



## BACKGROUND – THE LANTERN

As you approach the newly renovated Victoria Memorial Museum Building – the public exhibitions site of the Canadian Museum of Nature – the first thing that may catch your eye is the new “lantern”. This glass structure above the main entrance is a strikingly visible addition to the 100-year-old museum. And it fills a decades-old void left by the removal of the original four-storey stone tower in 1915–16.



**Improving Visitor Flow:** The lantern is more than an aesthetic addition: it serves an important function. It houses a much-needed staircase, allowing visitors to move easily from the second to the fourth floor. This resolves a long-standing limitation for the historic building. The original design of David Ewart, Dominion Chief Architect, only provided easy public access to the second floor, via the grand staircase in the Atrium.

**Reflecting the Past:** The original tower was intended to be the focal point of the building. Regrettably, the tower had to be removed by 1916 because unstable soil conditions would not support its massive weight. Nearly 100 years later, the architects created the new lantern that evokes the spirit of Ewart’s early tower, but also encloses a new butterfly staircase and heralds the 21<sup>st</sup> century transformation of the museum. Image from Library and Archives Canada.

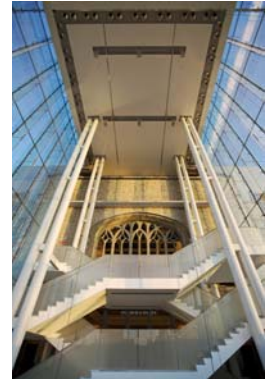


**A Spectacular View:** From the outside, the lantern is a modern yet elegant feature that heralds the 21<sup>st</sup>-century renewal of the museum. From the inside, visitors can gaze up Metcalfe Street towards Parliament Hill. Turning around, they can appreciate up close the stone carvings of animals and ornamentation that adorn the museum's exterior walls.

...2/



**Innovative Engineering Solution:** Unlike David Ewart’s original heavy tower, the new structure does not impose any weight on the existing masonry walls. The lantern actually hangs from a specially constructed roof that is cantilevered from concrete walls for the new elevator shafts inside the building. Four large steel columns provide the structural support for the roof, from which hang the panes of glass that form a transparent box.



## Lantern facts

- Constructed in 2008 and 2009
- Glass manufactured at Pilkington Glassworks in England.
- Steel (columns and roof truss) manufactured in Quebec, Montreal and Ottawa.
- 160 panes of face glass
- 120 pieces of glass “fins”
- 136,000 kg (300,000 lb.) of steel
- 90,700 kg (200,000 lb.) of exterior glass
- 929 m<sup>2</sup> of exterior glass
- 334 m<sup>2</sup> of interior glass

## Information:

Dan Smythe  
Senior Media Relations Officer  
Canadian Museum of Nature  
613-566-4781  
dsmythe@mus-nature.ca

Laura Sutin  
Media Relations Officer  
Canadian Museum of Nature  
613-566-4793  
lsutin@mus-nature.ca