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## Historic Restoration Begins on St. Croix's Iconic "Old Post-Office"

**NPS and HPTC team up to rejuvenate Guinea Company Warehouse, with minimal disruptions planned**

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**Guinea Company Warehouse in downtown Christiansted, St. Croix.**

The Christiansted National Historic Site in collaboration with the Historic Preservation Training Center (HPTC), has initiated a comprehensive restoration project on the Guinea Company Warehouse, a structure commonly known in the local community as "the old post-office."

The project will be carried out by a team comprising National Park Service employees and interns from the HPTC, including local St. Croix residents and additional support from HPTC's San Juan, Puerto Rico, Maintenance Action Teams, according to a release issued Monday.

The restoration efforts are set to address several key issues that have compromised the structural integrity and aesthetic of the building over the years. Key activities include the removal of deteriorating limewash and remnants of latex/acrylic paint believed to have been applied in the 1970s. The project will also undertake extensive masonry repairs, utilizing traditional lime mortar mixtures, historic brick, and reproduction kiln-fired Danish brick to preserve the building's original characteristics.

Furthermore, the initiative includes the replacement of all storm shutters and doors. These will be constructed from treated wood and outfitted with brass/bronze alloy metal hardware to extend their durability. The new paint for these elements will adhere to the building's historic color schemes, ensuring an authentic restoration.

Inspection and removal of the building's exterior paint—layered over many years—and failing plaster revealed significant issues. These include substantial mortar joint failure, decaying brick, and loose materials within the walls. The project will allow for careful inspection and selective removal of compromised plaster and masonry to facilitate the necessary structural and aesthetic repairs. This will be followed by the application of traditional plaster and a final coat of mineral silicate lime paint, restoring the exterior to its original historic hues.

To facilitate these extensive restorations, the building and surrounding sidewalks will be sectioned off in phases. Some closures are expected in 2024, aiming for a project completion in December 2024. The NPS said it is committed to minimizing disruptions to both vehicle and pedestrian traffic throughout the restoration period, ensuring that the impact on the community and visitors is kept to a minimum as they work to preserve this significant historical asset.