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Archaeological research centre to open

BUILDING WILL OPERATE UNDER UMBRELLA OF CYPRUS INSTITUTE

The former District Commissioner's House in central Paphos is ready to open as the Research Centre for Science and Technology in Archaeology.

The centre, which opens unofficially at the end of July, will house the head quarter offices of STARC, the Science and Technology in Archaeology Research Centre.

STARC operates under the umbrella of the Cyprus Institute, an organisation which promotes research and education in science and technology.

STARC focuses specifically on the development, introduction and use of advanced science and technologies in archaeology and cultural heritage.

Last year, the body was involved the first aerial digital photography project of an archaeological site in Cyprus which saw researchers suspending a special camera attached to a huge blue balloon over the Hellenic theatre in Kato Paphos.

"The first event to take place at the centre will be the bi-annual meeting of the Cyprus Institute Board of Trustees at the end of July," research vice-president Professor Loucas Kalisperis told The Cyprus Weekly. "We will have a member of staff there from next week and the official public opening will take place round about October."

The building dates from the 1930s combining architectural elements of Tudor Revival. It was designed by William "Willie" Caruana, a prolific Maltese engineer of the Cyprus Public Works Department, whose designs were used in a series of official residences during the same period. Restoration required sensitive renovation

works in order to make it suitable for STARC use while maintaining its original character.

"We have modernised the building under the guidance of Nicosia architect, Marios Pelekanos. We had to take the roof apart tile by tile to attend problems then carefully relay it. The design, planning and work has taken between 18 months and two years."

The offices will support practical work at laboratories, other facilities and premises for summer schools in Yeroskipou Germanina area.

Yeroskipou municipality is currently running an international design competition of the upgrade of buildings on this site for conversion into a cultural centre. The STARC facilities will be located directly adjacent to this arts site.

"We won't proceed with building this until at least a year from now. We are waiting to see the designs for the arts buildings in order to create premises which are in concert visually before proceeding," Kalisperis said.

The former Governor's House was granted by Paphos Municipality while the Germanina land has been provided by Yeroskipou Town Hall.

The centre will be available for public use and an underground 200-seat lecture hall is also in planning for public and professional use.

"The opening of this centre is of key significance for the archaeological community in Cyprus and the surrounding region. We expect it to act as a focal point for research activities. STARC would like to thank Mayors Savvas Vergas and Tasos Kouzoupos for their support and vision."