

Proposed UUCB Building Repairs

FAQ

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Please send additional questions to Susan@LankfordDesign.com

What needs to be done immediately, and what will it cost?

The Buildings and Grounds Committee recently submitted a list of urgently needed repairs to the Board of Trustees. The repairs include: Safir Room restoration (\$184K), roof rafter tail repair/sealing/painting (\$182K), other exterior painting, caulking, and sealing (\$163K), and new skylights (\$195K). An additional \$35K has been requested for mold remediation in the RE building. The total comes to \$758K.

Are there even more repairs needed?

Yes. But the list above is of those that need urgent attention.

Why is this happening now?

Our buildings are over 55 years old. Some systems, such as heating and electrical, have exceeded their life expectancies. Other routine upkeep, such as exterior painting, has been deferred for years for budgetary reasons. This is unwise, as exposure to the elements accelerates decay. One particular example is the Safir Room, which was damaged by leaks to the point it became a health hazard due to mold.

We have known since 2010 that the buildings have deferred maintenance that will average \$250K per year, indefinitely. The capital campaign several years ago essentially “bought” us 3 years. Though we have identified sources of funding for about 25% of our building maintenance needs through redirecting the endowment payout and establishing a Building Endowment, we have not yet identified an ongoing source of revenue to finance the remaining amount.

How fast will the work happen if the money is appropriated?

The Safir Room work could begin quickly, within a few months at most. The other projects could begin between 6 months and a year and a half from now.

How accurate are the figures?

We are most confident of the costs for the Safir Room, because the room has been demoed, the leak sources identified, and the costs of repair and refurbishment have been detailed by an architect.

The other projects are harder to assess until work begins and the extent of damage can be seen. We've tried to be prudent in our projections. We expect some items will exceed expected costs, but others will cost less than anticipated.

Do we really have to do this?

The repairs we're recommending now would cost much more if further deferred, due to accelerating damage of dry rot and mold. We have a new roof, thanks to the recent Capital Campaign. But the other elements of the building exterior also need to be made weathertight.

The unavailability of the Safir Room is more than an inconvenience to our members; it also impacts our rental income.

I thought the Safir Room was to be taken care of out of the last Capital Campaign.

No, the extent of mold damage had not yet been discovered when those Capital Campaign funds were being spent.

How are bids procured?

We only have estimates for the work at this point. The Safir Room is ready to be put out on bid as soon as we have funding. The bidding process is fairly straightforward. The architect works with us and develops a Request for Quotation (RFQ) and a list of bidding contractors. The RFQ describes in great detail the work to be done and any conditions on the construction. A contractor's meeting then is scheduled, typically two weeks after the RFQs are mailed, so that all interested contractors can tour the site, review the work to be done, and prepare a bid. Bids are due typically two weeks after the contractor's meeting. The Buildings & Grounds Committee then meets with the Architect to review the bids and select the bid that best fits our needs.

Have we considered other approaches than replacing what is damaged? For example, could we just roof over the areas where there are now skylights?

In general, we have proceeded with the assumption that we would replace what is damaged. However, the question is a good one.

The 4 large skylights in the Atrium give light to the rubber trees, which in turn give the room its name and distinctive ambiance. We have not considered eliminating these skylights. There are three other skylights: two between the Social Hall and Safir wing, and one above the upstairs landing between the Chrysalis Room and Conference Room. There would be direct costs in roofing them over, and indirect costs in providing artificial light thereafter. It probably makes sense to retain the original architectural plan. However, we will explore the pros and cons of approaches other than replacing skylights. This question is a good reminder to keep thinking outside the box.

How much priority does replacement of the heating system have?

Our heating system is original to the building. We've had breakdowns in recent years which we've been able to repair, but we're operating on borrowed time. Tom Tripp has obtained estimates for replacement of the system, which could be done all at once (most cost-effective) or in several stages. Replacing the heating system needs to be done. However, it differs from the urgent repairs we are proposing at this time, in that delaying does not further damage the building as is the case with water and weather damage.

I know this isn't part of the current proposed work, but what is the status of the removal of Monterey pines?

At the start of the project, we identified 86 Monterey Pines and 6 Eucalyptus that we wanted to remove. Since that time, we dropped the Eucalyptus trees because they were in reasonable health and the fire department did not deem them to be fire hazards if their debris was properly cleared. Of the 86 Monterey Pines that were dead or dying, 23 have been removed and we are working with the county to obtain a permit to remove the other 63 Monterey pines.

Wasn't the Ladd Griffith Fund created to cover extraordinary building repairs?

The Ladd Griffith Building Reserve Fund was created by the first UUCB Coordinating Team in 2005 and initially was funded with 20% of (undesigned) bequests to UUCB as they were made. It was used for extraordinary repairs, such as the asbestos removing in the Education Building, and the repairs to the brick floor of the atrium. 100% of the payout from the Building Endowment Fund that begins next year will go into the fund, as does the payout from the General Endowments that the Board began shifting into the Building Reserve. By 2020 all of the endowment payout will be going into the building reserve. Together these two payouts streams will cover about 25% of our building needs.