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ROM reopens galleries in first stage of massive expansion program

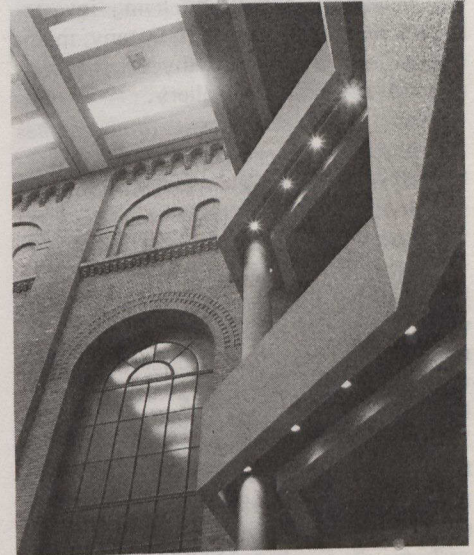
The Royal Ontario Museum of Ontario (ROM) in Toronto, which is undergoing a \$60-million renovation and expansion project, reopened September 24, allowing the public to view the first of a number of changes to the buildings and exhibits.

The reconstruction project, which began in January 1981, is considered one of the most complex ever undertaken in the international museum field. It will almost double the total size of the museum from 34 373 total square metres to 65 030 total square metres, making it the second largest museum building in North America, surpassed only by New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The project includes construction of two new buildings and the complete renovation of the main building. One of the new buildings, the nine-floor curatorial centre has been occupied by most of the staff and collections this past year and serves as the ROM's "nerve centre". It contains some of the most sophisticated research, collections management and support facilities in the museum world, as well as two new libraries.

The second building, the Terrace Galleries building is nearing completion and is expected to be ready for gallery installations in 1983. This building will house the museum's famous Ming Tomb collection. Major support for the renovation and expansion project has come from the Ontario government (\$37.5 million), Metro Toronto (\$5 million) and private donations (\$10.3 million).

Planning for new galleries in the museum began in 1975 when staff and consultants embarked on the preparation of a series of reports and publications, which have since received wide international acclaim. It was recommended that the new galleries should be designed in "clusters" rather than, as before, as a series each dealing separately with a single discipline or subject. In the plan for eight "clusters" under development, collections drawn from various departments are being integrated into a network of inter-



Royal Ontario Museum

A view of the old and the new: the main building (left) and the curatorial centre are linked by bridges.

related galleries designed to illustrate conceptual and/or chronological links.

Galleries partially ready

At the reopening in September, three clusters — although only partly completed — were on display. Further galleries will be phased in over the next two years with the formal reopening of the museum to be held in 1984 to coincide with Ontario's bicentennial and Toronto's sesquicentennial celebrations. In addition, the museum will offer a program of special temporary exhibitions during 1983 and 1984.

The three clusters of galleries on view at present cover the following areas: Mediterranean World, Palaeontological Sciences and Life Sciences.

The Mediterranean World cluster has eight galleries open with a total of 25 galleries planned for 1984. This series of galleries is intended to illustrate important chronological and conceptual links among a variety of diverse cultures and civilizations. The galleries will provide surveys of the development of the early states of



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