

[From Fall 2008]

Stabilization of the Light House

International Chimney Corporation started emergency stabilization on the light house on August 4 thru August 8, 2008 at which time the light house was closed to visitors. In the recent rappelling inspection they noted a dangerous condition on the gallery bracket supporting the gallery deck plates. The gallery deck is the walkway around the outside of the light house where visitors are normally allowed to walk. The gallery brackets appear imbedded into the brickwork, as in the original design. The inspection determined that there is a gap behind the brackets indicating that they are not tied to the wall but only leaning against it. The brackets were no longer supporting the gallery deck and cracks in the cast iron deck plates supported this conclusion. This made the gallery deck completely unsafe to walk on.

Mr. Steve Scyoc, manager of the stabilization, indicated no one was allowed out on the gallery deck and that the primary concern is to provide for public safety. The first step was to provide protection from dropping objects to the public. To make the area safe they cordoned off around the light house with a 4 ft high orange safety fence creating a controlled access zone into the light house and oil shed. A 40 foot long plywood roof was installed over the walkways leading into the light house doorway and leading to the oil shed to protect passage into either entrance. This plywood roof protected walkers into either structure from any falling debris.

The roofs of both the lighthouse and oil shed had to be protected from falling debris. A plywood covering was used to provide protection from falling objects to the roofs. The plywood cover was attached to the roofs of the light house and oil shed with rope so that no nail holes would be made into either roof structure.

In the watch room a barricade at the gallery door was installed to prevent anyone from going out on the gallery deck. A plywood barricade was installed halfway up the gallery door which would allow ventilation and still provide a view out the doorway. A lock was installed to keep people from going out on the gallery deck.

The gallery deck is temporarily stabilized with a temporary reinforcing/bracing, which would have a minimum visual impact from the ground, but preserve the original gallery deck and prevent debris from falling. The gallery bracket supporting the gallery deck was stabilized with a cable corset around and thru the existing brackets. It was installed to tie the brackets together in the same manner as the original builders intended to hold the gallery deck to the light house. The cable was wrapped around and thru the gallery brackets to hold them to the lighthouse and turnbuckles were used to tighten the cable against and thru the hoops of all brackets and snugged. Where the cable makes contact with the bracket hoops, sheaths were installed to prevent damage to the brackets. A catch scaffold underneath the deck was wrapped around the light house and provided scaffolding to work from. The scaffolding gallery deck brackets were enclosed with debris netting encapsulating the gallery deck and attached to the handrail of the gallery deck.

By Nick Greif