

ARCHITECTURE

A Whole New Hood

The College's art museum is set for a \$50-million overhaul (\$30 million has already been raised) starting in the spring, after new director John Stomberg takes over. Here are the details.

What's Happening

The southern part of the 30-year-old museum will undergo renovations while an expansion takes place to the north that will fill in space currently occupied by the courtyard. Additions will be "clean, modern and well-detailed," according to project managers.

The Schedule

The Hood will close in March. Staff will move out in July. Demolition starts in August. Plans call for a grand reopening in January 2019.

The Designers

The College hired Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects, a N.Y.C.-based husband-and-wife firm, to develop the plans. Project architect Azadeh Rashidi says two primary goals are to retain the character of original architect Charles Moore's design while adding a new identity, and to clarify "the Hood's relationship to the Green." That means making the museum façade and entranceways more visible from the north. She acknowledges that the site is tight. "Oddly, the fact that it is surrounded by the other buildings is kind of fun to deal with," she says.

Construction Materials

It's still early, but proposals include a whitish glazed brick for the exterior and granite for the entry area and lobby.

Room to Grow

The expansion adds roughly 15,000 square feet to the museum, including 5,000 square feet of gallery space and nearly 3,000 square feet of classroom space.

Secret Sauce

The "metaphorical heart of the museum," according to Stomberg, is the center for object-based inquiry, which features three state-of-the-art "smart" study rooms where faculty may contextualize objects through the use of film, the Internet, the Hood's comprehensive database of its collections and other new media. The space will allow the museum to engage many more students each year in intensive, object-based learning activities, he says.

An Active Place

Improved public spaces will "allow the art collection to be exhibited in a dignified glory fitting its importance," says Stomberg, who comes from the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum. "The other area of noticeable change will be a large atrium space that can be used for everything from opening receptions to student-led programs." He says the museum should always be an active place. "I love the idea of student curators and interns," he says. "I'm really looking forward to working with a great community."

Safekeeping

The Hood's collection of 65,000 works of art will be stored in facilities both locally and in the Boston area, where strict temperature and humidity controls will protect the valuables.

Art of the Loan

Forty-seven pieces of art are being lent to 17 other museums, including the Whitney, Tampa Museum of Art and the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

