



TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE
GEORGE P. BUSH, COMMISSIONER

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PRESS RELEASE

Commissioner Bush Launches Most Extensive Conservation in Alamo History

San Antonio firm part of team chosen to preserve and reinforce the Shrine of Texas Liberty

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AUSTIN — Today, Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush announced the Alamo Church and Long Barrack will undergo their most extensive conservation in more than a century. The General Land Office (GLO), the agency responsible for the Alamo on behalf of the people of Texas since 2011, has awarded a preservation contract to San Antonio firm Ford Powell & Carson and its partner, Preservation Design Partnership.

“Other states have history; Texas has legends,” Commissioner Bush said. “Texas history speaks to everyone who wants to be free. As a son of Texas and a veteran, I can think of no higher honor than leading the Alamo’s reinforcement today. We must conserve our heritage, and as long as I am the Alamo’s guardian, we will.”

The two firms, which were selected through a rigorous procurement process, will work together on Alamo conservation using funding approved by the 85th Texas Legislature. This project is outside, and in addition to, the Alamo design plan currently underway, which aims to restore reverence to its historic battlefield footprint and build the Alamo a museum to preserve and display the Phil Collins and Alamo collections.

“The Texas Legislature, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and Gov. Greg Abbott have provided ample funding to preserve the Alamo, which we all recognize is vital,” Commissioner Bush added. “They delivered every penny for which we asked to fund the most important conservation program in Texas. The Alamo needs us, and Texans of goodwill are coming to its aid.”

Ford Powell & Carson is based in San Antonio. The respected firm has decades of experience caring for Texas historic structures, including the Alamo. Its extensive resume includes the Plaza de Armas renovation, St. Mark’s Episcopal Church (home of the bell created from one of the two Battle of Gonzales “Come and Take It” cannon), La Villita historic district, and San Antonio’s other four Spanish missions. Preservation Design Partnership is one of the world’s leading historic preservation firms, whose work includes the Virginia State Capitol, Washington Crossing Historic Park (site of George

Washington's daring 1776 raid across the Delaware River) and the Supreme Court of the United States.

Along with announcing the awarding of the preservation contract, the Alamo and the GLO are releasing a time lapse movie that studies the deterioration of the walls inside the Alamo Church. The Alamo and GLO initiated the study -- called the "black paper project" -- in 2016. Its aim is to quantify how much and how rapidly the limestone that makes up the Alamo Church's structure is crumbling due to the effects of rising damp, vibrations from traffic on nearby Alamo Street, and other causes. Rising damp is a condition in which limestone soaks up moisture from below and the side, which can lead to internal damage and flaking. The traffic, which runs across the Alamo's historic footprint, creates a noisy environment around the Alamo and has been a prime suspect of damaging the Alamo Church for about 30 years.

The "black paper project" is simple: Alamo staff laid black construction paper on the floor next to the walls throughout the Alamo Church, to capture and quantify how much stone and mortar is falling from the walls. The movie is a time lapse of the material falling to the floor spanning more than a year. Today, the black paper is almost completely covered by fallen limestone and mortar.



The conservation project awarded today shall include the most extensive scientific study of the Alamo Church and Long Barrack ever done. This study will include moisture sensing throughout the Alamo's iconic church, and archaeological investigations on the site. The team will make, test, and implement recommendations to conserve the Alamo. Texans will start to see the work begin this fall.

This project follows major conservation projects completed earlier during Commissioner Bush's tenure at the General Land Office. In 2015, Commissioner Bush sought and won an emergency allocation of \$5 million from the Texas Legislature. That funding enabled a range of projects that shored up the Alamo's façade, updated ailing facilities, created a new space for temporary exhibits, replaced doors and HVAC on the Long Barrack, and replaced rotting cedar beams on the arcade.

The black paper project time lapse movie may be found here: <https://youtu.be/voDyw3ZbU9Q>.

For more on the Alamo restoration and master plan, visit www.SaveTheAlamo.com.

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