



Swanke Hayden Connell Architects hired for restoration work on The Barnum Museum

The Barnum Museum announced today that [Swanke Hayden Connell Architects](#) have been awarded the contract to work on this national landmark building which suffered significant damage during the June 24, 2010 tornado in Bridgeport CT. The cost to repair the damage specifically related to the tornado is currently estimated at \$6 or \$7 million. However, since those repairs require relocating and moving the entire collection of artifacts, the Barnum Museum Foundation has determined it would be in the best long term interest to fix other parts of the building and do a complete overhaul of the exhibition space which is expected to be a \$15 to \$17 million project taking more than two years to complete.

The original museum building, designed by the architectural firm of Longstaff and Hurd was constructed in the 1890s and is owned by the City of Bridgeport and listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

“The building itself is a work of art,” commented Kathy Maher, Executive Director and Curator for The Barnum Museum, “and therefore the collection inside is just part of the overall restoration process. The two are connected and must be revitalized simultaneously.” “We’ve had our hard hats and protective gloves on for months, but much more work needs to be done so that the public will once again have access to this magnificent museum show casing the treasures related to the life and times of P.T. Barnum and greater Bridgeport,” continued Maher.

“The Barnum Museum is one of the City’s most famous landmarks, as well as home to an important collection of artifacts of one our most famous residents,” said Mayor Bill Finch. “We want to see the building restored and will assist as much as possible in getting the doors open again so Kathy and her staff can return to their museum ‘home.’ “

Representing the firm of Swanke Hayden Connell Architects based out of New York City will be Richard S. Hayden, FAIA, RIBA Consulting Principal Chairman and Elizabeth Moss LEED AP, Project Director, Architect Conservator and Senior Associate.

Richard Hayden commented, “The commission for the restoration and repair of the Barnum Museum is fulfilling on both a personal and professional level. As a long-time homeowner in Fairfield CT and as Chairman of Swanke Hayden Connell Architects, I can fully appreciate the commitment that a community and its local government must make to celebrate its history while providing a source of learning and entertainment for its future. Bridgeport is a wonderful city with a rich history and a plethora of historically magnificent structures. We are proud to be part of the renewal of one of these gems.”

The Barnum Museum Foundation has raised more than \$250,000 so far to be used specifically for the restoration of the collection and the operation of the museum. The major funders and represented at the



announcement on Feb. 25 were: The City of Bridgeport, Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, Fairfield County Community Foundation, People's United Community Foundation, Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, and a special thanks to Elizabeth M. Pfriem..

Other corporate supporters include: Antinozzi Associates, Aquarion, AT&T, BlumShapiro, Bridgeport and Port Jefferson Steamboat Company, Bridgeport Arena at Harbor Yard, Bridgeport Community Historical Society, Bridgeport Energy, Bridgeport Host Lyons Charities. Bridgeport Landing Development LLC. Brody Wilkinson PC, Compuledger, Cutsogeorge Tooman & Allen Architects, Downtown Special Services District, Feld Entertainment, Foundation for Life/Barnum Financial, Friedberg, Smith & Co. PC, Friends of the Case Memorial Library, GE Corporate, Hampton Save A Landmark, Hearst Media Services, KBE Building Corporation, Lamar Advertising, Merit Insurance, Merrill Lynch, Mountain Grove Cemetery, People's United Bank, Pullman and Comley, LLC, RC Bigelow, Rotair Industries, Shoff Darby Companies, Inc., Sikorsky Credit Union, St. Vincent's Hospital, Trefz, Unicco, United Way, University of Bridgeport, Wells Fargo Advisors and Wingnutz Home Improvement, LLC.

In addition, the museum wishes to acknowledge and thank the hundreds of private supporters and volunteers who contributed their time, money and services to the Barnum Museum Tornado Recovery project.

Also present at the press conference today were: Bridgeport Mayor Bill Finch and Tom McCarthy, President, Bridgeport City Council and Barnum Museum Foundation Board Vice Chairman, Mary Donohue of the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, Helen Higgins of Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, Barry Hawkins of Fairfield County Community Foundation and Karen Galbo of People's United Community Foundation. Any of these individuals may be contacted to answer questions pertaining to their role and specialties with this project.

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The Barnum Museum has been completely closed to the public since January 2, 2011 in order to assess damage, begin the preservation of the collection and repair the building structure following tornado damage suffered on June 24, 2010. None of the exhibits illustrating P.T. Barnum's extraordinary business and personal accomplishments are open. Before planning a visit, please check the website www.barnum-museum.org or call 203-331-1104 to learn some of the many interesting facts or history related to P.T. Barnum.