



Stone by Stone

Province House Conservation Project



Province House National Historic Site (NHS) is currently undergoing an extensive conservation project. Built more than 170 years ago, Province House NHS is a complex building and its conservation presents a unique challenge of rehabilitating the structure while respecting its character-defining heritage elements.

The Government of Canada is proudly investing in the long-term preservation of Province House NHS. Full details of the project can be found on our website:
www.parkscanada.gc.ca/provincehouse

This periodic newsletter showcases the stories of Province House NHS and the efforts being made to save this iconic piece of our cultural heritage.

Quick Tips for Visitors

Even though Province House NHS is closed for conservation, Parks Canada continues to tell the story of the building:

Explore **“The Story of Confederation”** exhibit at the Confederation Centre of the Arts (upper foyer), which includes an impressive replica of the Confederation Chamber.
Free admission.

November to May – 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Saturdays only.
June, September and October – 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Monday to Saturday, closed Sunday.

July and August – 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday to Saturday,
12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Sunday.

Fast Facts

- Province House National Historic Site was built between 1843 and 1847.
- The first session of the Prince Edward Island Legislature was held in the building in January 1847. It is Canada’s second oldest active legislative building, after Nova Scotia’s “Province House,” which opened in 1819.
- Province House is owned by the Province of Prince Edward Island and is operated as a national historic site by Parks Canada, through an agreement signed with the Province in 1974.
- A major restoration project was undertaken by Parks Canada between 1979 and 1983 to restore a portion of the building to the 1864 period.



Ongoing Conservation Work at Province House National Historic Site

PHASE 2 UPDATE:

Phase 2 of the conservation project is winding down at Province House National Historic Site (NHS). This phase began in May 2018 and focused on the building envelope, essentially the structural parts of the building, including the foundation, interior and exterior walls, portico floors and roof.

Stonemasons have completed approximately 99 per cent of the exterior masonry work and approximately 95 per cent of the interior masonry work. When the white sailcloth surrounding the building comes down, there will be slight colour difference between the old and new exterior stones. Over time, the new stones will weather through a process called oxidation and will blend in with the original, older stones.

The roof work is also underway with approximately 90 per cent of the roof sheathing and rafter repairs complete. Contractors are using a combination of traditional materials with new, state-of-the-art components and high-quality design, which will not only restore the roof, but improve it. The new roof will enhance water management and prevent water from entering into the walls. The new insulation will reduce ice build-up and damming on the roof, ensuring that the structure will be better protected from nature's battering. There will also be less on-going maintenance and repairs required going forward.

The underpinning of the basement (lowering of the cellar floor) will begin once the basement walls have been consolidated.



Approximately 85 per cent of the walls below grade are complete. The underpinning is a labour-intensive process and involves supporting sections of the walls, excavating rock and soil, pouring new concrete, and waiting for it to cure before moving on to an adjacent section of wall. A structural engineer will be watching this work closely to ensure the building remains structurally sound throughout the process. This work is expected to begin in early 2022.

The basement floor is being lowered to increase the amount of usable space in the building. Previously, the basement was unfinished. It was humid, had dirt floors, and a person of average height could not access it without hunching over. Lowering the cellar floor by approximately one metre will create enough headroom to allow the basement to be a fully usable space. After the underpinning is complete, this floor will include accessible and inclusive public washroom facilities, a staff lunch room, storage rooms, and mechanical and electrical service rooms.

However, one part of the basement, the former caretakers suite, will be preserved in its original form.



PHASE 3 UPDATE:

Phase 3 is focused on preserving the character-defining elements of Province House while upgrading the building to 21st century standards. The scope includes fit-up work such as the interior finishes (painting and flooring) and upgrades to operational components such as fire and safety systems, information technology and audio visual, plumbing and electrical systems, as well as heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems. There will also be numerous improvements to universal accessibility at Province House NHS, including exterior building access, universally-accessible washrooms, and improvements to lighting and signage to assist the visually impaired.



Phase 3 is officially underway at Province House NHS with the dismantling of select vaults in the basement and the central core (which houses the elevator and bathrooms). The design work for this phase is also finished, marking a very special milestone in the conservation project. Tenders for the various contracts have gone out, and contracted work will begin in early 2022.

An exciting new element is the geothermal heating and cooling system. This new system will not only maintain comfortable temperatures year-round and improve air quality, but will also ensure that the building and its contents are not subjected to damaging temperature and humidity fluctuations, better protecting and preserving this building for many years to come. It will also greatly decrease the overall energy consumption, saving about \$10,000 annually.

PHASE 4 UPDATE:

The final portion of the project, Phase 4, involves the design, development and installation of the new visitor experience offer at Province House NHS. In 2020 and 2021, Parks Canada hosted multiple virtual engagement sessions with various stakeholders, representatives from cultural communities, and Indigenous community members to gather information, ideas, and perspectives to inform the development of an interpretive plan.

The interpretive plan, completed early in 2021, guides the development and design process for the exhibits. See below for more information about the interpretive exhibits.

Province House Exhibit Project Update

The exhibit development process for Province House NHS continues, with the Exhibit Project Team working closely with the design and content consultants (GSM Project and Kathleen Wiens). A Concept Design package was delivered to the team in July 2021, incorporating many of the ideas gathered during the engagement sessions. It identifies the over-arching concept for both the content and design of the exhibits as “ripple effects and echoing voices.” This concept will guide Parks Canada’s approach to the exhibit development to help visitors explore the rippling impacts that past and present decisions made at Province House have had on Islanders and Canadians.

The exhibits will feature voices and perspectives of the past and present, including many that have previously been excluded from the story of this place. With the objective of inspiring visitors, the exhibits will highlight the potential impact that every citizen has to start a ripple effect through civic or political engagement or activism.

Through the conceptual brainstorming process, six guiding principles were identified for the exhibit. These principles will inform decisions made by the project team throughout the exhibit development process to ensure that overall visitor experience objectives will be achieved.

These include using universal themes to help visitors relate to the stories told; an inclusive approach to story-telling to ensure that visitors of diverse backgrounds see their experiences represented; focusing on stories about people to enhance a feeling of connection; developing participative, ‘shareable’ experiences throughout the exhibits to engage and inspire visitors, along with sensory experiences to support different facets of learning; and finally, centering Mi’kmaw culture and exploring Indigenous perspectives and world views alongside Western approaches to governance and democracy.

With the help and guidance from our partners at L'nuey, six members of the Mi'kmaw community were invited to form a First Nations Advisory Circle. This group has been advising the project team on content and design approaches to ensure that Mi'kmaw culture and heritage is represented appropriately and accurately.

A Stakeholder Advisory Committee has been established to help guide the work. The ten members of this committee represent key stakeholders, including the Legislative Assembly, the City of Charlottetown, the Confederation Centre of the Arts, the Tourism Industry Association of PEI, and others. Both groups will be engaged for the duration of the project to discuss and consider options for the exhibit, provide input and offer feedback on all content, graphics, and audio/visual elements of the exhibit.

In July, 2021, the First Nations Advisory Circle recommended that the exhibits be presented in three languages, with each language treated equally. With this in mind, and inspired by Government of Canada's decision to implement the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), the Project Team decided that the entire exhibit would be presented in English, French and Mi'kmaw. This decision shifted the overall interpretive

approach to include more audio and video in the overall experience, which will help to tell complex stories, share multiple voices and first-person accounts, and to create more immersive experiences while broadening the narrative of the stories told.

In-person workshops were held in Charlottetown and Lennox Island First Nation in October 2021 to kick off the Schematic Design phase of the project. These workshops were key to gathering input from the project team, partners, and stakeholders about which stories are told where, and which media to use to tell different stories in meaningful and engaging ways. Participants considered stories and discussed a variety of approaches, including audio/video, testimonials, participative exhibits, and interactive experiences.

The next few months will be focused on clarifying and refining the schematic design for all of the exhibit spaces and developing a narrative framework that will unite the spaces of the exhibit through an audio guide experience.





A love for the craft

Robert Morrison is an expert in his field, with 41-years experience in the stonemason industry

Robert Morrison enjoys a good challenge when it comes to one of the oldest professions in the world.

Morrison, who is originally from Bristol, England, has 41 years of experience as a stonemason, and has worked on various historic buildings across Canada and the United Kingdom.

Two hundred and fifty hours later, Morrison has completed one of the most technically challenging pieces of his career- the ionic capital for the Province House National Historic Site (NHS) conservation project.

“That was a particularly complex piece,” said Morrison. “Something like that is once in a lifetime.”

In addition to being a stonemason, Morrison is also a certified CAD draftsman and is the production manager for RJW Stonemasons, the contractor who is carrying out the masonry work for the Province House NHS conservation project.

The masonry work began in the fall of 2018 and is ongoing. Approximately 2,500 separate stone repairs are being performed - using the same tools that were used when Province House was constructed between 1843-1847- a hammer and chisel.

A further 1,300 exterior stones are being replaced. Morrison assisted with the drawing, cutting and shaping of the Wallace, Nova Scotia stone being used for the exterior walls of the building.

Morrison said what made carving the ionic capital so challenging was the sheer magnitude of the stone and the fact that in all of his research, this ionic capital proved to be one of a kind.

An ionic capital is located on the topmost section of a column in a façade (the porch-like structure at the entrances of classical symmetrical buildings). Province House NHS has eight ionic capitals, and although they appear classical, the size and proportion of the volutes (the scroll-like embellishment on the ionic capital) are significantly different than traditional methods.

Therefore, Morrison had to manually find the centre of each individual curve as it spirals in the volutes, create his own template, then carefully measure and carve each section by hand.

There is no room for error in this delicate work.

“You have to have a clear head,” explained Morrison. “You have to think 3-4 steps ahead so that you are not cutting something off that you may need.”

Morrison began his career as a stonemason in 1980. He was immediately fascinated by the trade. He’s worked on the Palace of Westminster (which was constructed in 1016), Buckingham Palace, and Balliol College in Oxford as well as several notable cathedrals in England.

Morrison and a team of stonemasons moved to Canada in 1986 as part of a 22-month contract to help rejuvenate the stonemason industry as many of the historic buildings across the country were in desperate need of restoration.

Their first project was the Nova Scotia Legislature (also called Province House). The team apprenticed 12 local employees in an effort to share these traditional stonemasonry techniques.

Morrison went on to make Canada his home and has worked on various historic buildings. His most recent projects include Province House NHS and the Parliamentary Precinct.

Morrison said the ionic capital for Province House NHS is a real portfolio piece.

“I have a great sense of pride,” said Morrison on completing the ionic capital. “The opportunity to work on this piece is pretty unique.”

As Morrison reflects on his career at a stonemason, he has no regrets.

“I have loved every minute of it,” said Morrison. “If you love what you do, you never work a day in your life.”

What is an ionic capital?

An ionic capital is the beautifully adorned topmost section of a column. Province House has a total of eight columns, located on the north and south facades of the building. The ionic capital on the south west corner of the south façade was the one needing replacement as part of the Province House National Historic Site conservation project.



Robert Morrison carving the volutes (the scroll-like embellishment on the ionic capital stone) at Province House National Historic Site.

Mysteries at Province House National Historic Site

Every artist leaves a mark



While removing a small door jamb stone at the south-east entrance in July 2020, a stonemason discovered something unusual - polyethylene sheeting between the door jamb and the stone behind it. Much to his surprise, after removing the polyethylene sheeting, a carving of a human face was revealed.

The original stone was designated for replacement, so drill marks can be seen

surrounding the face, but luckily, the drilling did not ruin this unique piece of artwork.

The face carving has a 3D quality to it. The smiling face has eyes looking to the side, with a nose and cheeks that slightly protrude, while wisps of hair frame the face. One of the cheeks has a unique stone pigment, giving the face a rosy cheek.

The presence of polyethylene sheeting and newer mortar raises questions about whether the face was carved by one of the original stonemasons (James Watts, William Bain, Francis McDuff) and then repositioned and reinstalled during later renovations or whether the face was created later in the building's history, by a more modern stonemason.

We will likely never know for certain who carved it, but we can hypothesize that someone wanted to leave their mark by carving his own face into the stone. Whoever it was clearly had a sense of humour, and never intended for it to be found.



History of the Original Stonemasons

The first cornerstone for the Colonial Building (Province House) was laid on May 16, 1843.

According to the Mary K. Cullen report, a historical document outlining the history and use of Province House, around ten stonemasons, bricklayers and day labourers cut and laid stones and bricks during the construction of this historic building between 1843-1847.

There were three main stonemasons who were contracted to carry out the masonry work, including bricklaying and stonemasonry work: James Watts, William Bain and Francis McDuff.

Watts, Bain and McDuff were all born in Scotland and arrived in Canada several years, even several decades, before the construction of Province House. Watts acted as site foreman and all three received training in Great Britain.

They went on to hire seven labourers to assist with the construction. Although not all the names of the labourers are known, William Crosby was hired to assist with the construction of the wings and porticos in 1847.

As a result of the delayed construction of the porticos, the original portico foundations were not as deep as those of the main building and it is reported the foundations began to shift over time. In 1856, new portico foundations were built. Crosby and Patrick Gormley subsequently “built up the foundations and laid stone steps” (Mary K. Cullen, 1977).

James Crockett and James Puncher were also hired to carry out some of the work on the building between 1856 and 1870.

In light of the little available documentation from this era, it is difficult to distinguish exactly who carried out the masonry work on Province House and who among this disparate workforce were true master craftsmen.

Some outstanding questions include: Were Watts, Bain and McDuff all master craftsmen? Did they form their partnership only for the duration of this project? How did they

share the work? Did the three partners carry out the stonecutting? Who prepared the mortar? Who laid the stone and the brick? How much of the exterior stone fabrication (i.e. templated wall stones, window and door jambs and sills, capitals, portico columns, cornice stones) was completed on site?

It has been suggested that given the amount of work required to carve each of these detailed stones, plus the logistics of quarrying and transporting of raw stone blocks, that it's unlikely all of the work was completed on PEI in such a narrow timeframe by the labour forces that have been identified.

Interested in learning more about Watts, Bain and McDuff?

James Watts (1786-1860)

Born in Stirling, in the Scottish Lowlands, to William Watts and Helen Drysdale. Watts married Mary Agnes Isabel MacDonald on July 11, 1803, in Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Scotland. The inscription on his tombstone in the Old Protestant Burying Ground in Charlottetown states that Watts died on January 29, 1860, at the age of 74.

The MacDonald-Watts couple emigrated to Prince Edward Island (PEI) from Edinburgh after 1803 and before 1810 (as their eldest son, James Jr., was born on September 5, 1809, on PEI). Watts apparently was not given a public contract until 1837. Earlier, in 1821, he had made an offer to carry out masonry work on Fanning Bank, the Lieutenant-Governor's residence.

James Watts had at least three sons: James Jr. (1809-1864), John (born around 1846) and Daniel (1825-died in an accident in 1847), and at least one daughter, Christiana (1815-1856). There were possibly two other children, featured in a family tree, but their filiation has not been confirmed by an archival record.

William Bain (1802-1849)

Born to David Bain and Janet Water in 1802 in Thurso, Caithness, in the Scottish Highlands, Bain died on November 4, 1849, at York Point. He was buried in Charlottetown at the Old Protestant Burying Ground.

William Bain married Ellen Dockendorff on February 28, 1839, in Charlottetown. The couple had four children: William, Francis, Jane and Jacob. The Bain family was very active in the “newly established Baptist Church in North River.”

When he arrived in Charlottetown, Bain published a promotional article in the Royal Gazette on January 6, 1835, in which he described his professional experience, which he said he had acquired in several towns in Great Britain:

Plain and Ornamental Stone Cutting The Subscriber respectfully tenders his grateful acknowledgements to the Inhabitants of Charlottetown, and the Island at large, for the favours he has received since he commenced business, and begs leave to inform them that he is now carrying on the above business in Water Street, opposite Mr. John Gainsford's brick house, where an extensive assortment of the very best quality of Head Stones, Tomb Stones, Hearth Stones, Grinding Stones, Stove pipe Stones, Jamb Stones, and all descriptions of House-building stones, are furnished and executed punctually, in the neatest manner, and on the most reasonable terms. As the Sub-scriber intends residing in Charlottetown, he most respectfully offers his services, to furnish Plans and Estimates, and to enter upon any Contract for House-building &c. From several years' constant practice in several of the principal towns in Great Britain, the Sub-scriber feels confident that he will give satisfaction to those who may favour him with their commands. William Bain Charlottetown, Dec. 28, 1834.

When the call for tenders for the construction of Province House was launched in 1839, Bain submitted an offer of service. He was ranked second after Isaac Smith, which suggests that he had the expertise and experience required to undertake a project of this scope. In fact, in fall 1836, Bain had completed masonry work on the Lieutenant-Governor's residence (Government House).

Francis McDuff (1808-1856)

Born in Dumfries, Scotland, McDuff emigrated in 1820. He married Elizabeth (Eliza) Johnston (e) (1810-1902) on July 12, 1836 (after the birth of their eldest son, Francis, in 1835 in Brookfield, PEI). Elizabeth Johnstone, daughter of Alexander Johnstone and Jane Moffat, was born on January 13, 1810, in Kirkpatrick-Juxta parish, Dumfriesshire, Scotland. As some of her siblings were born in Scotland (1813, 1815, 1817) and others on PEI (1821, 1822, 1824, 1827, 1830), Eliza's family must have emigrated sometime between 1817 and 1821.

Francis McDuff is believed to have died at British Hospital in San Francisco, California, on January 18, 1856, at the age of 47. He was buried at Lone Mountain Cemetery in San Francisco. His wife died in 1902 in Brookfield, PEI, and appears in the PEI censuses of 1881, 1891 and 1901. As a widow, she lived with her son Richard, a farmer, on Lot 31 in Queens County.

At the time McDuff practised his trade, craftsmen frequently travelled from one North American town to another, offering their services to the highest bidders. Like in Great Britain and the United States, it was these “migrant craftsmen” who formed the first national unions in Canada.

This information was provided by Brigitte Violette, Historian for Parks Canada

SOURCES: These short biographies are based on data from a number primary sources in digital format: name files from several 19th-century PEI and UK censuses, Charlottetown newspapers, and various civil registration records (baptism/birth, marriage, death and burial certificates) from Canada and the United Kingdom. This documentation is accessible through two genealogy research websites—Ancestry and Find My Past—as well as in PEI's PARO Collections Database. The PARO database can also be used to identify parties involved in public construction contracts, cases submitted to the Supreme Court and other collections from the province's public archives. The name files in Censuses of Canada can also be accessed through the Library and Archives Canada website. Newspapers are generally available in digital format through the Robertson Library (UPEI). The Island Narratives Program, also housed on the UPEI website, contains short texts and documents relating to 13 PEI communities.

Mary K. Cullen's pioneering study (A History of the Structure and Use of Province House, Prince Edward Island 1837-1977, Parks Canada, Department of Indians and Northern Affairs, 1977, Manuscript Report No. 211) was supplemented by a number of secondary sources to provide contextual information on the history of Prince Edward Island and the stonemason trade: Marianne Morrow, “The Builder: Isaac Smith and Early Island Architecture,” The Island Magazine, No. 18 (Fall 1985): 17-23; Ruth E. Bleasdale, Rough Work: Labourers on the Public Works of British North America and Canada, 1841-1882, Toronto, Buffalo, London, University of Toronto Press, 2018, 400 pp. (Canadian Social History Series); Desmond Morton with Terry Copp, Working People: An Illustrated History of Canadian Labour, Ottawa, Deneau & Greenberg, 1980, 349 pp.; Lucille H. Campey, “A Very Fine Class of Immigrants”: Prince Edward Island's Scottish Pioneers 1770-1850, 2nd ed., Toronto, Natural Heritage Books (A Member of the Dundurn Group), 2007, 208 pp.

Profile Series

BARB MACDONALD is proud to have been with Parks Canada long enough to see two major conservation projects at Province House National Historic Site (NHS).

MacDonald is originally from Halifax, Nova Scotia and chose to make Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island her home following her appointment as a Site Supervisor at Green Gables Heritage Place in 1982.

At the time, Parks Canada was in the process of restoring Province House NHS to the 1864 period. The restoration work involved extensive research and many talented craftspeople to complete the project.

“The attention to detail to bring it back to the 1864 period was very impressive,” recalls MacDonald. “It was just steeped in history and it was exciting to see this project come to life.”

Over the years, MacDonald has held various positions at Parks Canada. After being a Site Supervisor, she became the Heritage Presentation Media Coordinator for the PEI Field Unit from 1991-2007.

“My job entailed developing and implementing various interpretation media projects for PEI National Park as well as the National Historic Sites in PEI,” said MacDonald. “It was in this position that I became well versed in Province House NHS.”

She went on to become the External Relations Manager for the PEI Field Unit in 2010.

In the early days of the conservation project, MacDonald was one of the people who sat around the table with Public Services and Procurement Canada and a number of consultants to discuss what was required to conserve this heritage building.

“Their level of knowledge and expertise and seeing how it all fit together and how passionate they all were in their various aspects, roles and skills, was just astounding, really.”

Now, MacDonald is the National Historic Site and Visitor Experience Manager. Her current role means she continues to bring her wealth of knowledge about Province House NHS to the conservation project.

MacDonald is involved in helping to conserve the heritage aspects of the building as well as in developing the exhibits and what visitors will experience when the doors re-open to the public.



“We are looking at presenting the stories about the site in different ways and from multiple perspectives,” explains MacDonald. “When it reopens, there will be a slightly different approach to the themes.”

MacDonald is honoured to be part of something as important as the Province House NHS conservation project.

“I feel as though I’m part of a team that is doing their best to ensure its longevity over time and also to ensure its stories continue to be told,” said MacDonald. “It’s been a great team effort on a truly amazing project.”

Profile Series

KAYLA REYNOLDS is the conservation foreman for the Province House National Historic Site (NHS) conservation project.

Her job entails conserving the existing exterior stone on this more than 170-year-old building.

When she first arrived at the site with RJW Stonemasons Ltd. in Spring 2019, her main focus was lasering the exterior stones on the building. The laser helped remove any imperfections without damaging the stone.

“It makes the stone look cleaner and also helps prolong the lifespan of the stones so they don’t deteriorate as quickly over time,” explained Reynolds.

Since then, she has been repairing the stone in place, using the in situ approach. The in situ approach means that, where possible, the damaged walls are being repaired in place, rather than being completely removed and reassembled. This approach is less invasive and protects more of the heritage fabric of the building.

“We are trying to save as much stone as possible so we are not having to replace and put so many new stones into the building.”

The most challenging aspect of this approach is colour matching the mortar patch mix and the pin repair mix when she is repairing cracks in the original stones. The original stones have oxidised over time and now have a pinkish/reddish hue to them. Conservators make the mortar patch and pin repair mixes on site using lime, stone dust and casein.

“The colour is very different,” explained Reynolds. “We don’t want our work to stick out, we want it to blend in, and in order to do that, we have to pigment our stone mix for it to match, so that is always difficult.”

Reynolds said her favourite section to work on was the ionic stone capitals where she conducted some minor repairs. Consequently, her favourite day on site was observing the ionic capital stone replacement on the south west corner of the south façade.

An ionic capital is located on the topmost section of a column in a façade (the porch-like structure at the entrances of classical symmetrical buildings). Province House NHS has a total of eight columns, located on the north and south facades of the building.

“It was a pretty intensive process,” recalls Reynolds.



Reynolds, who is originally from Small Point, Newfoundland, has an archeology background and has been working as a conservator since 2014, following her studies at Fleming College in Peterborough, Ontario.

She says it has been an honour to work on Province House NHS and looks forward to seeing the white sail cloth come down when the masonry work is complete.

“It will feel great to know that I was a part of it,” said Reynolds. “I’ve always been interested in history and working with our past, so to know that I’m working on a heritage building important to Canada, is just fantastic.”

Profile Series



including mortar repairs, pinning jobs and consolidation; restoration masonry, including Dutchman repairs and placcage work (partial replacement/ indent) dimensioning and measuring replacement stones, including geometrically difficult stones (apex stones and pediment springers) and plain ashlar (a type of masonry which is finely cut and/or worked, and is characterised by its smooth, even faces and square edges).

“It’s a fabulous building. It’s in good shape, for the age that it is, compared to other buildings that I have worked on in the past.”

One thing Wilson has often pondered as she’s worked on Province House, is whether the capitals, the most decorative feature of the building, were produced on site or if they were brought in from somewhere else.

“The masonry complexity to do them, like the cutting and carving to produce one of those, is very advanced.”

She says she has enjoyed working on every section of this historic building, but has particularly enjoyed replacing several of the stones in the main entrance on the south side. This section required her to measure and order stones, cut stones out of the wall, install new stones and conduct Dutchman repairs.

“I got to do the entire process at the main entrance, so that has been an enjoyable experience,” said Wilson. “It’s nice to work in one area. You get a real sense of how they did it, if they had any problems and how they rectified them.”

Wilson said she is looking forward to seeing the quality of the workmanship when the scaffolding is ready to come down upon completion of the masonry work.

“It will be very exciting to have that grand reveal because you have been staring at it from a 4-foot distance for years, but it’s also a little sad because you really get attached to the building.”

Wilson said she has thoroughly enjoyed working on Province House NHS.

“It’s pretty special to have been part of something so important and historic and to say I got to work on this building.”

COLLEEN WILSON is using her artistic background to help conserve and rebuild the exterior walls at Province House National Historic Site (NHS).

Wilson, who is originally from Weyburn, Saskatchewan, is a stonemason, stone carver and conservator for the Province House NHS conservation project.

Wilson has a Bachelors Degree in Fine Arts and brings 22 years of experience as a stonemason to the conservation project. She has a broad understanding of architectural styles throughout history and has worked on various historic buildings across the country, including West Block, on Parliament Hill.

“It’s pretty awesome to be able to go from one end of the country to the other and to be a part of these great projects that haven’t happened in Canada for a long time.”

Wilson was one of the first stonemasons with RJW Stonemasons Ltd. to arrive at Province House NHS in 2018. She has assisted with the conservation work,

Contact Us

Parks Canada is committed to sharing the story of the important conservation project at Province House National Historic Site.

To learn more, visit our website:

www.parksCanada.ca/provincehouse or contact us:

Email: pnipe-peinp@pc.gc.ca

Phone: 902-566-7050

Mailing Address: 2 Palmers Lane, Charlottetown, PE C1A 5V8