

# MUSEUM

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Funding for the \$14.4 million structure was the first hurdle to clear. The State of Oregon allocated \$6.36 million in state-serviced bonds, and the rest of the funding came from private grants and donors, according to the museum's Web site, <http://uoma.uoregon.edu/index.html>. Before the Oregon Legislature could release the bond money, the University had to secure the private funding, which took longer than expected.

Fong said world events such as the Sept. 11 attacks may have affected the flow of funds for the project.

"There were things that were out of our control," he said.

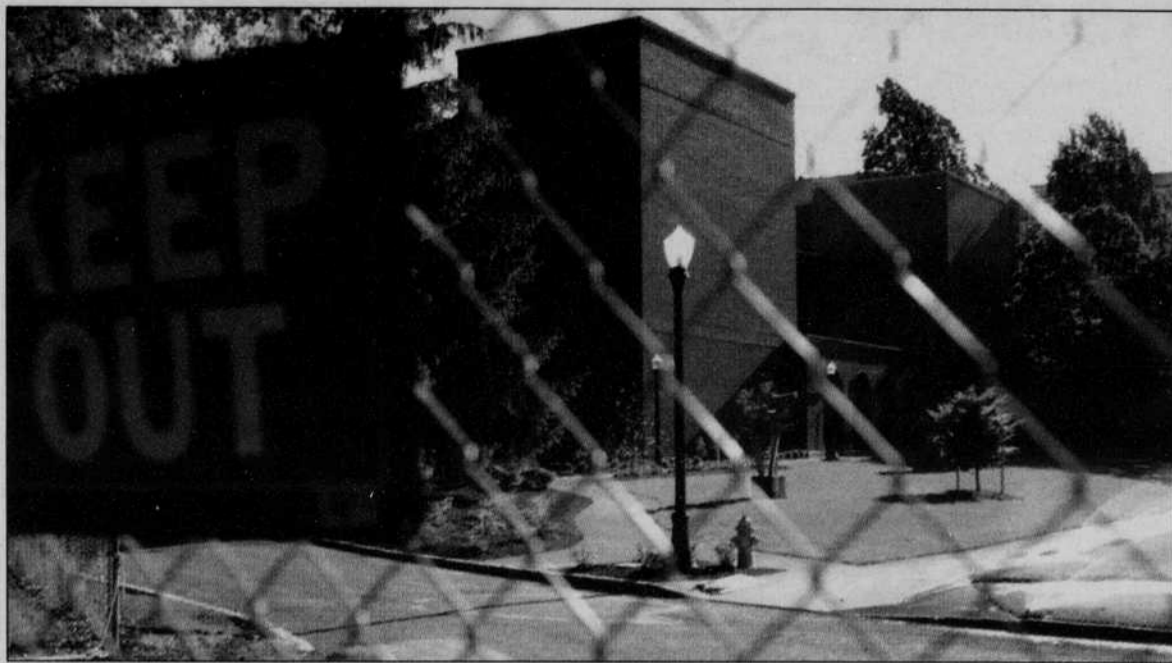
Before any work could begin, museum staff also had to meticulously pack and move away more than 12,000 different pieces from the museum's collection.

Groundbreaking for the project finally took place in September 2002, with an estimated 16-month construction time. But constructors still had to grapple with other challenges that slowed down the project. A big concern was how to transform a 1932 building into a 21st century state-of-the-art marvel.

"It presented a lot of challenges of how do you attach a contemporary building to an existing structure," Fong said.

Fong added that designers had to be especially careful since the original building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Guidelines on historic preservation had to be followed during the refurbishment to retain the original building's decorative elements and character.

Fong said architects also had to consider other aspects such as electric and technical work. Adjustments had to be made so that the original and new sections could operate in sync.



Danielle Hickey Photo Editor

The art museum has been under construction for almost two years. Plans to finally open it are set for October 2004.

Builders also had to deal with asbestos, which was commonly used in heating systems in the early part of the century. "It all had to be handled as hazardous material," Fong said, adding that as builders handled the asbestos removal, no other construction could take place, adding even more time to the construction schedule.

Museum Director David Turner said the building went through several "change orders" as project managers constantly reevaluated what needed to be done. Changing anything in the design requires consultation at different levels with the University, museum officials, architects, builders and even additional consultants.

"I know there was a consistent manner of thinking that they wanted to build this building right and not cut corners," he said.

He estimates that the building plans may have gone through as

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**David Turner**  
Museum director

many as 100 different changes.

"That's normal for a project this size," Turner said. "It's not unusual."

The museum's closure not only prevented students from viewing its impressive collections, but also affected them in other ways. Fine arts graduate students used to have their exhibitions at the museum, but have had to look for alternative locations. Art history students who, at times, used the museum for their studies also could not use it, Turner said. He added that the museum staff teaches a museology class each year and had to make do without the

museum's facilities when it was closed.

The building is now twice its original size at more than 63,000 square feet, according to its Web site.

Fong said builders are still finishing detailed interior work.

"This detail work is quite exact, and for an art museum it needs to be," Fong said. He added, for instance, the floors had to be level and the lighting just right to allow for attractive artwork displays.

With the upcoming October opening date, staff members are busy preparing to move back into the structure. Turner said the staff was originally supposed to have at least one year to move back in, but delays in the schedule have shortened that time considerably.

"We're going to have to get in there and do an awful lot of work really fast," he said.

The museum, which is renowned for

## MUSEUM TIMELINE

- 1932 - The University Museum of Art opens its doors. Building is designed to accommodate a later renovation.
- 1955 - Museum opens to general public.
- October 2000 - Museum closes to prepare for renovations.
- Sept. 10, 2002 - Groundbreaking ceremony for the current renovation
- May 4, 2004 - The University announces the new name of the museum will be the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art
- May 8, 2004 - The museum holds an open house
- October 2004 - Grand reopening

SOURCE: Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art staff and Emerald Archives

its Asian art collections, will have two special rooms dedicated to Korean art, as well as new rooms for American and Northwestern art and European art, Turner said. Previously, the only collection galleries were for arts from China and Japan. The expanded museum will also provide more space for changing exhibitions.

Turner said despite the delays, the new building will be "worth the wait." Students are eagerly looking forward to October.

Freshman Megan M. Johnson said she is really curious to see what's inside.

"I want it to open really badly," she said. "Since I've been here it hasn't been open."

Sophomore Erin Hallows had similar sentiments.

"I've never been in it, but I'd want to, especially since they've been working on it since I've been here," she said.

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