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Company gets to bottom of Pittock roof work

By BILL COUTANT
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Portland's Bureau of Parks & Recreation is trying to stay ahead of any potential problems at the venerable Pittock Mansion.

The bureau hired Professional Roof Consultants Inc. of Portland to inspect the roof of the reinforced concrete building that was constructed in 1914.

"The preliminary evaluation

is already done," said PRC President Steven McBride. "We've already written a 13-page evaluation of data from the field investigation. We'll have a more **detailed report** for the city within the next two weeks."

The mostly clay-tile roof was installed with replacements in the 1920s. A 1965 restoration included more roof tiles.

"In the 1960s, they reused a majority of existing tiles and blended in new ones to match,"



The historic pittock Mansion stands as an architectural marvel above the city of Portland. The city's Bureau of Parks & Recreation bought the house, the gatehouse and garage, and converted them into a popular tourist attraction, tea room and gift shop. Above, a worker evaluates conditions on the mansion's roof

McBride said, adding that the roof underwent structural repairs at that time. "The key now would be finding tile that would match."

The preliminary survey indicates that there are some leaks at perimeter corners. Also, the building's copper gutters need repair.

Richard Bosch, project manager for the bureau and a staff architect, said the roof of the historic house—built for Henry J. Pittock, former publisher of The Oregonian newspaper—is one of about 114 park renovations the city is evaluating.

"We're in the middle of concluding evaluations for a five year bond project," Bosch said.

The mansion roof work is one of the smaller Pittock projects, which also will include improved access under

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the federal Americans With Disabilities Act. Life-safety and seismic concerns are among the issues that will be addressed in the future.

"We wanted to investigate so that we would know how extensive future improvements would be," he said.

There are no safety issues associated with the roof of the popular tourist attraction, which sits 1,000 feet above the city in the Imperial Heights area, he said.

GOOD REPORT: Funding for the evaluation comes from the bureau's consultant budget. The document is designed to ensure the most critical projects are completed first, Bosch said.

"We want to make sure we

don't misapply the money for repairs and do the fluff instead of more important ones," he said.

Generally, the roof is in good shape on the main house. The roof of the gatehouse—a building that now serves as a tea room—needs to be repaired in the near term. The roof of the garage—now a gift shop and restrooms—has been maintained and shingles have been replaced regularly.

"When we go for a total roof replacement, we'll seismically upgrade the roof, which includes chimneys and parapets," Bosch said. That job would cost between \$300,000 and \$500,000 if it were to be done now.

McBride said the most difficult task in making repairs will be staging and access.

"We're following up with an evaluation and we'll train them on how to maintain it, track costs, check for leads, replacement procedures and everything," McBride said.

Bosch said the firm was one of four invited to bid on the job and had the lowest of three bids.

"They also had the crispest explanation and lowest price (about \$6,000)," Bosch said.

Bosch also was impressed because the firm has not only done what was required, but also has provided a projected maintenance schedule, a report and pictures.

"They've done an excellent job," he said. "They've made their report comprehensible to laypeople and completed it in a relatively short time. I'm very impressed."

Professional Roof Consultants, founded in 1992, has experience in all types of roof design and building conditions.

The Pittock Mansion, designed by Architect Edward T. Foulkes of San Francisco, includes hand-carved wood, elaborate ornamental plasterwork, room-to-room telephones and an interior that reflects French Renaissance, Victorian, Georgian and Jacobean influences.

The city purchased the mansion and its grounds for \$225,000 in 1964. Pittock, who was 79 when he moved into the home with his wife, died five years later. His descendants occupied the home until 1958.



Professional Roof Consultants Inc. of Portland has been inspecting and evaluating the roof, flashing and chimneys of the Pittock Mansion for the city's Bureau of Parks & Recreation.