
From: Ben Polak, Provost <provost@yale.edu>
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To: The Yale Community
Subject: Update on campus building projects

One of the things I am asked most frequently about by students, alumni, and colleagues is the scaffolding dotted around Yale's campus: what is the construction that is happening, and when will it be finished? I am writing today to tell you about three of these renovation projects.

The projects are linked in three ways. Each of the three buildings involved is an architectural oddity. In each case, the true purpose of the building is "hidden." And each of these projects has been delayed and scaled back for financial reasons.

The projects are also different in some ways. The first — Payne Whitney Gymnasium — was the effort of two presidents, Rick Levin and his predecessor, Howard Lamar. The second — Sterling Chemistry Laboratory — is also the effort of two presidents, Rick Levin and his successor, Peter Salovey. The third, 43 Hillhouse — the "president's house" — was planned by exactly zero presidents, since it would be a conflict of interest for them to do so.

Payne Whitney Gymnasium

Payne Whitney Gymnasium was built in 1932. What looks from the outside like a Gothic cathedral is in fact a nine-story athletic facility with everything from squash courts to a swimming pool. The building has been under continuous renovation since 1997, including the addition of the Lanman Center with basketball courts and a running track, construction of the Israel Fitness Center, renovations to the squash courts and lobby, and expansion of the gym's sports medicine facilities.

The main focus of our renovation plan for the interior of Payne Whitney was to upgrade program and support facilities. The work now in progress is focused on refurbishment of the building's exterior including masonry, windows, and skylights. It will still look like a cathedral and, as we finally remove its blue shroud, we will all be able to see it.

A larger exterior renovation was put on hold in 2008. The current, scaled back, project began in June. It is scheduled to be completed, and the scaffolding on the tower removed, in August 2014. The total budgeted cost of the exterior renovation is \$30 million, partly gift and partly internally funded.

Sterling Chemistry Laboratory

The Sterling Chemistry Laboratory was built in 1923. Its exterior is Gothic and does not look at all like a science building, but the inside is more like a factory, right down to the saw tooth roof which was designed to let more natural light into the building's interior, but now leaks like a sieve. The building contains classrooms, two large lecture halls, labs, workrooms, faculty offices and meeting rooms, and machine and glass shops.

The main focus of our renovation plan for SCL is to improve teaching and research space, accessibility, and safety. This includes new undergraduate teaching laboratories; lab support, offices, and student common areas; and new mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems. You will see some smaller enabling projects — including interior renovations to allow for temporary relocation of teaching labs and research programs during

construction — beginning this fall. Earlier this summer, the building’s main entry was brought into compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act regulations. It still won’t look like it from the outside, but we hope it will now function as a modern science building inside.

A much larger renovation and expansion was originally planned in 2008. The scaled back project is scheduled to start in July 2014 and be completed by fall 2016. Its total budgeted cost is \$130 million, 100 percent internally funded.

43 Hillhouse Avenue

The house at 43 Hillhouse Avenue was built in 1871 as a residence for the Farnham family. It was originally High Victorian Gothic in style — the first Gothic architecture in the area. In 1937, three years after Yale received it by bequest, the building was converted to the Georgian Revival style that we see today. Although it is often referred to as “the president’s house,” no president has lived there in many, many years, and the actual presidential quarters is an apartment on the top floor. Instead, the main use of the house has been as a welcoming and gathering space for students (especially new and graduating students) and their families, alumni, faculty, and donors and other guests of the university.

The main focus of our renovation plan for 43 Hillhouse is to make the building handicap-accessible, so that the university’s main welcoming space will be truly welcoming, and to upgrade safety, security, and mechanical systems. We will still call it the president’s house — and indeed, for the first time in a long time, the president will live there once work on the building is complete — but the wonderful art work and greeting spaces will now be accessible to all.

Plans to upgrade 43 Hillhouse were first developed in 2000, and a larger renovation was originally planned in 2010. The scaled back project started this summer and is scheduled for completion in fall 2014. Its total budgeted cost is \$17 million, 100 percent gift funded.

These are just a few of the renovation activities that will be in evidence around campus this year. Of course, there are many other capital projects, large and small, that are needed as well. I am developing a plan for scheduling these, and I will be sharing updates with you as this plan takes shape.

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