

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JULY 23, 2025

Critical Restoration Work scheduled to safeguard the Sydney Street Courthouse

Saint John, NB – The Saint John Theatre Company (SJTC) is thrilled to announce that major restoration work on the Sydney Street Courthouse, the future home of the Atlantic Repertory Company (ARC) and the Courthouse Stage, is set to begin.

This essential phase of development will focus on masonry and site preparations, with a particular emphasis on securing the exterior envelope of the building. Work will target the eastern-facing rear exterior wall, which has been significantly compromised over time due to deferred maintenance and decades of water infiltration, followed by freeze/thaw cycles.

Protective fencing has already been placed around the wall to ensure public safety, as the structural integrity of the wall is at risk. The Building Committee has emphasized the urgency of the repairs, noting that addressing these issues now will prevent further damage and allow the project to move ahead as planned.

“Getting this work done is crucial for protecting the Courthouse and keeping the momentum of this incredible project”, said Brian Goodwin, Chair of the Building Committee, “the first phase of construction is expected to last roughly four months, securing the wall before the next freeze-thaw cycle.”

An official groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled for fall 2025, marking a significant milestone in the transformation of this historical landmark into a modern cultural hub for Saint John.

A Rich History

Built in the 1820s and situated at the corner of Sydney Street and King Street East in Uptown Saint John, the Courthouse holds a prominent place in the city’s history. After being gutted by a fire in 1919, it was rebuilt in 1925 within the original structure’s shell. However, following the construction of the new Provincial Law Courts, the building has sat empty since 2013.

In 2016, the Saint John Theatre Company (SJTC) began discussions with the Province of New Brunswick about acquiring the property to meet its growing programming needs. After years of negotiations and a federal funding announcement in 2019, ownership of the Courthouse was officially transferred to SJTC in 2020. Plans are now in motion to transform the building into a vibrant, multi-purpose performance and event venue, doubling its original footprint to accommodate the needs of the Atlantic Repertory Company (ARC), the SJTC, and the wider community.

The Future Home of the Atlantic Repertory Company

Since its founding in 2019, ARC has focused on nurturing emerging talent from Atlantic Canada and presenting exceptional theatrical works from across the country. Productions such as *Waiting for Godot*, *The Woman in Black* and *Cottagers and Indians* have showcased the program's capacity to make a meaningful impact.

With the restoration of the Courthouse, ARC is poised to take its mission even further. The Courthouse Stage will serve as ARC's permanent home, providing a cutting-edge facility for rehearsals, performances, and professional development opportunities. This space will include offices for Resident Artists, expanded production areas, and exclusive training sessions led by industry professionals.

The new venue will not only retain local talent but also attract artists from across Canada and beyond, cementing Saint John's place as a hub for creativity and culture. Alongside the existing BMO Studio Theatre, this additional space will allow ARC and SJTC productions to run simultaneously, doubling the artistic offerings for the community and solidifying Saint John's reputation as a destination for high-quality theatre.

Stay tuned for further updates as this exciting project moves forward, bringing new life to a cherished historical landmark and enriching the cultural fabric of Saint John.

The Project Team:

Saint John Theatre Company/Atlantic Repertory Company – Project Owner

Avant Garde (AGCM) – Construction Management

CBCL – Project Controls and Fire Protection Engineering

EXP – Architecture, Design, and Technical Services

Trinity Consultants – Acoustic Design Specialists

Theatre Consultants Collaborative (TCC) – Theatre Planning and Design Specialists

John G. Cooke and Associates – Heritage Restoration Specialists

Rooney, Irving & Associates (RIA) – Elevator Consulting Specialists

Contractors (Phase I):

Branco Management Inc. – Demolition & Abatement Services

Groupe Atwill-Morin – Masonry Restoration

Media Contact: Stephen Tobias, Executive Director, Atlantic Repertory Company, stephen@saintjohntheatrecompany.com or Lise Driscoll, Marketing & Communications, SJTC, 506-652-7582 ext. 226, lise.driscoll@saintjohntheatrecompany.com

atlanticrep.ca