

SAU

St. Ambrose University hall gets facelift



3 HOURS AGO • [TARA BECKER TBECKER@QCTIMES.COM](mailto:TARA.BECKER@QCTIMES.COM)

St. Ambrose University's oldest hall is going through a much-needed transformation that will include some features dating from the original plans more than 120 years ago.

Construction began in April on the more than \$5 million project on Ambrose Hall that will include a

clock in the central tower of the building.

Work will include replacing decaying brick and mortar on the building's exterior, repairing parts of the roof, replacing sandstone with limestone on the first floor, and putting in hundreds of new windows.

The project also includes replacing windows and the roof of LeClaire Hall. The work, which has caught the attention of motorists along busy Locust Street, is slated to be completed by December.

Ambrose Hall was built in stages between 1885 and 1912. It was the only building on campus until 1922, when Davis Hall was built.

The goal of the project is to make the hall look like it did in the late 1800s and early 1900s, said Mike Poster, the university's vice president for finance.

"That was something that is really important," Poster said. "(The Hall) really is the history of the university."

The first floor of the building houses administration offices, while the other floors consist of classrooms, faculty offices, the student success center, and other academic support areas.

In the fall, a coffee shop will open up in the building.

While plans have been in the works for years, the university late last year started interviewing construction companies that specialize in historical renovations.

Poster said renovation work in the 1960s and 1970s covered up some of the historical features of the building. For example, asphalt shingles were put on parts of the roof, presumably as a cost-saving measure, he said.

Old pictures from the late 1800s and early 1900s showed a bell in the central tower that has since been covered up. The newly remodeled tower will expose the bell and it will be rung on special occasions, Poster said.

The original plans for the hall also included a clock in the central tower that was never installed.

A.J. Loss, president of Bush Construction, said Tri-City Electric Co. will install a new clock purchased from Missouri-based Americlock, Inc. Copper medallions will be on the other three faces of the tower, Loss said.

The windows for the building will be energy-efficient, double-hung, aluminum-clad wood windows that match the original windows when the hall was first built, Loss said.

In all, 370 windows will be replaced, Loss said.

Poster said the university hopes to have a ribbon cutting in the spring.