

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Fort Christian In St. Thomas, Under Construction, Is Toured By Governors Mapp And Turnbull

Government / **Published On December 21, 2016 01:40 PM /**

Staff **December 21, 2016**



ST. THOMAS -- Governor Kenneth Mapp and former Governor Charles Turnbull were joined by Department of Planning and Natural Resources (D.P.N.R.) Commissioner Dawn Henry, and Custom Builders' senior executives, the general contractor on the project, to complete a site inspection of renovations on Fort Christian in Charlotte Amalie, Government House announced late Tuesday.

The tour of the fort, currently under construction, was led by the Territorial Curator for the Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums, Mr. Levi Farrell. Mr. Farrell outlined some of the discoveries made during the excavation of the layers of concrete that had been used in previous renovations, including the skeletal remains of a man holding an infant,

discovered under a floor, according to Government House. Mr. Turnbull, a historian, questioned the tour guide and shared interesting historical tidbits with the group that included senior staff members, division heads and members of the renovation team.

The total budget for the renovation of the fort is \$2,076,549.02 for Phase I, \$911,000.00 for Phase II, and an estimated \$1.5 Million for the third phase.

Renovations on the project began in 2005 with Tiptop Construction and Custom Builders was awarded a new contract to perform the renovation work in 2014. Custom Builders substantially completed Phase I on June 24, 2015 to include a new bricked roof, refurbished Governor's Quarters with wooden floors, a refurbished reception room complete with wainscoting, refurbished church with exterior lighting added to the grounds of the south curtain and interior courtyard. These improvements have markedly enhanced the aesthetics of the fort, and the refurbished restrooms will provide comfort to all visitors to the "new" fort, Government House said.

Ms. Henry and the team at D.P.N.R. have been able to identify additional funding to renovate the courtyard, according to Government House. With the assistance of the Public Finance Authority, Mr. Mapp bypassed one of his P.F.A. projects to allow for the courtyard to be funded. Custom Builders restarted the work on the fort in November with the mission to complete Phase II in time for the Centennial. Phase III will be designed after funding is identified.

According to Government House, D.P.N.R. expects, in addition to the work that was accomplished in Phase I, for the courtyard to be renovated, all of the western rooms to be refurbished, the basement completed and some exterior work on the eastern side to be finished. Custom finishes to be completed in the chapel will include mahogany pews and an altar. These improvements are expected to be completed so that all visitors to the territory for the Centennial celebration will be able to enjoy what Government House described as a historical gem of the Virgin Islands.