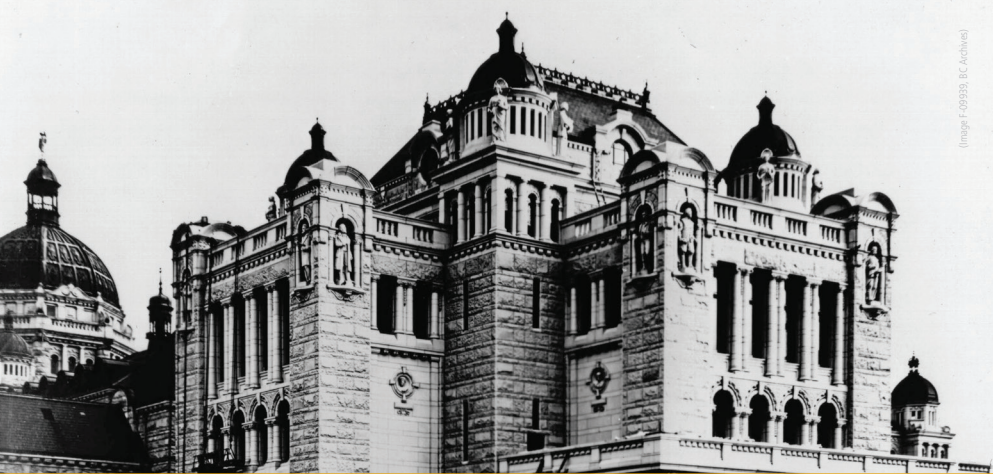


# Additions to the Parliament Buildings



(Image F-02939, BC Archives)

The new Legislative Library nearing completion in 1915.

Following the completion of the Parliament Buildings in 1898, architect Francis Mawson Rattenbury was re-commissioned to design several additions to the buildings between 1912 and 1920. The first phase of the additions was the construction of the Legislative Library – a dedicated space for the library collection and staff that had been housed in the original buildings since 1898. Called the Provincial Library for many years, it was the original home of the provincial archives and provincial public library service.

Connected to the rear of the Parliament Buildings, the exterior of the Library features an imposing colonnade and a series of sculptures of historical figures carved by sculptor Charles Marega. A number of copper domes surmount the structure, visually linking the Library with the style of the original design.

In addition to the Library, two additional wings were added to the Parliament Buildings to provide additional office space. Not visible from the front of the buildings, the two wings nearly doubled the floor area of the initial design.



(Image H-00178, BC Archives)

Governor General the Duke of Connaught, Provincial Archivist and Librarian E. O. Scholefield, and architect Francis Rattenbury laying the cornerstone for the new Legislative Library, September 28, 1912.



Interior view of the Legislative Library's central dome. The eight massive columns supporting the dome are made of scagliola – a decorative form of plaster that is molded and hand-painted to imitate marble.

## Other Uses of the Legislative Precinct



(Image J-20109, BC Archives)

One of the original Birdcages was later used to house a mineral museum.

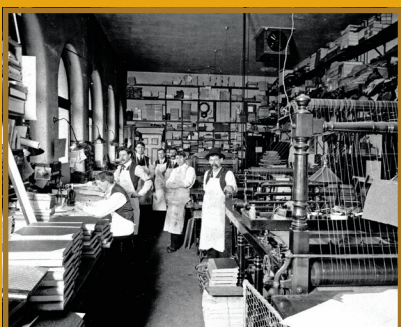
The Legislative Precinct has been used for a range of other unique purposes over the years.

In 1893, a masonry and timber building known as the Armouries was constructed on the west side of the Legislative Precinct, near Menzies Street. It was originally built as the headquarters of the 5th British Columbia Brigade of Garrison Artillery. In 1921, its ownership was transferred to the provincial government.

In 1897, one of the original Birdcage buildings was adapted to be used as a mineral museum. Under the direction of the Provincial Mineralogist, the building was retrofitted to house and exhibit minerals, ore samples and geological maps. It also contained a laboratory and student learning space.

At the opening of the new Parliament Buildings in 1898, the East Annex, which is connected to the main building by a walkway, housed the provincial museum. By the 1960s, the collection had outgrown the space and the province decided to construct a new museum and archives adjacent to the Parliament Buildings, known today as the Royal British Columbia Museum.

The government printing and bookbinding department for the province was originally housed in the west wing of the Parliament Buildings. Known as the Queen's Printer, it was relocated to a new building at the corner of Government Street and Superior Street in 1928, where it remains to this day.



(Image A-02779, BC Archives)

The Government printing and bookbinding department was once located in the basement of the Parliament Buildings. Photo circa 1899.

# Restoration & Renovation

Following completion in 1897, the Parliament Buildings served as the seat of government for over 70 years, a testament to their design and craftsmanship. However, after decades without significant improvements or renovations, the Parliament Buildings had deteriorated noticeably and had leaking roofs, rotting foundation timbers and an antiquated electrical system. Furthermore, by the 1970s, BC's population and provincial government had grown significantly, resulting in a shortage of office space in the existing buildings.

In 1972, the government committed to an extensive restoration plan. Victoria architect Alan Hodgson supervised the restoration, which took over ten years to complete and was supported by two different governments.

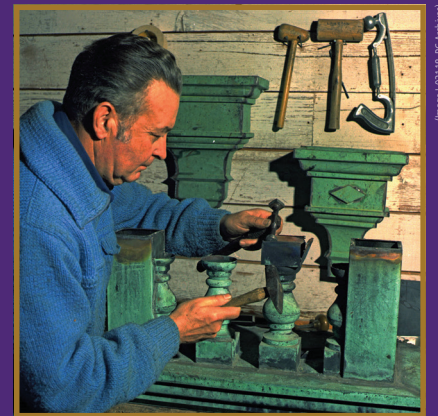
Throughout the restoration, all efforts were made to preserve the original vision of architect Francis Mawson Rattenbury and to use, wherever possible, the same materials and techniques as in the original construction. In many instances, this meant removing many "modern" updates that had been added to the buildings over the years, including vinyl linoleum, mismatched paint schemes, temporary room partitions and unseemly light fixtures.

A number of skilled craftspeople and artisans with rare knowledge of the original methods were employed to revitalize much of the woodwork, stained glass and plaster throughout the buildings. Even the statue of Captain George Vancouver atop the central dome was re-gilded.



(Image J-03116, BC Archives)

Restoration of the original oak doors.



(Image J-03118, BC Archives)

After many years of exposure to the elements, the copper finials on the Parliament Buildings needed to be restored.



(Image J-03122, BC Archives)

The statue of Captain George Vancouver was removed from the main dome by crane and re-gilded.

## Did You Know?

As British Columbia's population has grown, so too has the number of elected Members of the Legislative Assembly. By the early 1990s, the Chamber was quickly running out of space for Members' seating.

Rather than expanding the size of the Chamber, additional space was created through the use of narrower desks and chairs. To retain the original walnut desks, a Victoria woodworking firm was contracted to modify the desks, making each one 10 centimetres narrower. Additional desks based on the original design were then constructed for new Members.

The configuration of the desks in the Chamber was also changed in 2009. A third row was added to accommodate desks for additional Members.

