was contracted by the High Council of Egyptian Antiques to try and help save the Pyramid of Djoser, which almost succumbed to an earthquake in 1992.

The company said will use its anchors to try and secure the landmark's central chamber.

Self-inflating water bags will be put in place to try and prevent the collapse of the damaged ceiling.

Cintec is based in Wales. It's Canadian office is in Ottawa.