

A New Partnership in Stone

"Great ideas require bold initiatives," states the Very Rev. James Parks Morton. He is speaking about Cathedral Stoneworks, a newly formed partnership between Colonna & Co., a church affiliate, and preservation developer David M. Teitelbaum.

Mr. Teitelbaum is known in New York real estate and preservation circles for his innovative approach to the adaptive reuse of historic properties. The federal landmark Archive Building in Greenwich Village, the Barbizon Hotel, the Rodin Studios and 111 Fourth Avenue are but some of his developments.

The new Cathedral Stoneworks, by employing trained cutters and carvers from the Stoneyard Institute, will combine the worlds of hand-crafted artisanship and high technology. Such an enterprise, to date, exists nowhere else in the United States.

"We're buying two fabulous new computer saws," says Teitelbaum, president of the new venture. "These will give us that competitive edge. With the machines, we'll be able to take on large commercial projects and still be able to provide hand-finished stone of the highest caliber."

"It's an amazing process," continues Teitelbaum, "specialists design the shapes directly on their computer work stations. The computer then creates instructional tool-path tapes that guide the automated stonecutting equipment. The saws can shape a block of stone 20 to 30 times faster than by hand."

The first two saws will be installed within the next twelve months at the Cathedral, inside an expanded cutting shed. Initially, the machines will be used to cut stone for the Cathedral itself and will be used to give stoneworkers experience in their operation.

Cathedral Stoneworks plans to purchase additional saws for a factory in the Bronx, which is to open in 1990. This new stone-fabricating facility will provide highly articulated stone to the commercial market, offering both quality and speed of delivery to conventional stone-erection contractors.

"A most encouraging signal that our company is on track," claims Teitelbaum, "has come from the development community. A prestigious group, including Skidmore Owings & Merrill, the George Hyman Construction Co., and Chicago developer Richard Stein, has included Cathedral Stoneworks on its development team in competing to construct the \$650 million Federal Triangle Building in Washington, D.C., for the federal government.

"If selected," continues Teitelbaum, "we will train local Washington youths in the art of stonecraft. They will help us to provide stone



Gilding the cross atop Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church. Cathedral Stoneworks is the principal contractor for the \$3.5 million "stone-by-stone" restoration.

fabrication and fine art embellishments for this three million square foot, neo-classical building."

Cathedral Stoneworks is also negotiating with the Indiana Limestone Company to provide molded and profiled stonework for its customers on the East Coast.

At present, Cathedral Stoneworks is the principal contractor for the restoration of several churches and historic buildings, including the \$3.5 million "stone-by-stone" rescue of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church.

"At 111-115 Broadway, over \$1 million of domestic granite and limestone has been fabricated and delivered," according to John T.

Walsh, P.E., president of the Stoneyard Institute and Cathedral Master of the Works.

"By using old photographs and computer-aided design, our team reconstructed the facade and located matching stone at an abandoned quarry."

Walsh believes this new association will be a quantum leap into the commercial world and should provide much needed funds for expansion of the Stoneyard Institute's training and educational programs, thus multiplying the numbers of those cutters and carvers already at work building the Cathedral and in preservation projects throughout the city.

Staff report.