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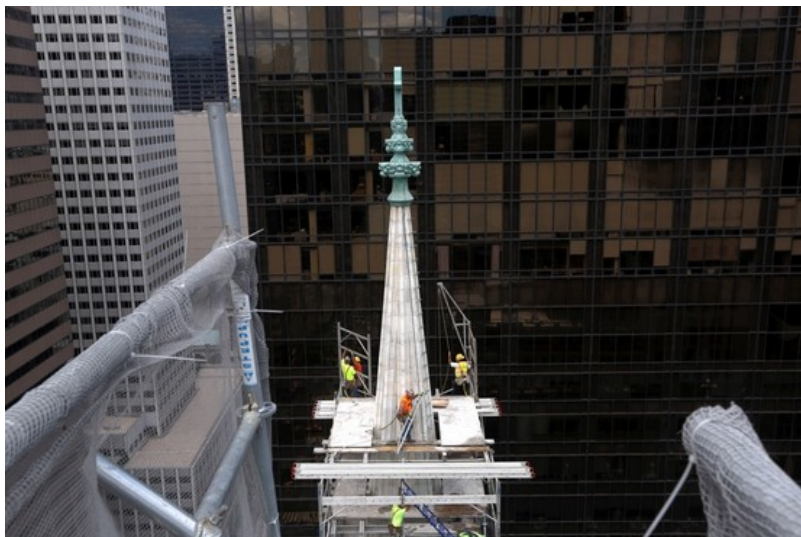
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NY REAL ESTATE COMMERCIAL

New York's Landmark St. Patrick's Cathedral Shows True Colors

St. Patrick Cathedral's Spires Gleam Following Restoration



Contractors take down the scaffolding on the north tower of St. Patrick's Cathedral on Wednesday. *MARY ALTAFFER/ASSOCIATED PRESS*

By PERVAIZ SHALLWANI

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For the first time in more than a century, the majestic spires of St. Patrick's Cathedral were gleaming as brightly as they were meant to.

Workers on Wednesday began slowly dismantling scaffolding from the 330-foot-tall Gothic Revival-style cathedral on Fifth Avenue, giving New Yorkers and tourists the first glimpse of the facade's original color when it opened in 1879—a creamy white.

Over time, the Tuckahoe marble was battered by pollution and weather, causing the church's exterior to turn a grimy brown color and resulting in cracks, said Kate Monaghan, a cathedral spokeswoman.

A three-year, \$170 million restoration of the church was begun in May 2012, and workers have finished part of the first phase—cleaning the facade's 80-foot spires, Ms. Monaghan said. The scaffolding around the spires is being removed over the next two weeks, she said, though much of the rest of the church will remain covered as work continues.

The work includes restoring the sanctuary and the installation of a new fire-suppression system, with projects already under way to spruce up church pews and 2,800 stained-glass panels, 10% of which were found to be damaged, Ms. Monaghan said.

The Midtown cathedral is home to the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York and is visited by Catholics and tourists from around the world.

Lisa and Larry McCrief, a married couple from Dallas who make it a point to visit the cathedral almost every time they visit the city, said they have been greeted with scaffolding during visits last summer and again on Wednesday.

"I think it's a worthy cause," Ms. McCrief said. "It's just unfortunate that it takes so long. It will definitely be something to look forward to."

"It's still pretty spectacular," Mr. McCrief said.

More than 100 workers a day have been toiling on the renovation, which includes cleaning the façade with a sand-based liquid solution that Ms. Monaghan described as being "so soft that I have been told that you could use it on skin."

"To do a square foot would take at least an hour, if not more," she said. "A worker with a spray bottle is spraying each square inch, so it takes some time."

Ms. Monaghan said the cathedral has undergone two restorations—in the 1940s and again in the 1970s. But the facade had never been fully cleaned, she said, and the current effort is its most "complete restoration."

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