

Torrey Hall:

Picking up the pieces



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PHYSICAL PLANT ALL HANDS MEETING - 2018

Torrey Hall

Originally built in 1863 on the spot where Williams Hall now sits.

The building was moved to its current location, between Billings and Votey, in 1895.



LS10764



LS10778



LS10778



Home to the Pringle Herbarium and Zadock Thompson Natural History Collection

Building stores over 300,000 samples of unique dried plants— some dating back to the 1800's— and the university's collection of ~400,000 vertebrate and invertebrate specimens.

History of Torrey Hall

The Pringle Herbarium occupies 3,600 square feet on three floors of Joseph Torrey Hall, at the north end of the campus of the University of Vermont on Colchester Avenue. Torrey Hall was constructed in 1865 as the University's third library. Considered one of the architectural treasures of the University, it is a substantial three-story brick building with a mansard roof. The collection has been in its current location since 1975. The building is and is likely to remain dedicated to the University's natural history research collections, as it also houses the vertebrate and invertebrate collections. The collection-processing area, library, research space for staff and graduate students, and classroom occupy the second floor. The bulk of the collection is located on the third floor.



Summer 2017: Building Envelope Renovation Project

Original Project Scope Included:

- Upper roof replacement
- Slate roof restoration
- Chimney restoration
- Masonry repointing
- Window restoration
- Foundation waterproofing

On August 3, 2017 at 8:30 a.m.,
the Project Scope changed.



Immediate Actions by Physical Plant to Respond

By the end of the day:

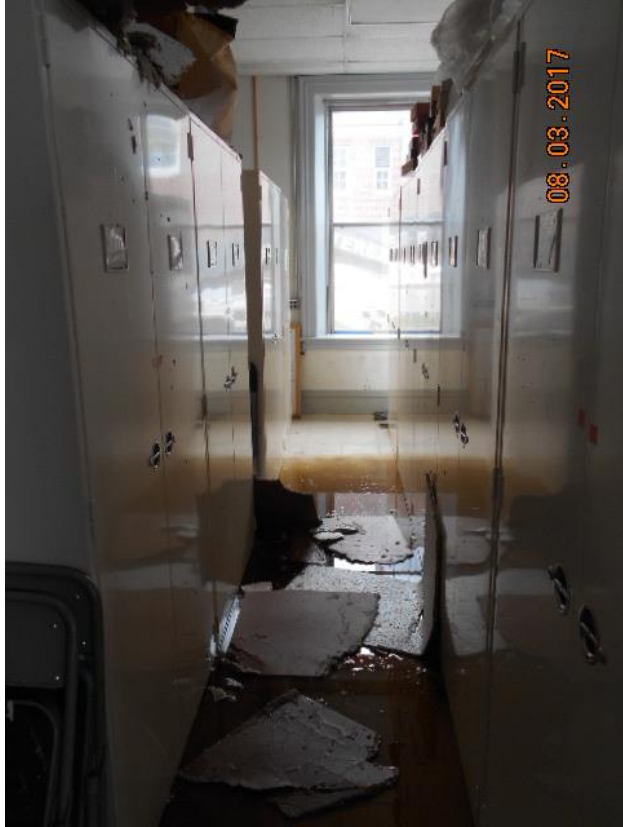
- Brought in UVM **insurance company** to assess the damage.
- **G.W. Savage** was on site to begin cleanup.
- **Vermont Tent** - set up a large tent in parking lot as staging area.
- **K.R. Adams** job trailer (that was no longer being used at Centennial Field) was moved on site.
- **PPD Zones** loaned portable air conditioners to start drying out salvaged items.
- Freezer truck arrived on site to ship out rare pieces that absolutely needed saving.
- Other areas— Fleming Museum and Billings— were set up as salvage and drying-out areas.



Water damage on all floors

To put out the fire, about 500,000 gallons of water were doused onto the building.







First priority: save the collection

Technical assistance from Bailey-Howe Library staff:

"only have 36 hours to stabilize the wet collections before fungal attack would compromise them."

According to Dave Barrington:

"Two days of herculean effort by almost 100 volunteers resulted in the salvaging of much of our wet material. We triaged the exposed materials into "only damp," "wet but important and salvageable," and "wet and lowest priority or unsalvageable."



The moist specimens drying on the floor of the Marble Court, Fleming Museum, day 3 (photo, David Barrington).

Next priority: save the building



Concern that weight of the collections in heavy metal cabinets, in combination with the weight of the water saturating the walls and floors, would compromise the integrity of the whole building.

Booska Moving and Brown's Crane services removed the cabinets through the roof.

180 cabinets
@ ~1,000 lbs each



One of the new metal cabinets coming out of the roof of Torrey Hall, day 6 (photo, Sid Bosworth).

Find temporary home for collection

- Storage containers deployed for immediate storage needs
- Dr. Barrington secured space in **Jeffords Hall** hallways to relocate the cabinets.
- **Blundell House** –*which happened to be vacant*– needed a quick fit-up to become new temporary location for the Thompson Animal Collection and Teaching laboratory



Blundell House before – (former kitchen, BR and bathroom)



Blundell House after – turned into laboratory space





Cabinets moved to Blundell House



Meanwhile....Back at Torrey Hall: Stabilize and shore up the structure



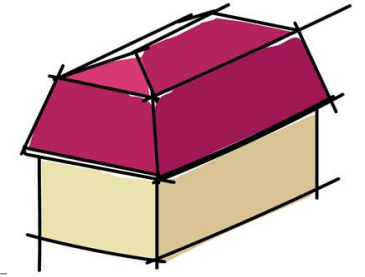
Get building back to functional condition once all contents were removed.

- Restore electrical service
- Bring in fire alarm system – *by chance, FD&C project at Votey Hall had just removed one*
- Restore heat
- Make it water tight.

electrical system upgrade for building



Mansard Roof



MANSARD

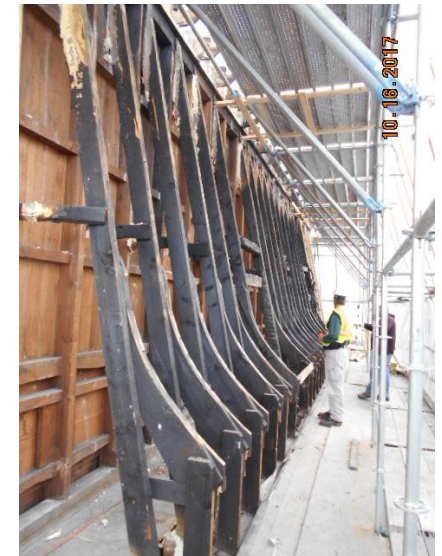
- **The design (luckily) worked in reverse.** The fireproofing on inner wall (designed to protect the roof if there ever were an interior fire) ended up protecting the interior from the fire on the roof.



Firewall had been installed just weeks prior to the fire.



After fire.







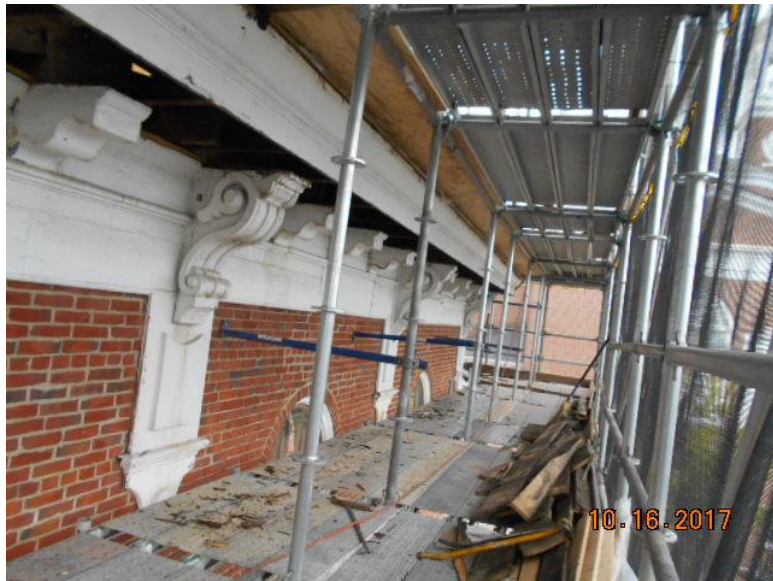
Structural trusses damaged by the fire needed reinforcing, allowing for added insulation in upper roof.



3rd floor



(Unplanned) asbestos abatement



Project received much news and media attention

Fall 2017, Volume 24


UVM HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM
HISTORY DEPARTMENT - WHEELER HOUSE - BURLINGTON, VERMONT

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TORREY HALL FIRE: PRESERVATION RESPONSE



In August 2017, a major fire occurred at UVM during renovations to Torrey Hall, seriously burning the mansard roof. Although the Burlington Fire Department swiftly controlled the blaze, water damaged the interior. Fortunately the Zadock Thompson Zoological Collection and the Pringle Herbarium specimens were unharmed.

In October, historic preservation graduate students accompanied Professor Thomas Visser on a site visit to UVM's Torrey Hall. Hosted by the UVM Physical Plant Department, the historic preservation team offered technical assistance to help with planning for the preservation of surviving historic features.

Built in 1862 as the university's library and museum with classroom space for liberal arts instruction, Torrey Hall was expanded with a mansard roof in 1874 and moved to its present location in 1895, after which two additions were constructed for museum collections. In the 1970s the old Art Building was renovated and re-named to honor Prof. Joseph Torrey, UVM president from 1862-66.

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST GRADUATING CLASS

WCAX 3

Weather Sports Wildlife Watch VT Realty Livestream

54°F Overcast
60° 54°
Burlington, VT

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Fire damages historic UVM building; important collection inside 'largely intact'

By Tyler Dumont and Alexandra Montgomery | Posted: Thu 9:27 AM, Aug 03, 2017 | Updated: Thu 7:41 PM, Aug 03, 2017

BURLINGTON, VT (WCAX) As firefighters rolled up just after 8 a.m. Thursday, smoke poured from the upper floor of the University of Vermont's Torrey Hall.

"We still have a lot of work to do in the building trying to exit the scaffolding," a firefighter said.

The historic building, which houses the Pringle Herbarium and the Zadock Thompson Zoological Collection, was severely damaged by the fire, which broke out on the roof of the building.

The Fire at the Pringle Herbarium: A Disaster Averted



Torrey Hall at the height of the blaze.

Just after eight o'clock on the morning of August 3, 2017, the firefighters in Station 3 of the Burlington Fire Department responded to a fire alarm that came in from the University of Vermont's Torrey Hall.

The roof interior of Torrey Hall, the University of Vermont Building housing the Pringle Herbarium as well as the University's vertebrate and invertebrate collections, had indeed caught fire—apparently related to training work on the new roof. Anyone on the scene in the first half hour witnessed the entire top of the building in 30-foot-high flames, and a plume of black smoke rose over Burlington that made it clear to the entire University that a major blaze was in progress.


Prospects for saving anything in the interior seemed dim. The firemen from Station 3 went to work on the assistance of crews from surrounding communities responding to four alarms. Aware of the value of the collection cabinets on the uppermost level, just under the roof, before they turned on the hoses. Within the hour, the fire was completely under control, thanks to the remarkable efforts of these firefighters.

The Natural History Museum in Torrey Hall brings together three of the most important natural history collections in Vermont: the flora represented by the plants in the Cyrus Pringle Herbarium and the fauna as documented for both the invertebrate and vertebrate animals in the Zadock Thompson Zoological Collection. The size of the combined collection is about 700,000 accessions (330,000 vertebrates and 350,000 invertebrates, 20,000 plants and fungi, of Vermont or large and small). All told, a working Museum in Torrey Hall provides the State of Vermont a large and the University of Vermont with a working Museum that promotes the exploration of biodiversity through both original research and the teaching of natural history.

ALPINE RESTORATION

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Torrey Hall At UVM Gets A Long-Overdue Face Lift



By Dick Nelson of Vermont B/A Magazine.

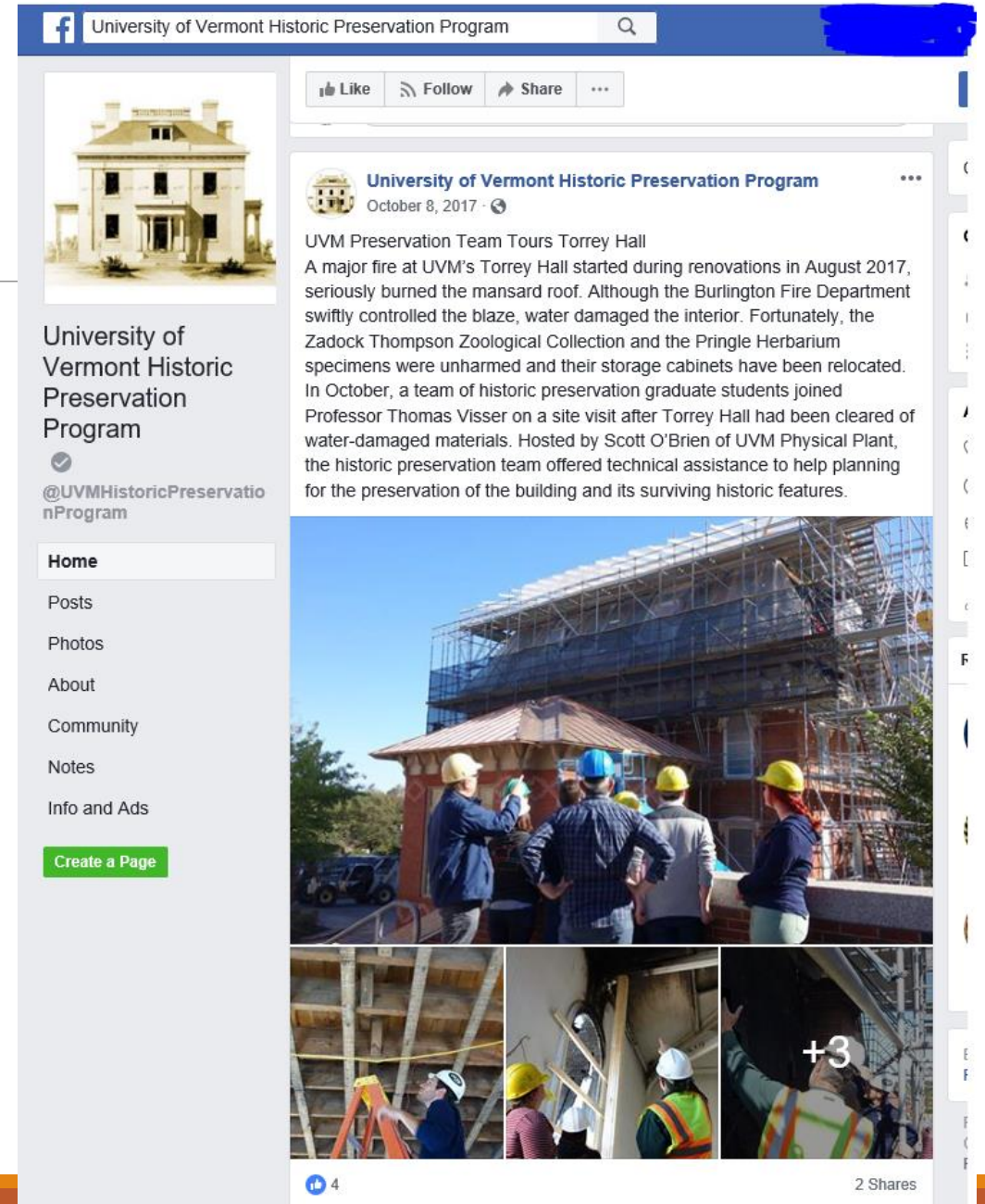
For Bruno Gubetta and his crew at Alpine Restoration, the sudden fire that gutted UVM's Torrey Hall on August 3, 2017, was just one of many obstacles to overcome in restoring the historic brick building, which sits next to the President's house in the center of the Burlington campus.

"We'd actually done most of our work when the fire broke out," says Gubetta, whose company has worked on historic projects around the state for more than 20 years.

UVM Historic Program Preservation Tour

“... In October (2017), a team of historic preservation graduate students joined Professor Thomas Visser on a site visit after Torrey Hall had been cleared of water-damaged materials.

Hosted by Scott O’Brien of UVM Physical Plant, the historic preservation team offered technical assistance to help planning for the preservation of the building and its surviving historic features.”



University of Vermont Historic Preservation Program

Like Follow Share

University of Vermont Historic Preservation Program
October 8, 2017

UVM Preservation Team Tours Torrey Hall
A major fire at UVM's Torrey Hall started during renovations in August 2017, seriously burned the mansard roof. Although the Burlington Fire Department swiftly controlled the blaze, water damaged the interior. Fortunately, the Zaddock Thompson Zoological Collection and the Pringle Herbarium specimens were unharmed and their storage cabinets have been relocated. In October, a team of historic preservation graduate students joined Professor Thomas Visser on a site visit after Torrey Hall had been cleared of water-damaged materials. Hosted by Scott O'Brien of UVM Physical Plant, the historic preservation team offered technical assistance to help planning for the preservation of the building and its surviving historic features.

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4 2 Shares

And even a *conspiracy* theory on facebook....



A screenshot of a Facebook post from a user named 'M... August 3, 2017'. The post text reads: 'Torrey Hall was an inside job.' Below the text are 142 reactions (represented by a thumbs-up icon and a sad face emoji) and 10 comments. The interface shows 'Like' and 'Comment' buttons. The comments section includes:

- A comment starting with '# Likes Bush did it' (6 likes).
- A comment starting with 'Likey... ing It was Gary Derrl' (9 likes).
- A comment from 'Tho... Lis... Engelo' stating: 'UVM did say yesterday that they need more revenue. Follow the money.' (4 likes).
- A comment from 'Er... Lis... ev... yda' stating: 'And two days ago they posted this... making everyone's heart break when they heard about dried plants burning. #savethedriedplants' (1 reply).

At the bottom of the screenshot is a photo of a person working with dried plants on a table, with a caption that is partially obscured but includes 'Liked by 999... and 793 others'.

This *fortuitous* series of events....and quick response from many at UVM helped prevent a worse disaster

- Several years earlier, the collection of rare plants had been moved from antique wooden cabinets into modern metal cabinets.
- New firewall/insulation had been installed under mansard roof just *weeks* prior to the fire.
- The Fire Department was aware of the value of the collections inside, thus firefighters first spread waterproof tarps over the most vulnerable collection cabinets on the uppermost level just under the roof, *before* they turned on the hoses.
- A spare job trailer from Centennial Field was available for use right away.
- Volunteers and contractors were available to help ASAP.
- Blundell House was vacant and available for quick re-use as temporary lab for the Herbarium.

The Fire at the Pringle Herbarium: A Disaster Averted



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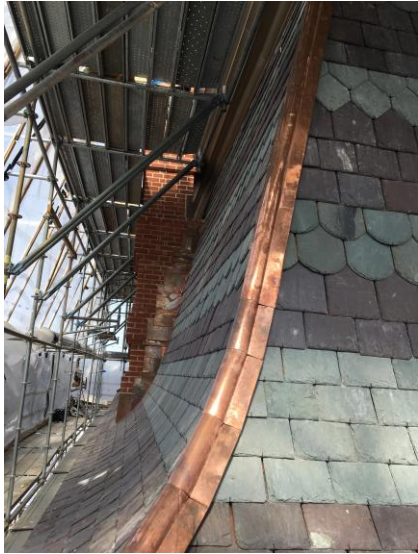
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Many people, UVM units to thank for response!!

- PPD staff (Zones, TCO, LSS)
- Dr Barrington and staff/volunteers of Pringle Herbarium
- Pat Brown helped facilitate the stakeholders meetings.
- UVM Risk Management staff
- FM Global
- J.A. Morrissey
- Cummings Electric , Cooper Mechanical, Cold Hollow Contracting, Benoit Electric, K.R. Adams
- FD&C,
- Safety Systems of Vermont
- And many others



Once remediation was complete...
...original project picked up again



***Plus* added work to Scope of Project:**

- Insulation in upper roof
- Planning for current code egress/stair
- Planning for elevator (to be able to move cabinets back in)
- Planning for central air conditioning
- New sprinkler system

The End

for now

