Conservation of Decorated Plaster Ceilings
in the
Council Chamber and Assembly Room
of the
Colonial Building, St. John's, Newfoundland

Historic Plaster Conservation Services Limited
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Jablonski Building Conservation, Inc.

Table of Contents

NOTE TO READER

There are three kinds of text information in the report.

Task descriptions are declarative sentences set in New Times Roman 12 pt. in a column on the left side of each page.

Picture descriptions are set in New Times Roman ITALIC and are closest to the picture they describe.

Technical Descriptions, Background Notes, and Explanations of Methodology are found in shades boxes, set in Arial 12 pt. wherever they best contribute to the flow of the document.

INTRODUCTION

Historic Plaster Conservation Services Limited was contracted by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to execute a conservation plan on the ceilings of the Council Chamber and Assembly Room of the Colonial Building.

The Colonial Building is arguably the most significant historic building in the province. Built in 1847, it served as the seat of government until 1956 when it was replaced by the much larger Confederation Building. In the late 1880s a muralist named Aleksander Pindikowski (the Polish spelling of the names) was commissioned to decorate the two principle rooms of the building. In the 1940s a painter named Clem Murphy was commissioned to strengthen and stabilize the ceilings of the two rooms using a unique technique that employed frames of welded strap iron bolted up through the ceilings in such a way as to carry the weight of the failing plaster. This technique was designed to do minimal damage to the Pindikowski paintings, although many of them had to be repainted in the process. Much of the original Pindikowski work survives and it is the considered value of this decoration that prompted the commission awarded to HPCS.

In addition to the conservation program described in this report, HPCS was also commissioned to conduct a series of studies intended to establish an understanding of the development of the decorative finishes in the two-story entrance lobby to the building and in the large rooms. In this work, HPCS was ably assisted by Mary Jablonski and Stephanie Hoagland of Jablonski Building Conservation Inc., New York, NY, and by Craig Sims, Heritage Building Consultant, Kingston, Ontario. PowerVac Disaster Kleenup™ supplied supplementary labour to the project.

The project evolved out of an earlier HPCS assessment of the condition of the ceiling plaster in the two principle rooms. The work took place between mid-June and the end of August. A full deck of scaffolding was provided in each room. Access to the building was unlimited and no other work was underway in the premises at the time.

The project was managed for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador by construction manager Robert Mathews of the Department of Transportation and Works. Oversight for the heritage aspects of the project came from the Colonial Building Advisory Committee, which was made up of arts administrators, historians, and members of the Department of Transportation and Works, and which was chaired by Jerry Dick, Director of Heritage, Department of Tourism, Culture & Recreation. In particular I would like to recognize the positive contribution of committee member John Trahey, Design Manager with the Department of Transportation and Works, who provided support and collaboration in decision-making and extensive contextual information on the evolution of the building.

The HPCS team was led by Rod Stewart and Masumi Suzuki, with members Scott Theriault, Andrew Russell, Banri Nakamura, Michiko Nakamura, Ralph Hillmer, Maurice Kwiecinski and Robert Ireland. This report was completed in January 2010 by Rod Stewart with illustrations by Masumi Suzuki.

Rod Stewart
HISTORIC PLASTER CONSERVATION SERVICES LIMITED

INTRODUCTION TO CONSOLIDATION

The consolidation of plain face plaster in historic buildings differs from building to building depending on the specific conditions faced by the conservation team and the defined objectives of the project.

Consolidation of Plaster: Essentials

The consolidation process converts a traditional hanging wood lath and plaster system of plain face plaster, which is supported by plaster keys and lugs pressed up through the spaces between laths, into a fully adhered system of plaster adhered to the wood lath support.

A traditional plaster ceiling is essentially a suspended system. The first application of plaster is to wood lath that has been soaked overnight in water and has been nailed to the joists in a saturated condition. The first or “brown” coat of plaster is troweled onto this wet surface and some of it is forced up through the spaces between laths, where it folds over onto itself and forms the characteristic lug that can be seen from the attic side of such ceilings. Subsequent applications of material finish the job, with the final application being a putty coat of lime-based material that lends itself to being troweled to a smooth, hard surface onto which decorative embellishments could be added. In the days following the plaster application, there would have been a tremendous amount of water evaporation from the wood lath and plaster. The wood lath would shrink away from the plaster, producing a slight space and leaving a suspended, mechanical bond, rather than an adhered system. As a suspended system, plaster is very efficient. Typically, the ratio of keys to laths is about 1:3, meaning that fully 1/4 of the plaster is engaged in the support of the other 3/4.

Over time, plaster fails for a variety of reasons. Sometimes the failure is caused by mechanical damage to the key system that supports the ceiling. As individual keys are broken, they pass their load-carrying role onto the adjacent keys on either side. As these keys are put under stress, they too are more likely to break because of this extra load. This process may take years to take hold. As built, the system is quite robust and the loss of a few individual keys does not make a big difference. It is when a significant percentage (significant is usually over 25%) of keys are lost in a specific area of a ceiling that the unanticipated collapse so characteristic of these ceilings can occur.

The consolidation process is a preventive maintenance procedure that anticipates this deterioration process and protects the ceiling in advance of the inevitable collapse.

The method consists of infusing the porous brown coat of plaster and filling the space between plaster and lath with an acrylic resin, which is applied as a spray to the attic side of the ceiling. The resin is applied in several coats. The first coat is diluted to enhance penetration into the plaster, then a more viscous resin solution is used to fill voids and gaps between plaster and lath. When the consolidation is complete, the missing lugs and keys are reproduced with a filled adhesive made from the same resin. After consolidation, the plain face plaster is a fully adhered system.

UNIQUE CONDITIONS AT THE COLONIAL BUILDING

The Council Chambers and the Assembly Room in the Colonial Building present all the typical challenges of a plaster conservation project with the added complication of having been "restored" in a rather unique way in the 1940s.

A local painting contractor named Clem Murphy was employed in the 1940s to do whatever he deemed necessary to preserve the ceilings. There had been a fire in the attic above the Council Chamber in 1939 and there was extensive damage to the framing around the chimney. The fire was serious enough to have burned through the roof, so it is logical to assume there might have been a good deal of water damage. There is documentary information about the clean-up of soot after the fire with many pails of hot, soapy water.

Murphy's plan was to support the ceilings by bolting 2''-wide by 1/8"-thick metal frames to its surface with long bolts that penetrated the metal and the ceiling plaster and terminated on a wood frame built on the floor of the attic. The metal frames Murphy devised were formed and forge-welded in shapes that somewhat matched the painted patterns on the ceiling. Some frames outlined simple rectangular panels, others were more complex with curved sides, and still others were circles around the ceiling medallions.

The technique seems to have been successful. Except for two areas in the Council Chamber, all the original plaster in both rooms has survived.

The drastic but necessary step of placing metal frames on the surface of the ceiling required Murphy to carry out extensive over-painting of the Pindikowski work. The painting was done carefully and it is obvious that attempts were made to respect the original artist's intent, but the quality of the second painting was clearly inferior to the original.

The Murphy Bolt system has suffered over the years since it was first installed. Many of the bolt heads protruding through the attic floors have been trod on and bent over. Each time this occurs, a direct strain is placed on the surrounding plaster. This damage is evident across both ceilings. The bolts and frames were a temporary measure that kept the ceilings intact, but in the ensuing years another method of strengthening fragile plaster has been developed—consolidation—and it is prudent to supersede the Murphy Bolt system with this modern treatment.

The Murphy Bolts also contribute to difficulties in the attic space above the ceiling. All the litter and rubble from the 1939 fire was left lying about in the joist cavities. Eventually it was covered over with sheet plastic and then a layer of fiberglass insulation was put down. All the above material, including the flooring that Murphy had installed to connect his bolts, had to be removed.

The fire rubble was typically a few inches thick across the area of both ceilings. More than two tons of discarded papers and other trash had accumulated in the attic and had to be removed for the treatment to proceed.

ABOVE The Murphy frame in this case is made to follow the perimeter of the Pindikowski painting.

BELOW Here the ingenious Murphy frame intersects the freehand painting details and has caused the need for extensive "infill" or repainting of the Pindikowski original. It is not possible to determine the condition of the ceiling at the time Murphy did his work, but it is reasonable to assume that the work was essential to saving the paintings and that the intervention was the minimum required to accomplish this. The conservation of these freehand portions of the known Pindikowski decoration was undertaken by conservators from Jablonski Building Conservation.

Plaster consolidation requires access to the upper side of a plaster ceiling. Access is usually from the attic. The Colonial Building was typical of undervalued public buildings in that its attic had become a repository of junk and debris over the previous century.

1 Insulation had to be removed to provide access.

2 It became apparent that the insulation had been placed in the attic directly on top of the debris from the 1939 fire.

3 Once exposed, it was easy to see the deteriorated condition of keys and lugs that are essential to support a plaster ceiling.

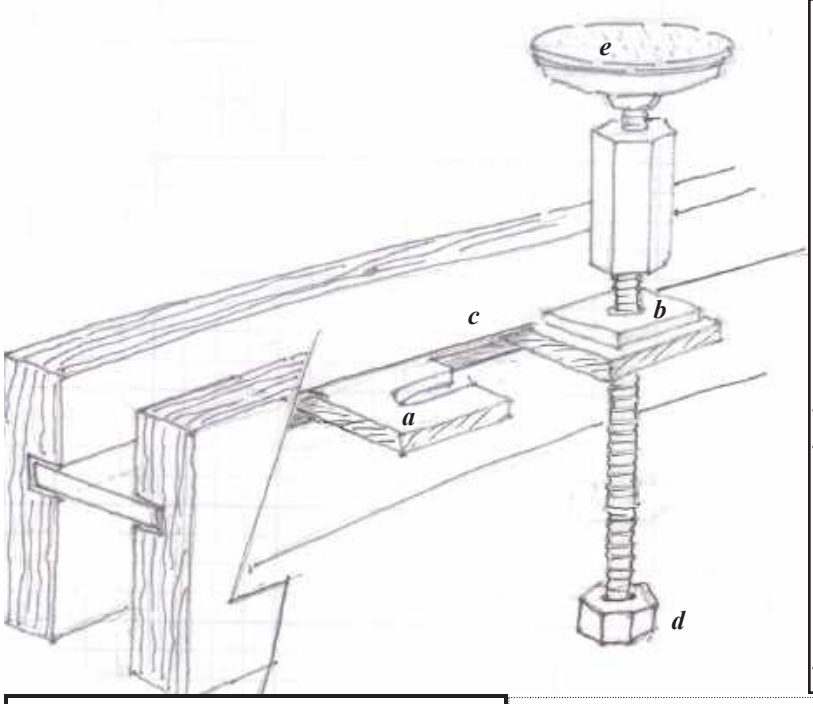
4 Under the "Murphy Bolt" catwalks in the attic over the Assembly Room, the debris from the 1939 fire and before was found essentially undisturbed .

5 The "Murphy Bolt" catwalk system had to be removed so that the debris could be cleaned up and access to the upper side of the plaster ceilings gained. This work could not be done until the ceilings were temporarily supported by a plaster beam support system or falsework provided by HPCS.

ABOVE and BELOW Before the attic could be safely cleaned, a system of plaster support beams was put in place to carry the weight of the plaster. 260 beams were used, each providing up to 12 individually adjustable support points. The ceiling surface was protected by a soft foam pad attached to the contact point. Because the system offers great flexibility, the individual contact points could be selected on the basis of providing support and not damaging any "freehand" Pindikowski painting.

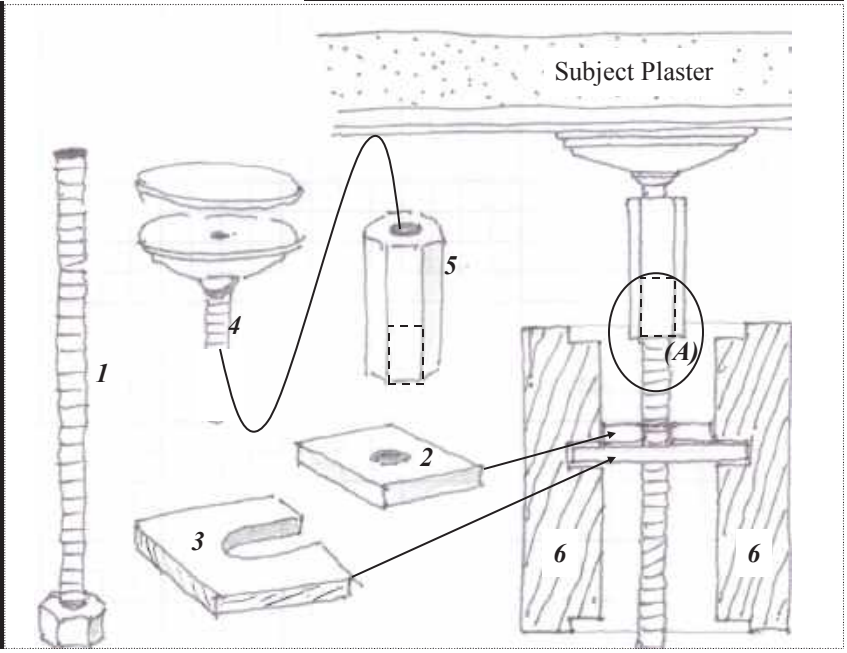
ABOVE The HPCS Temporary Plaster Jacking System requires the installation of a conventional "System Scaffold" working level deck. The structure of the scaffolding system is further used to erect a rigid and adjustable superstructure just below the flat surface of the decorated ceiling.

BELOW A special temporary beam system has been devised by HPCS for the specific purpose of supporting plaster and wood lath ceilings during their conservation treatment.
Beams are supported in their working position by an industry standard scaffolding system referred to as "System Scaffolding". The SS forms a base working platform 7' below the ceiling and additionally, support for a rigid overhead superstructure directly below the ceiling on which the HPCS temporary beam system is installed. The HPCS beams are typically 8' long and each has a capacity for 12 individual jacking points along its length. Using the HPCS beams in a grid of 16" to 24" centres, it is possible to gain a very direct, as needed support beneath a delicate delaminated ceiling and still have access to the surface for observation and delicate manipulations.



LEFT Section of a typical beam showing an unengaged jack support slide (a) beside one that has it jack installed (b). The slot in the jack support slide permits the jack to be placed quickly, and the slots in the beam sides (c) permit the entire assembly to be located exactly where it is needed anywhere along the length of the beam.
The nut (d) welded on the threaded jacking shaft accepts a socket wrench for tightening. Torque adjustable electric nut runners are used to set accurate pressure on the jacks.
The contact surface (e) is a padded flexible surface typically equipped with a silicone foil face that keeps anything from sticking to it.

RIGHT Component parts of the HPCS temporary beam system are illustrated.
The connection at (A) is not threaded as might be expected but simply a slip fit. This allows the jacking shaft (1) to be threaded onto block (2) and positioned along the beam on a convenient jack support slide (3). This done, the technician slips the preassembled parts (4) and (5) over the end of the jacking shaft (1) and tightens the nut to the specified tension.
Beam Rails (6) are made from 1" Baltic birch ply with 20 laminations per inch.



ABOVE Technician cleaning the attic. Much of the debris is handpicked out of the cavity. This was followed by vacuum cleaning with strong industrial machines.
BELOW After cleaning, this image shows areas where the keys and lugs that were already broken were removed in the cleaning and hand testing exposed the snowy white plaster below.

ABOVE New framing was provided to support the cornice against the chimney of the Council Chamber. This had never been repaired after the 1939 fire.

TO CLEAN OR NOT TO CLEAN

There was considerable discussion among the stakeholders about how much if any cleaning should be done on the painted ceilings. Could the consolidation and strengthening of the ceilings take place without addressing the surface conditions? If not, what was the minimum requirement for undertaking the consolidation?

In many ways this discussion was a logical extension of the previously reported position of the client's that the project was not to be or become a restoration project, but was rather to remain a plaster ceiling conservation exercise that would leave all options for restoration or further interpretation open to successive stakeholders.

The thinking was that the consolidation treatment of the ceilings was necessary to protect them from collapse during any protracted building rehabilitation program but final decisions about how the two rooms were to be treated and ultimately interpreted were yet to be made.

However, when the full scaffolding was finally erected in the Council Chamber and all the stakeholders could have a close inspection of the conditions, the discussion became somewhat academic. The soiling condition was such that simply touching any part of the ceiling surface left a smudge mark that stood out alarmingly against the drab, sooty background of the rest of the ceiling. Since "touching" the ceilings is an essential part of holding them in place while attic cleaning and then consolidation are undertaken, the cleaning decision advanced to selecting a methodology.

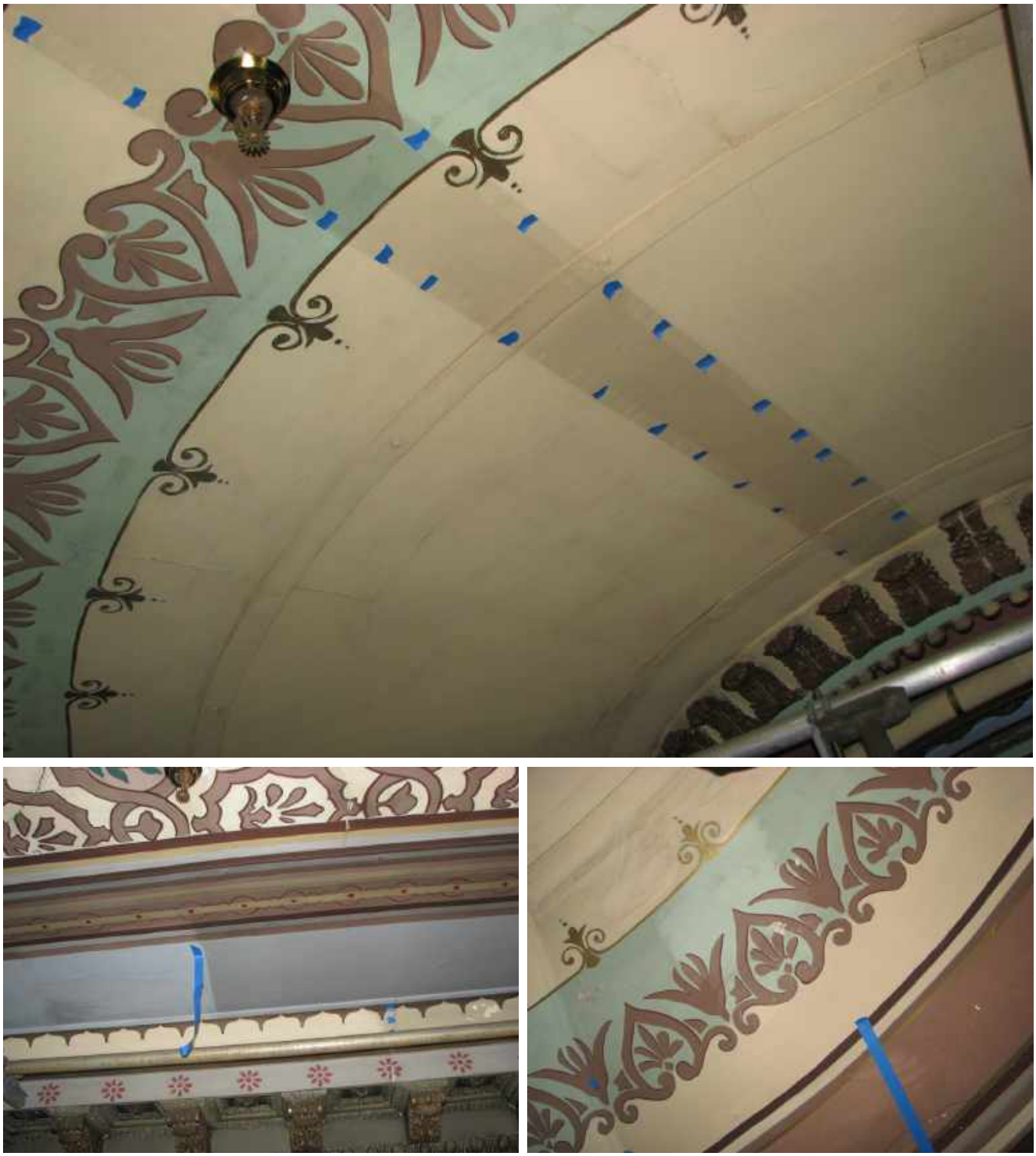
At that point HPCS retained Jablonski Building Conservation Inc. of New York to take the official position of paintings conservator. JBC would devise and supervise an appropriate cleaning methodology to be executed by HPCS on the non-freehand portions of the ceiling. JBC alone would execute the treatments on remaining freehand Pindikowski work. JBC was already investigating finishes on behalf of HPCS in the lobby of the Colonial Building. With this appointment approved by the client, a cleaning program got underway.

In a typical ceiling consolidation process, there is a small likelihood that some of the spray-applied consolidating material will leak through cracks and other damaged areas and find its way to the ceiling surface. In this exercise, the presence of the 800 Murphy Bolts, each of which represents a 1/4" hole in the ceiling, virtually guaranteed that this would occur. Without cleaning, this leakage would consolidate the soot and bond it to the painted ceiling surface in a way that would make later removal virtually impossible.

Testing was done. A methodology was proposed and approved. Based on the certainty that consolidant would leak through and collect on the ceiling, it was decided to clean with mild soap and distilled water and to continue the post-cleaning rinsing of the ceiling throughout the consolidation process. This meant that all material that leaked to the surface would be thoroughly diluted to no effect and rinsed off the ceiling entirely.

The "freehand" areas were not treated this way, and instead received localized consolidation and cleaning by JBC staff as part of the treatment of a separate freehand Pindikowski Paintings Conservation exercise to be found in Appendix 2 of this report.

Essentially the same program was followed a month later when the team was able to erect scaffolding in the Assembly Room and inspect it closely.



ABOVE The images are all from the Council Chamber ceiling. Cleaning with plain water was quite effective and considered to be more than adequate. Only gentle scrubbing action was required to dislodge the dirt. No paint loss was observed.

CLEANING BEFORE CONSOLIDATION

The number of Murphy Bolts in these two ceilings exceeds 900. Each bolt represents a 1/4" hole through which HPCS consolidating resin could be expected to flow freely. Given that the ceilings were found in a very soiled condition and would be cleaned as part of the project, it was decided that prior to consolidation was the optimal time for cleaning.

Tests were conducted and simple distilled water with up to 4 drops of ph neutral soap (Sunlight dish soap) per gallon applied from hand atomizers and rinsed with clear distilled water was the selected method. Clean cotton wipes were used to dab the surface to remove drips that might have air-dried and formed a water stain because of soils or mobilized salts. Great care was taken to avoid abrasive scrubbing. None of the soil was particularly persistent. Anything that didn't come off with this treatment was left.

Once it has coalesced, the solvent for Rhoplex MC 76 is acetone. Cleaning excess Rhoplex off delicate surfaces with acetone would not be advisable. The decision was taken therefore to clean first and then dilute any Rhoplex that leaked during consolidation by giving it a constant light spray with distilled water.

Before and After Cleaning Images 2

Holes in the soffit had previously been patched with adhesive paper and printed to more or less match the ceiling.

Triangular section (southeast corner) of CC ceiling left uncleaned for client review.

Test cleaning of the Council Chamber ceiling was done with plain distilled water, distilled water and ph neutral soap and with soap-impregnated "soot" sponges. Ultimately, the sponges were discarded as unnecessary and potentially dangerous to the delicate surfaces.

Red pigments were found to be highly fugitive and were not cleaned.

In consultation with Jablonski Building Conservation, the decision was that HPCS would clean the ceiling with plain distilled water, with the exception of specified "freehand" Pindikowski elements.

Heavily sooted areas were first cleaned with a gentle air wash. These were areas that probably had not been cleaned since the 1939 fire because they were hidden or difficult to reach.

The cleaning method was a light spray of distilled water on clean Scott industrial towels. The towels are non-woven highly absorbent shop towels.

ABOVE The 2500 c. f. m. "Negative Air" unit equipped with Hepa filters was constantly used to clean the air in the project work area.

Council Chamber Consolidation Program

Divide the space logically into 8 more or less equal areas for treatment. Commence at Sector One and continue over the next two days to treat the entire ceiling.

First Treatment consists of a spray application of Rhoplex MC76 diluted with distilled water 50%.

In each Sector, spray +/- 40 litres of this dilution from the attic floor. This is a total application of approximately 320 litres of material over the entire ceiling and cornice for a coverage rate of 1 litre per 6 square feet.

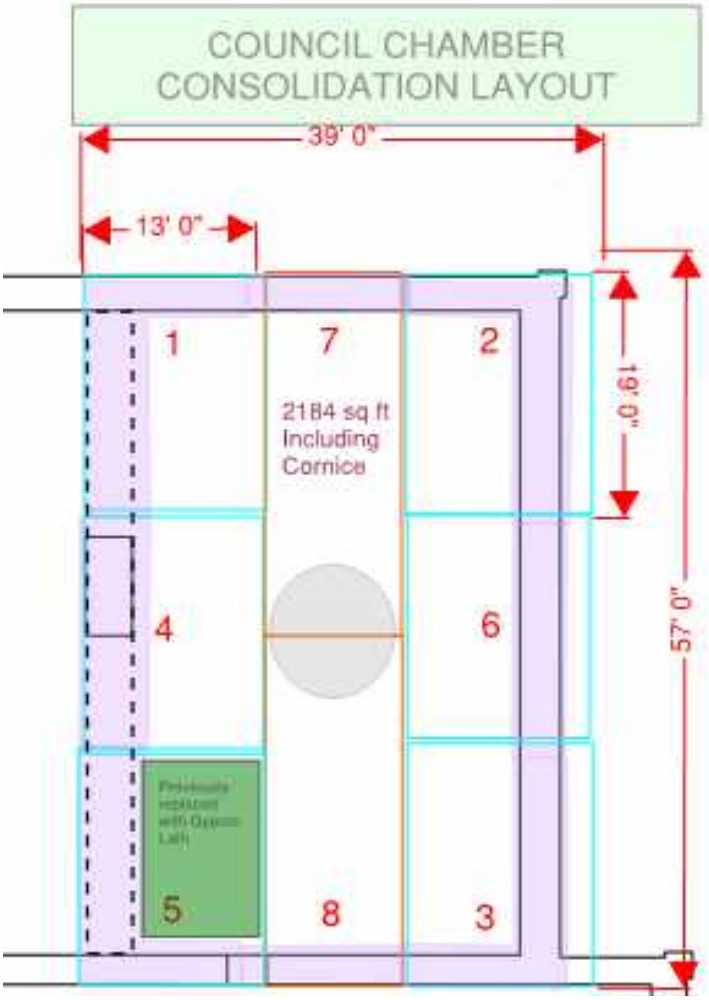
Second Application after the first material is dry to the touch consists of a further spray application of neat Rhoplex MC 76 at a rate of 15 litres per sector or about 16 sq. ft per litre.

Sector 5 has a significant replacement area as marked. This area was given a thorough application of material to make it easy to clean in future.

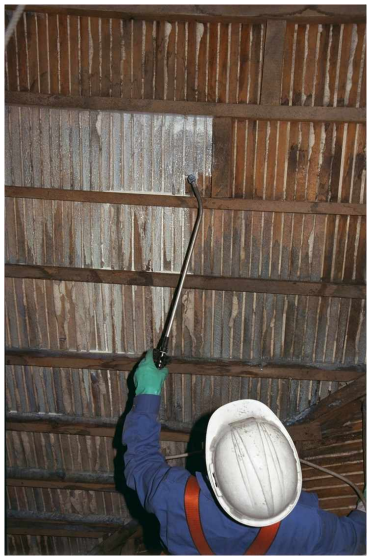
The third and final aspect to the consolidation treatment consists of the application of an adhesive formulated by HPCS using Rhoplex MC76 and several inert fillers. The fillers are of different sizes and produce a mortar-like material that replaces the missing keys and lugs of the original plaster system.
The three fillers used in equal proportions are:

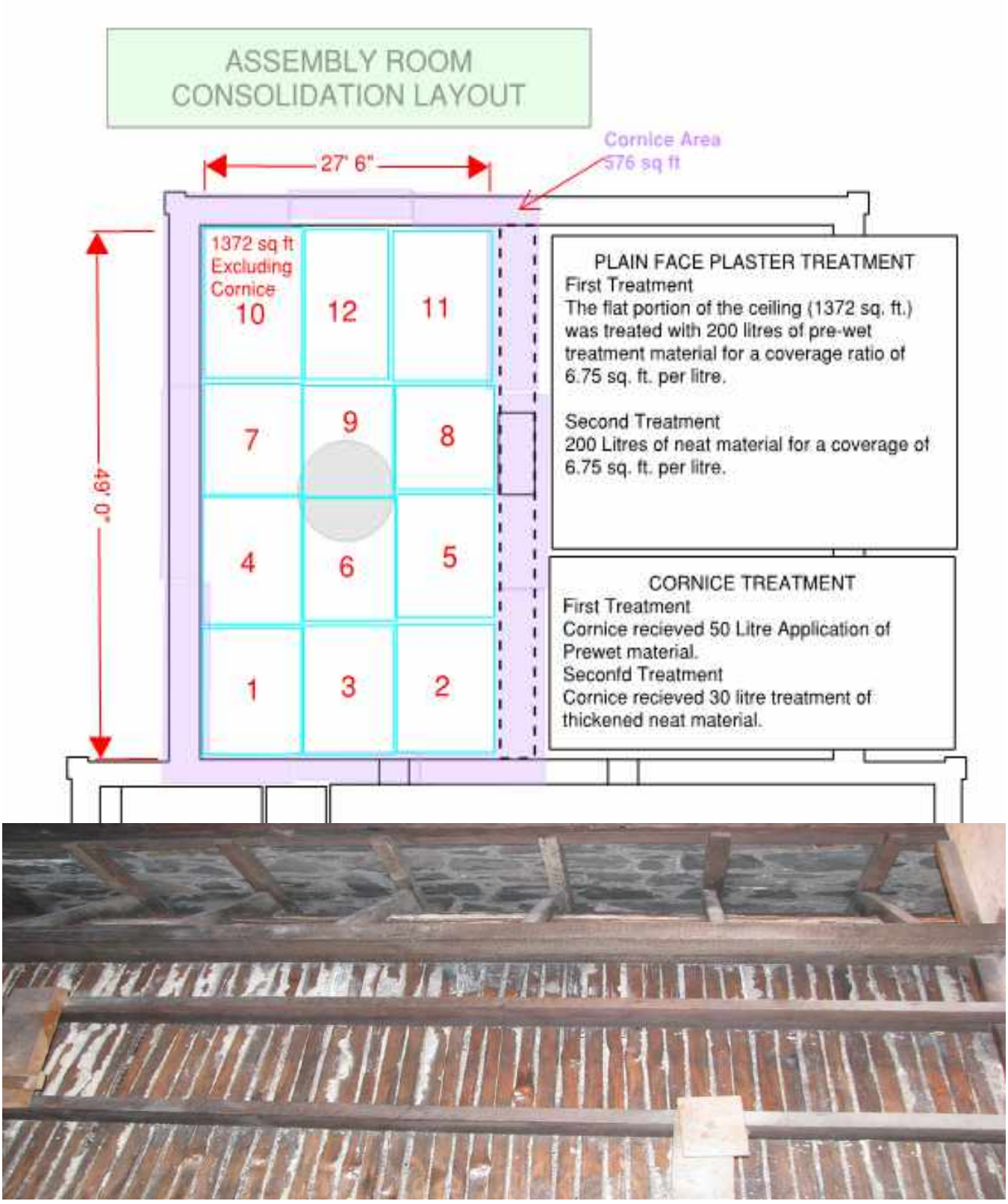
- Phenolic micro spheres
- Agricultural lime
- Fluid petroleum coke

HPCS has this material packed in 30 oz (800ml) caulking tubes. It is applied like a conventional caulk to replace the missing keys and lugs.



Schematic representation of the Committee Chamber divided into sectors for treatment. The mauve perimeter represents the area of the cornice relative to the area of the flat ceiling.





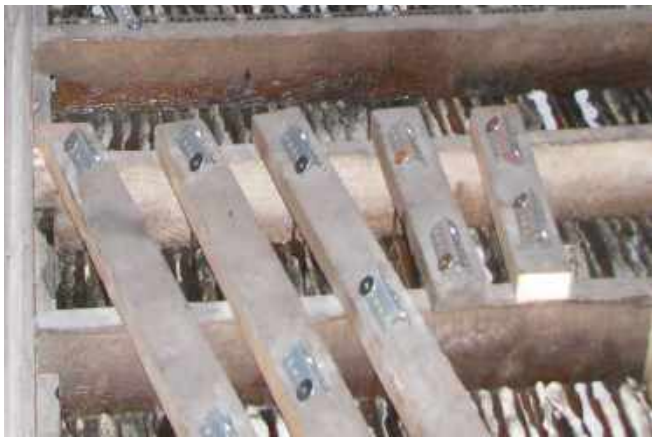
ABOVE Illustrates a section of ceiling that is cleaned and ready for consolidation treatment.

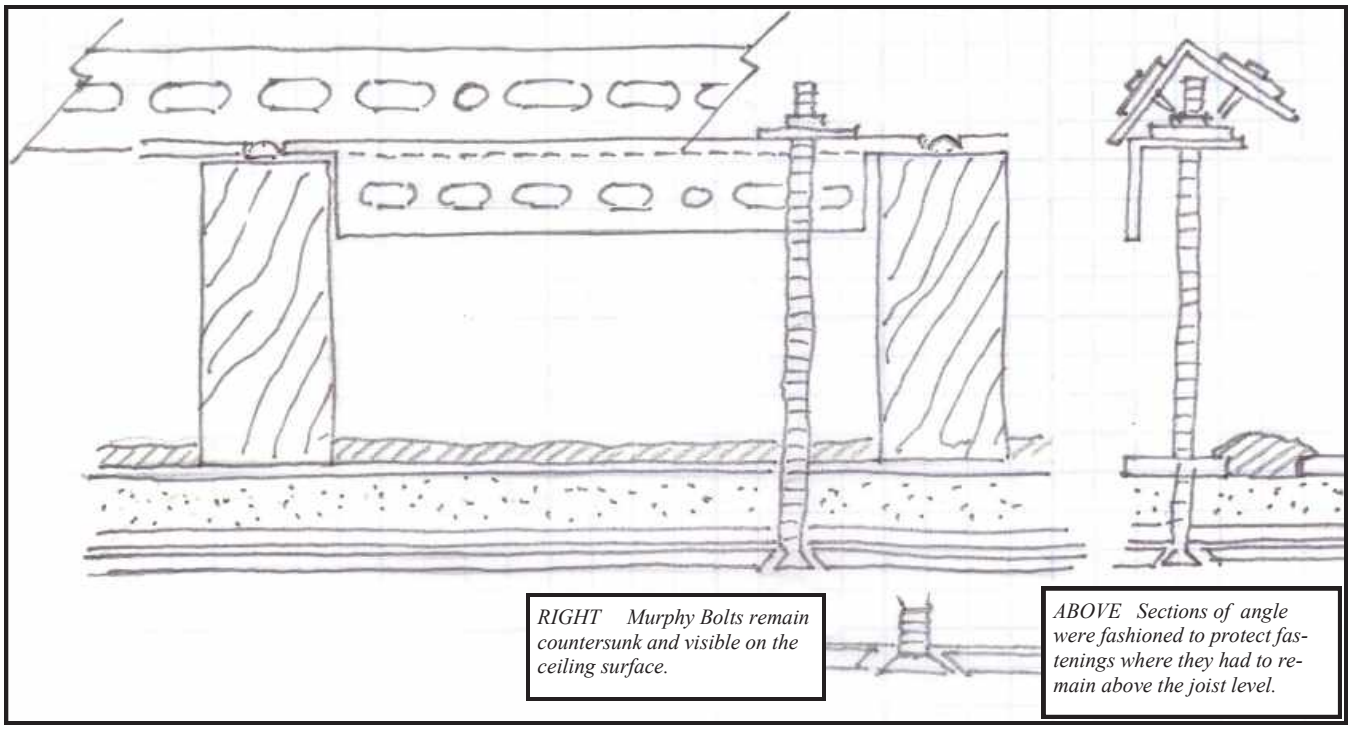
ABOVE Section of ceiling after spray application.

BELOW HPCS Plaster Lug & Key Replacement comes in 30 oz (850 ml) recyclable cartridges.

ABOVE Clean and consolidated upper side of ceiling ready for the application of HPCS Lug & Key Replacement.
BELOW Keys are replaced with an adhesive formulated with Rhoplex MC76 and three variously sized three fillers . It is compatible with and therefore bonds to the previously applied consolidant and, because of its fillers, has the thick consistency of a mortar similar to the brown coat of the original ceiling plaster.

The protruding heads of the Murphy Bolts were protected from accidental damage by future workers either by ensuring that they were well below the level of the joists, as above, or by installing protective covers over them, as in the three images below.



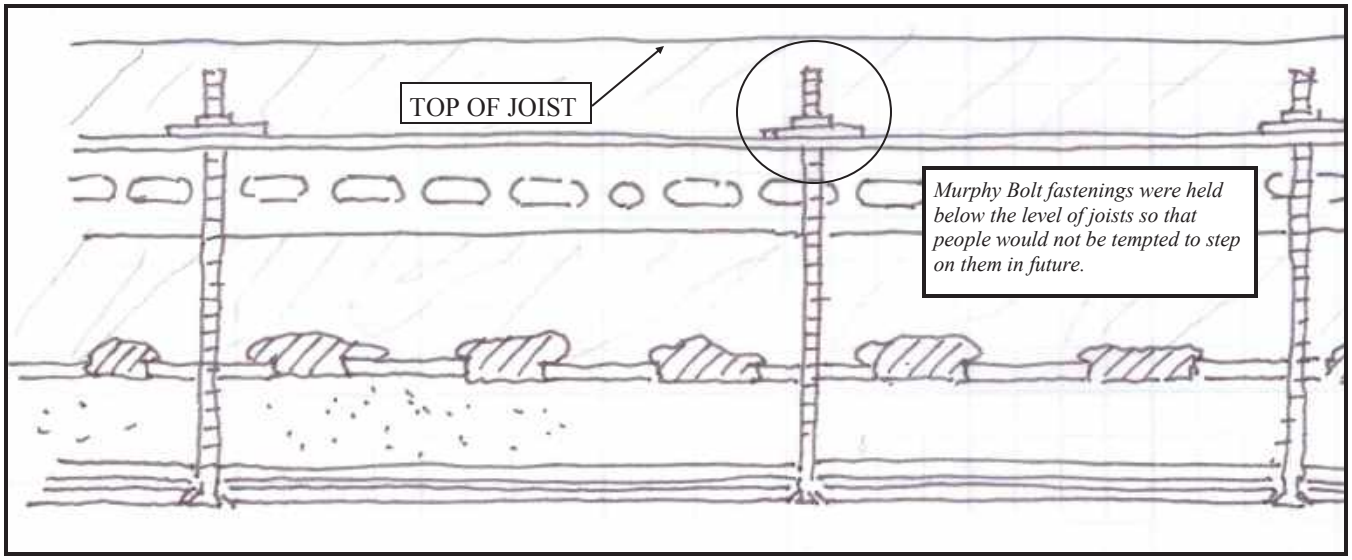


RIGHT Murphy Bolts remain countersunk and visible on the ceiling surface.

ABOVE Sections of angle were fashioned to protect fastenings where they had to remain above the joist level.

ABOVE In some locations the Murphy Bolts projecting through the ceiling into the attic were reconfigured so that they were now supported by a galvanized steel structure with termination points protected from foot traffic by additional metal elements. It was noted early on that most of the damage to the ceilings had been caused by people treading on the Murphy Bolts that had protruded unprotected through the rather makeshift support system that had been devised for them.

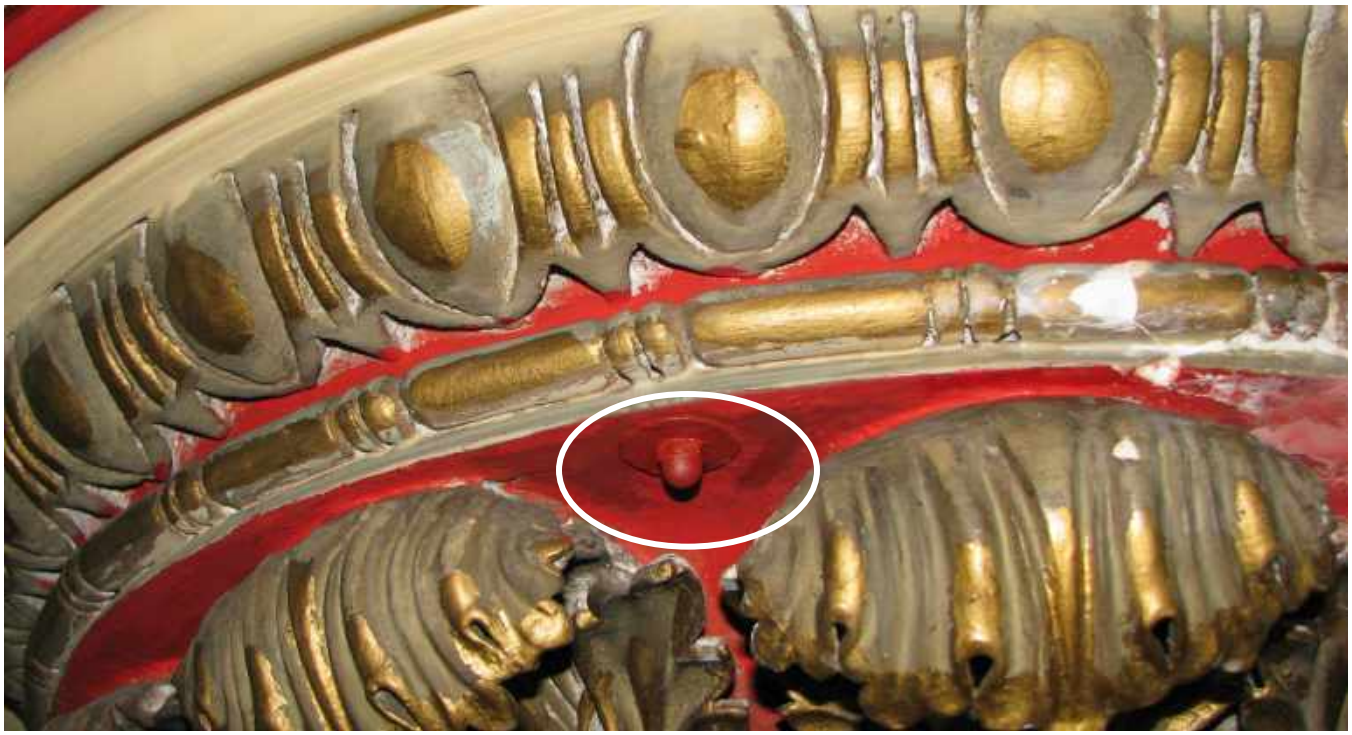
A substantial number of adhesive warning tags (NO STEP) were placed on the metal and wood elements of the restructured Murphy system.

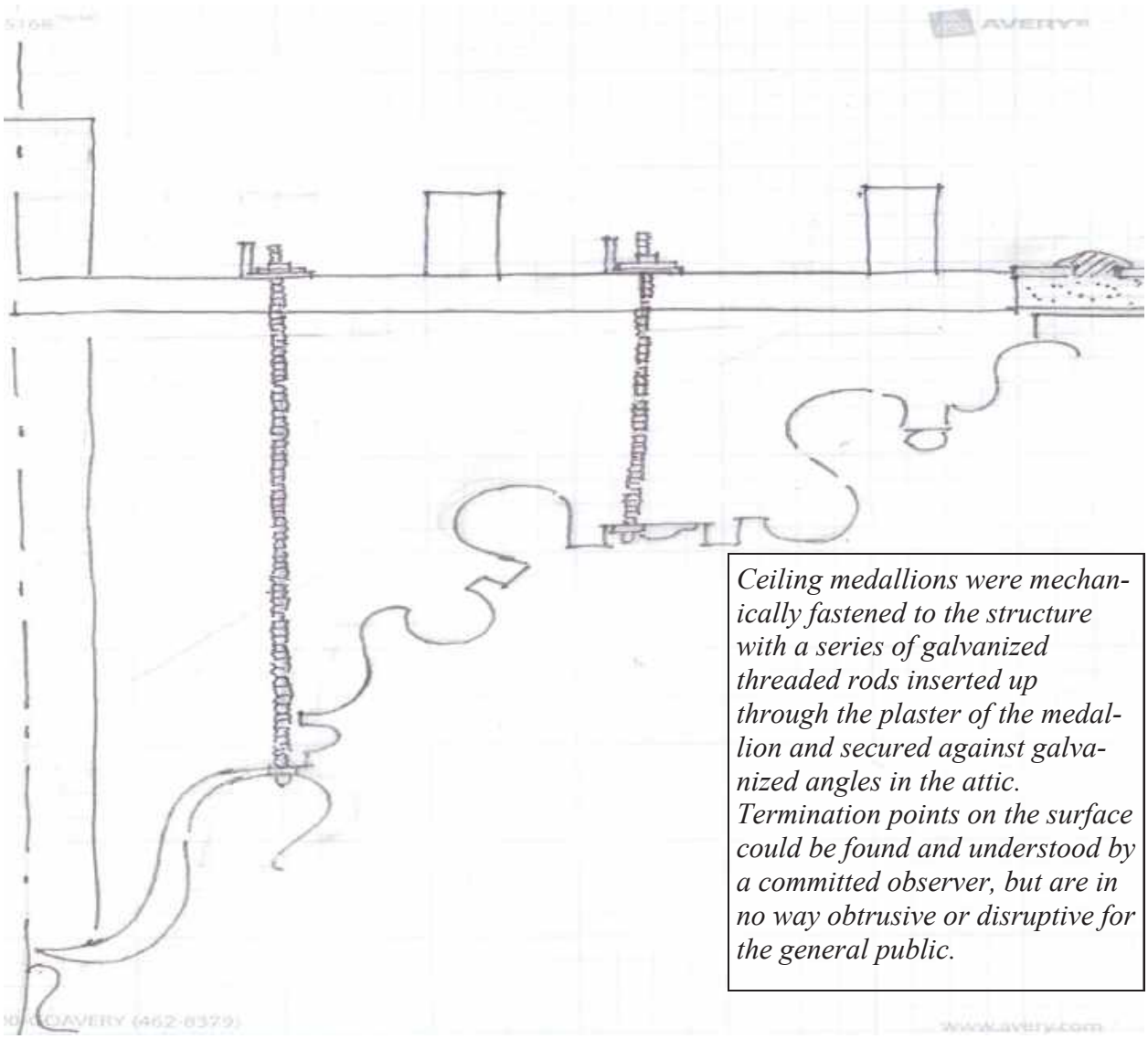


Murphy Bolt fastenings were held below the level of joists so that people would not be tempted to step on them in future.

Anchoring of Ceiling Centres

ABOVE and BELOW The ceiling medallions were re-anchored to the ceiling structure. Each required 8 rods fastened up through substantial cross-sections of the plaster at strategic locations around the perimeter. The room side of these fasteners was left visible so that restorers in the future can find them and assess the need for any additional intervention. Except through the use of field glasses by a knowledgeable investigator, these fastenings will be all but invisible from the floor.



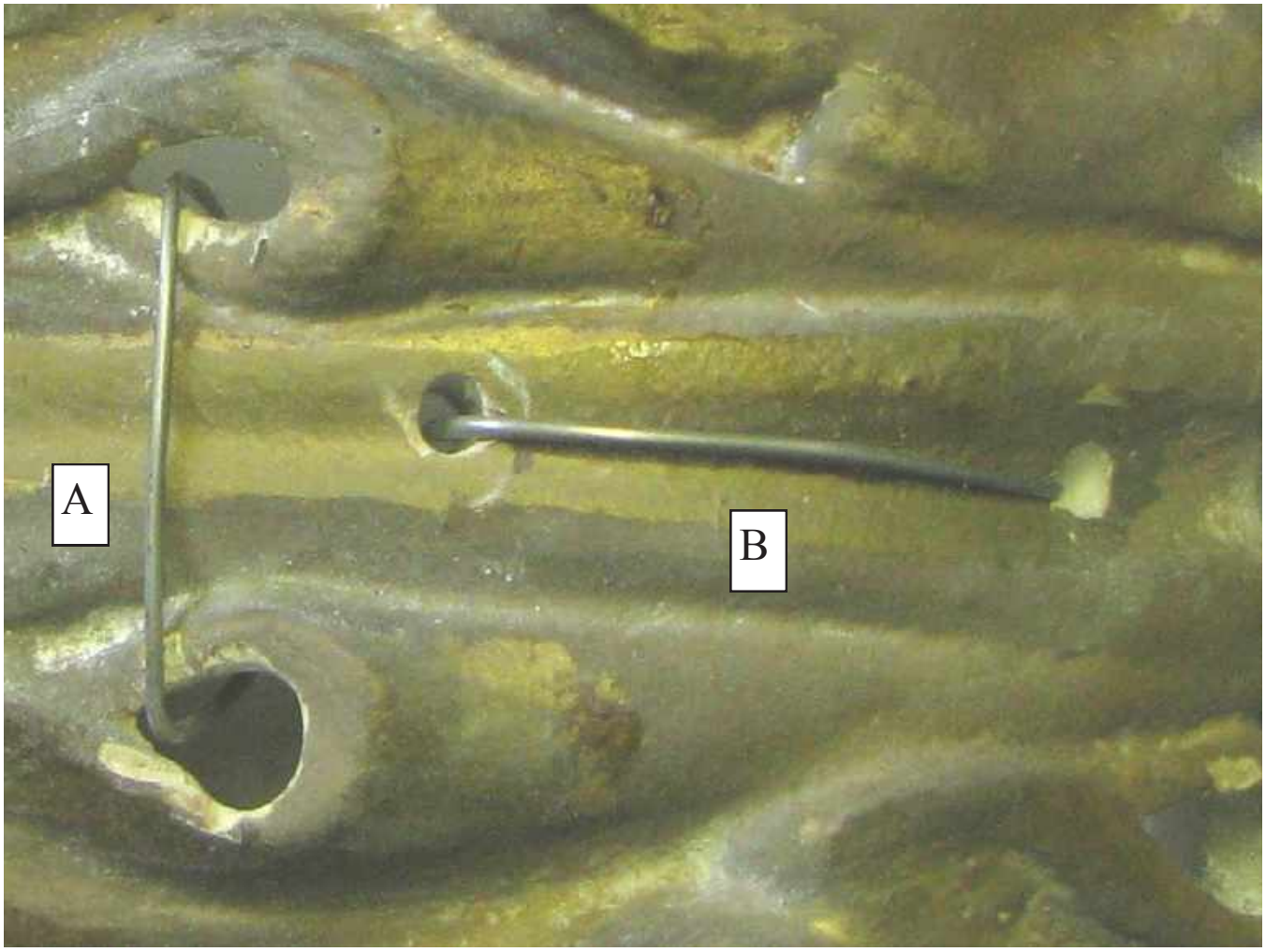


Ceiling medallions were mechanically fastened to the structure with a series of galvanized threaded rods inserted up through the plaster of the medallion and secured against galvanized angles in the attic. Termination points on the surface could be found and understood by a committed observer, but are in no way obtrusive or disruptive for the general public.

In the attic above the medallions, the new anchors terminate with large washers, a section of perforated angle and a non-slip nylon lock nut.

Mechanical Connection for Acanthus Leaves and Brackets

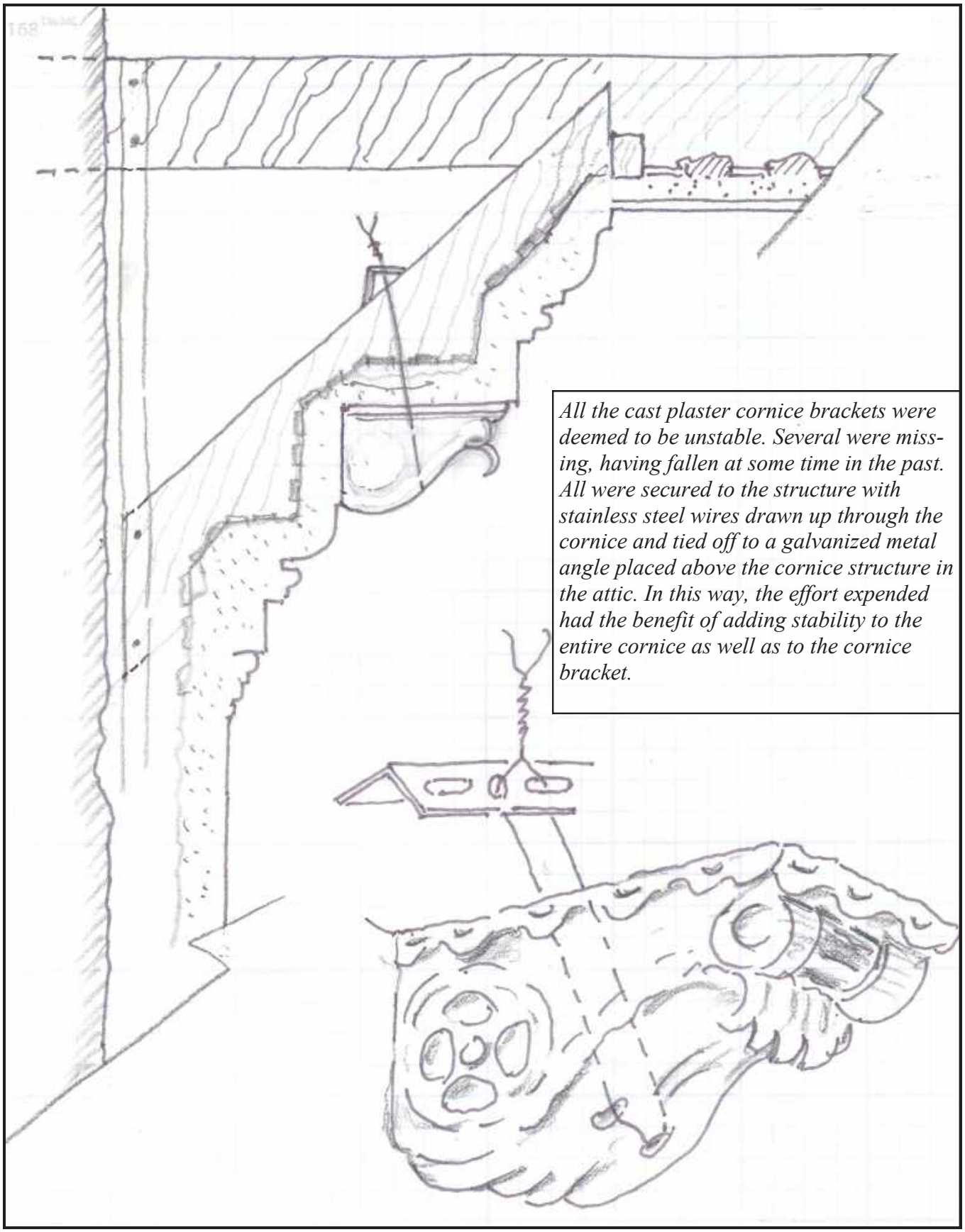
This acanthus leaf was used to demonstrate two different methods of making a mechanical connection between the ornamental plaster and the structure.



Two methods of providing a mechanical connection for the cornice, brackets and acanthus leaves are illustrated.
A In method one, a 1/8”-diameter hole is drilled up through each of two pre-existing holes in the acanthus leaf and on through the bulk of the plaster bracket and further through the wood lath and plaster substrate to which all of this assembly is attached.
B In this method, two new holes are drilled along the midline of the acanthus leaf. It is hoped that this will allow the wire to “hide” more effectively. These holes, like the holes in “A”, are pushed all the way up through the bracket and the substrate into the attic.
In both cases, the wires terminate on a new wood element running parallel to the wall above the exit location of the wires.
Neither method can be easily seen from the floor. Both methods can be seen and readily understood by a person intent on understanding the issues of fastening the decorative plaster.

“A” was selected because it requires a lower level of intervention and is more fully reversible.

The stainless wire hangers for the leaf are brought up through the bracket and cornice substrate and terminated around a perforated galvanized angle. The angle is installed on the original wood cornice support structure and runs continuously around the perimeter of both rooms. This stainless wire acts efficiently to stabilize the entire cornice.



All the cast plaster cornice brackets were deemed to be unstable. Several were missing, having fallen at some time in the past. All were secured to the structure with stainless steel wires drawn up through the cornice and tied off to a galvanized metal angle placed above the cornice structure in the attic. In this way, the effort expended had the benefit of adding stability to the entire cornice as well as to the cornice bracket.

Ornamental Replacement Parts Were Created

Samples of plaster ornament were taken so that molds could be made for replication of missing elements. All ornament is common to both rooms.

17 Silicone RTV Rubber Molds were made for the following elements:

Cornice Bracket
Cornice Bracket Acanthus Leaf
Tip for above
Rosette for Cornice
Egg and Dart for between Brackets on Cornice

Acanthus Leaf for Central Medallion
Tip for above
Cylindrical Ball for Medallions

Acanthus Leaf for Gallery Columns
Tip for above
Left-hand Double Leaf Sprays for the Gallery Columns
Right-hand Double Leaf Spray for the Gallery Columns
Stag Horns for Gallery Columns
Flower for Gallery Columns
Centre for Flower for Gallery Columns

Tip for Gallery Fascia Acanthus Leaf
Egg and Dart for Gallery Fascia

260 individual parts were made and fitted.

Some parts were cast using 5 lb. per cubic ft. urethane foam. Typically this material was reserved for the heaviest parts and for the leaves.

Smaller more intricate parts were cast in Hydrocal 100 casting plaster.

ABOVE Some of the parts required for the plaster restoration aspect of the project.

ABOVE Capitals and other ornament below the galleries were in particularly distressed condition.

ABOVE Cornice Bracket elements—in this case, short sections of Egg and Dart molding—are fastened with adhesive and bamboo dowels and are held in place with braces against other ornament while the adhesive sets.
BELOW A substantial number of acanthus leaves' tips were missing and had to be replaced with replica parts cast from original samples.

SIGNED WORK IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AND ASSEMBLY ROOM

Over the 155 years since the Colonial Building was built there have been many major and minor interventions. A complete history of these interventions has not been compiled and is not the part of the current report.

Records of various kinds would contribute to such a history. One of the records richly presented and heretofore not taken into account, is the signatures of participants found throughout the building. The tradition, stronger in some cultures than others, of "signing your work" is apparently strong in Newfoundland.

In both the Council Chamber and Assembly Room, there are dozens of signatures and marks made by tradesmen who were possibly proud of their accomplishment or simply saw a chance for immortality. For the most part these names are found on upper ledges and "spots" hidden from the general view. Access to view them is rare and difficult to arrange. It is important that as they are found, they are recorded.

In these two rooms, the significance of the signatures is that when they include dates, as many do, and are painted using the same paint we find on the ceiling, we have a firm and accurate chronology of at least some parts of the puzzle concerning sequence and over-painting that has yet to be unraveled for these ceilings.

This report presents these signatures as we have found them with location indicators so that future research can be done by others as required. See APPENDIX 1.

A typical example of signing, this one from the Assembly Room, says "J. Finn 1940". It is in a vivid red paint, a colour seen extensively applied to the medallion and cornice. Analysis of the paint would confirm that it was probably Mr. Finn who applied the paint we see today. Scientific research would lead to an understanding of whether this was a creative initiative of the 1940 campaign or whether it was over-painting a previous red that might have faded as reds do, or that had been washed off or otherwise lost.

APPENDIX 1
All of the following signatures and marks occur on the upper top ledge of the lower cornice of the Council Chamber, starting at the southwest corner and running clockwise around the room.
Here in the southwest corner the letter "M" is seen along with two layout marks used to locate the wall stencils.

BELOW: G. F_ wlo__ 1946

ABOVE __ Walsh carved his name.

BELOW Conway Plaster, apparently a firm of three brothers, were here in 1986.

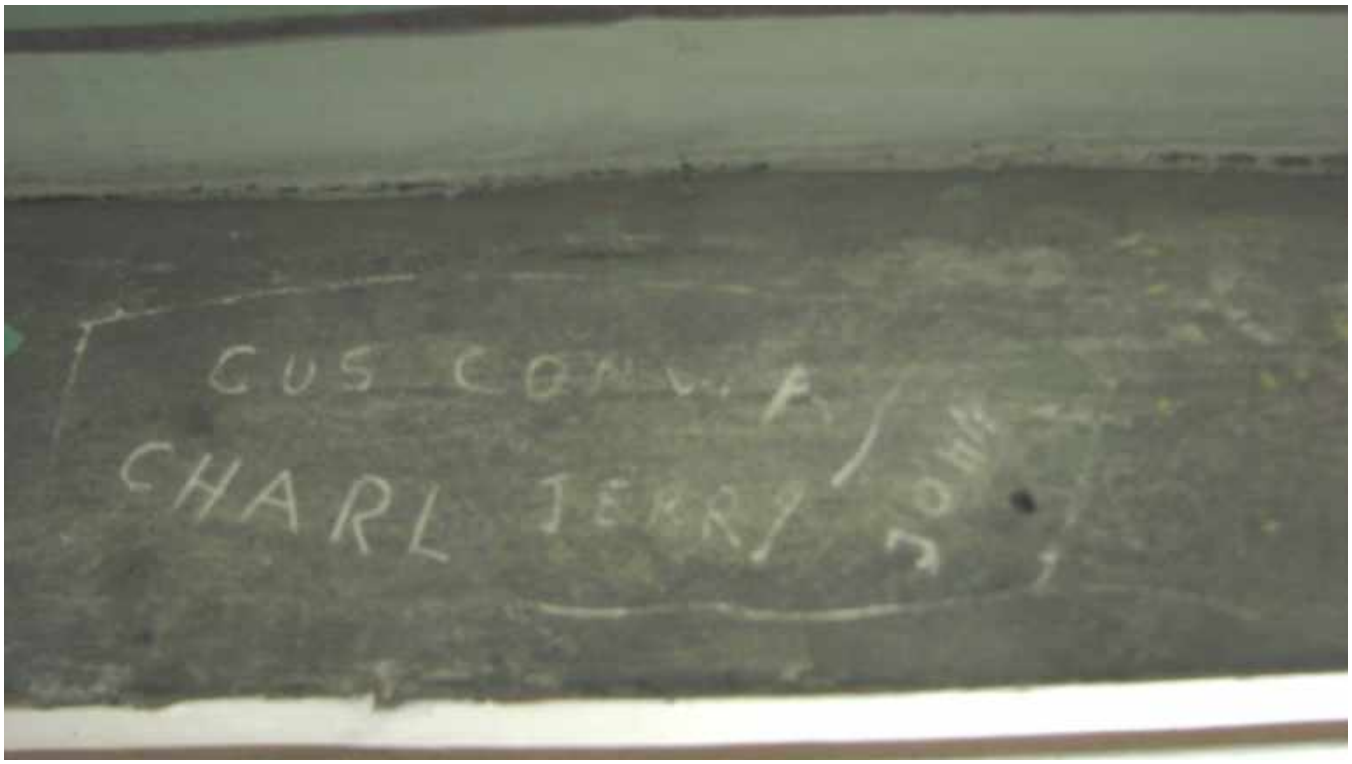
ABOVE J. Graham signed by carving beside a set of stencil layout marks seen in the circle.

BELOW WJP carved elegant letters.

ABOVE Possibly Andrew was planning something larger when he was told to scale back his offering. In any case, here Andrew Pinhorn used a combination of upper- and lowercase letters to spell his name.

BELOW C. Kane signed in 1946.

ABOVE This 1946 signature and the initials J.T. appear on the top ledge of the great Corinthian capital in the northeast corner of the room.
BELOW R.M. has signed for eternity in the same location.



ABOVE The Conway plastering firm signed again as a group. Jerome is absent but the group has been joined by other family members, Jerry and John.

BELOW J. Conway signed alone in 1986 in a way that is similar to the group effort above.

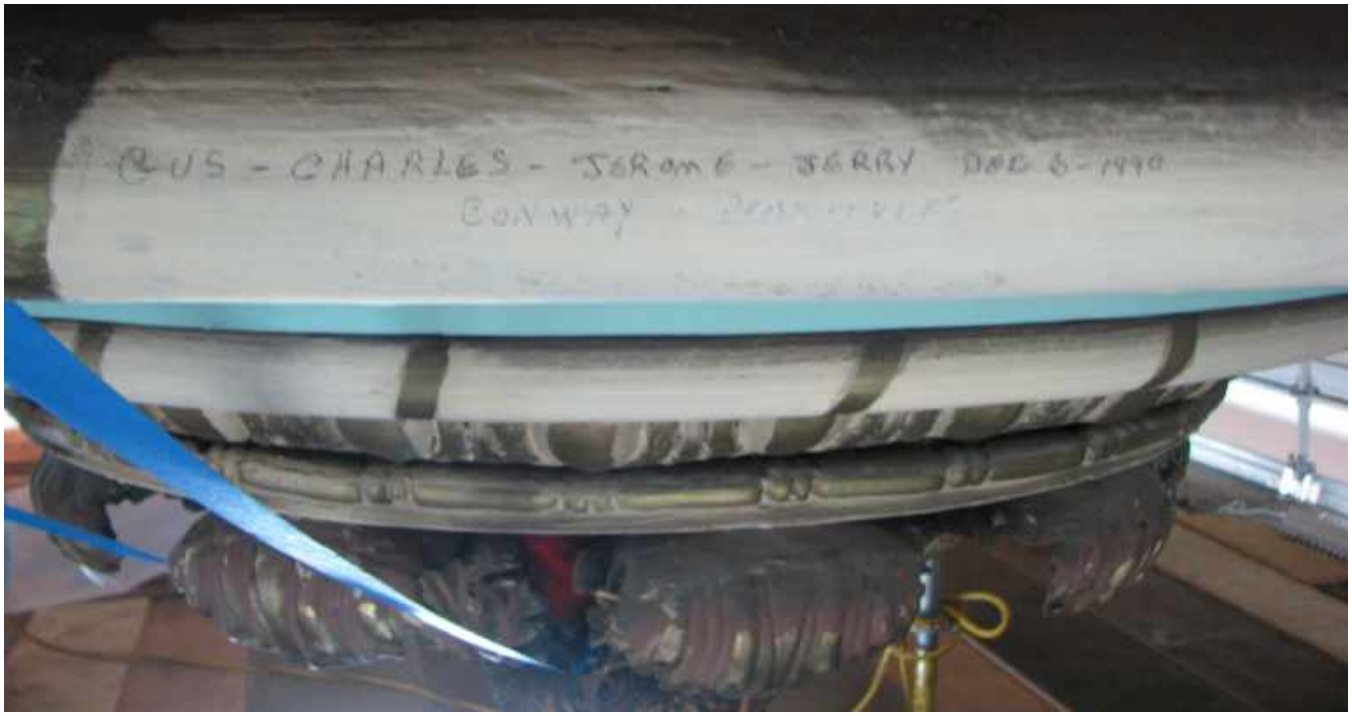
ABOVE Again, the signature of J. Graham, this time with the clear date of 1878. Further research on this subject might yield some information about his work. The date is the only record we have of activity in this room before the major decorating campaign by Pindikowski.
BELOW In 1940, Clem Murphy signed C.J. Murphy. This signature establishes the date for the installation of the "Murphy" bolts that protected the ceiling from collapse from 1940 until the current work in 2009. Notice that Murphy signed right over top of C. Kane who apparently had a large brush.

ABOVE J. H. made his undated mark in a carved serif typeface, probably as early as any other.

BELOW Someone named WESCOTT had some very bright red paint to work with in 1946.

ABOVE H. Pike had a very bold painting style.

BELOW The Conway plastering family returned to the Council Chamber in 1990 and signed the lip of the ceiling medallion together. Note that Jerome and Jerry are apparently brothers.



ABOVE J. Byrne signed on July 18th, 1945, on the top ledge of a Corinthian capital.

INFILL PAINTING TO REPAIR LOSSES OF THE LINEAR AND NON-FIGURATIVE PAINTING OF THE CEILINGS AND FRIEZES

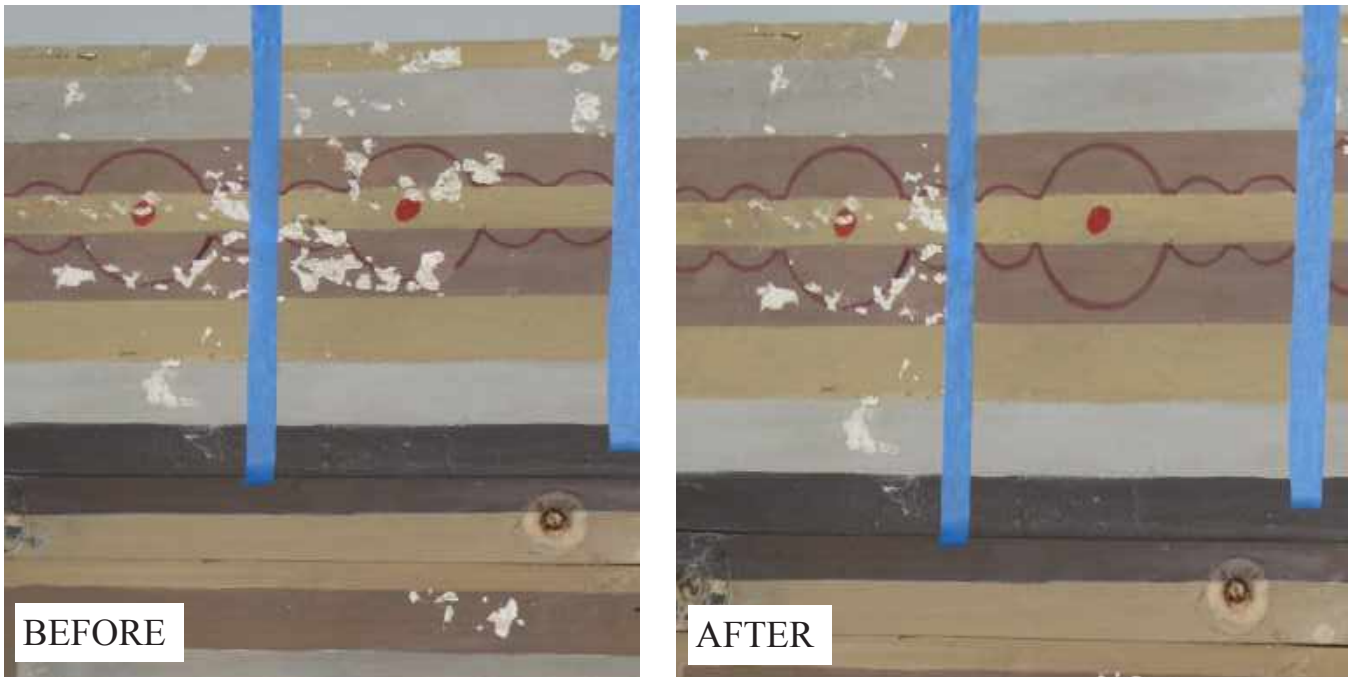
From the outset, the client made it clear that this was not to be a restoration project and that after consolidation, only the minimum work required to make the two rooms presentable would be undertaken.

This “minimum” standard had to be met by the process of mock-up presentations in which the client could see a specific condition and the option to amend it in a specific way to make it “presentable.”

For instance, in the case of the very deteriorated painted surface condition of the borders of the Council Chamber ceiling, these before-and-after mockups were presented. The dentils on the frieze and the cornice brackets were other examples of this piecemeal and conservative approach. Each and every painting repair option was presented in this manner, with HPCS personnel undertaking the specific work requested as these requests were made.

CONSERVATORS RETAINED FOR ESSENTIAL WORK ON PINDIKOWSKI FIGURATIVE PAINTING

Ultimately, we arrived at a selection of what we will refer to as conservation painting options that were beyond the expertise of the HPCS staff on this project. For those specific treatments, HPCS engaged Jablonski Building Conservation, New York, to analyze and determine what treatments might best be applied where the original A. Pindikowski work was to be treated.



ABOVE Mock Up of recommended repair painting to losses in the typical border areas of the decorative painting in the Council Chamber. Surface was cleaned, loose paint was removed. The exposed plaster was primed, and the touch ups were done in pigmented latex paint.