

Green Future for Dinwiddie Hall

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During the next 14 months, an old building on the uptown campus will become a leader in energy efficiency. Massive renovations are under way at Dinwiddie Hall, which had been home to several science departments and the Middle American Research Institute.



Built in 1923, Dinwiddie Hall is undergoing a 14-month renovation project to make it one of the uptown campus' most energy-efficient buildings. (Photos by Alicia Duplessis)

Once complete, the renovations will make Dinwiddie the uptown campus' first building commissioned by the Green Building Certification Institute.

“Our plans for the structure qualify it for the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification, which is based on a point system that leads to rankings of silver, gold or platinum,” says project manager Clarence Odom of facilities services. “We applied for the silver ranking but we will actually have enough points for gold.”

Among the “point gainers” in the LEED certification process are plans for water and energy efficiency, green space, indoor air quality and the reuse of materials from the existing structure including windows, doors and floors where possible.

Although Dinwiddie will be the first to receive the certification, Odom says, it will be the second campus building renovated with energy efficiency in mind. The first is the [Lavin-Bernick Center for University Life](#).

“This is really exciting for Tulane because green is truly the way the country and the world is going,” says Odom.

Thousands of students have taken classes in the 86-year-old structure that also housed the Middle American Research Institute, a university museum focused on cultures of Mexico and Central America, with a collection of artifacts from every continent. The institute's collections include pieces ranging from Maya pottery shards to African masks and textiles.

“Moving out the museum from the fourth floor was a task in itself,” says Odom. “We had to be very careful when moving the collection, which is valued at about \$15 million.”



Dinwiddie's interior is quiet now as it awaits renovations, but thousands of Tulane students have taken classes in the building.

Now in its early stages of renovation, the building is void of student foot traffic and its halls are quiet. All that remains are a few student desks and outdated museum exhibits that have been left behind for discarding.

When the work is complete, however, the museum will return to all-new space on the third floor and other floors will have new classrooms, offices and elevator access. Plans call for it to be the home of the anthropology department, which is part of the School of Liberal Arts.

David Curtis, grandson of the building's original architect, Nathaniel C. Curtis, has taken the reins as architect for the \$9 million renovation expected to be completed in July 2010. David Curtis has worked on a number of university buildings including those of the law and business schools.

Built in 1923, [Dinwiddie](#) is named for Albert Bledsoe Dinwiddie, professor of mathematics and president of Tulane from 1918 to 1935.