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Consigli restores Maine Irish Heritage Center's headquarters; former church

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Consigli Construction Co., Inc.'s Portland operations have completed multiple renovations and repairs to the Maine Irish Heritage Center's headquarters on Gray St., marking the official re-opening of the center since damages caused by flooding and the collapse of the tower's bell forced the closure of the building.

The 1893 building was once used by Maine's Irish immigrants as the home of one of the largest Irish Catholic congregations in New England. In 2006, the tower's bell frame broke through the belfry floor and collapsed through two floors of the tower. The Maine Irish Heritage Center was forced to close the facility and cancel its events, leading to a significant effort on the part of its volunteers to raise funds and awareness to the center's importance in the community.

Consigli oversaw renovations that returned the bell to its belfry among numerous other improvements. In the belfry, structural steel beams were installed along the tower walls, with additional support beams reinforcing the corners. The rooms and floors ripped apart by the bell's collapse were also repaired and refurbished, as was the lower-level meeting area, giving the Heritage Center new space to use for offices. Consigli also performed work on the building's exterior, including slate repairs and masonry stabilization and rebuilding, which was completed under a grant from the Office of Housing and Community Development in Portland. The self-perform craftworkers at Consigli oversaw all rough carpentry, including framing of walls and ceilings, as well as construction of the handicap ramp, drywall salvaging and hanging, and refinishing and reinstalling of finish woodwork.

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