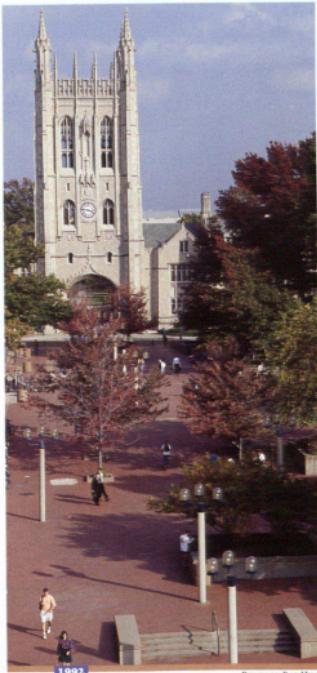


# Heart & Soul of Old Mizzou

BY JOHN BEAHLER

TODAY, NO ONE WOULD EVEN WHISPER THAT MAYBE, JUST  
MAYBE, THE BUILDINGS AROUND FRANCIS QUADRANGLE  
SHOULD BE RAZED TO MAKE WAY FOR MORE MODERN,  
UTILITARIAN CLASSROOM BUILDINGS. THAT WOULD BE  
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PLAINS OF KANSAS RIVAL MISSOURI'S OZARKS BEAUTY.



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PHOTO BY ROB HILL

*Today's generation of Mizzou students might have a hard time believing that the brick-paved pedestrian walkway called Lowry Mall was once a busy city street between the Missouri Bookstore and Ellis Library.*

**B**UT NOT TOO MANY DECADES AGO, some campus planners viewed the venerable structures almost like academic white elephants—outdated, inefficient, costly to maintain and impossibly expensive to renovate. Maybe it would be best to just tear 'em down and start over again, they mused.

An engineering study from the late 1960s said that Swallow Hall, one of the oldest buildings on campus, had just about had it. Built on the Quad in 1893 just north of Jesse, its brick walls were badly cracked from uneven settling of the foundations. Decorative stone lintels were splitting. Cast-iron support columns were overloaded, and the engineering expert had no idea how to even approach the Rube Goldberg maze of roof framing.

The study's conclusion: Renovating Swallow Hall would likely be a waste of money.

Luckily, no one took that advice, and Swallow is still holding its own. The building's most serious deficits have been shored up, and an exterior makeover is scheduled to get under way this year. In fact, all the buildings around the Quad either already have

had exterior repairs completed or scheduled to begin in the next few years.

It's a prime example of Mizzou's dedication to preserving its past, even as new buildings seem to sprout everywhere on campus. "You know, I think today you'd be hard-pressed to get anybody to even think about tearing Swallow Hall down," says Kee Groshong, MU's vice chancellor for administrative services.

There were a number of reasons for that about-face 30 years ago. For one thing, the preservation movement was gaining steam nationally, and architects and contractors were getting better and better at saving old buildings. On the local level, a group of MU faculty and staff worked to get the entire Francis Quadrangle, buildings and all, on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.

"Getting the Red Campus on the national register had a lot to do with changing that attitude," says Osmund Overby, professor emeritus of art history and archaeology, an expert on Mizzou's architectural history. "That nomination to the national register gave a kind of status that caught a lot of people by surprise, but pleased a lot of people, too."

Pickard Hall was the next step in revitalizing Mizzou's historic buildings. Built in 1892 as the campus's chem-

istry building, it was transformed into the Museum of Art and Archaeology in 1976. "We began working on the assumption that this was a fine old building, and the exterior appearance of it needed to be maintained and the interior changed a lot," Overby recalls.

"But, in fact, there weren't significant changes at all to the basic layout of the interior. The old chemistry labs functioned just fine as museum galleries. When the museum opened, there was a good demonstration right here in the heart of campus of how these old buildings could be reused and made perfectly functional for new uses, and we could hang onto that sense of tradition and place," Overby says.

Pickard Hall's transformation was topped a few years later, when Lowry Hall, the old Missouri School of Religion building, was renovated. Built in 1905 at the corner of Ninth and Lowry streets, Lowry Hall became the site for more than 30,000 students in religion classes. Lowry Hall now is the home of the Arts and Science dean's office and the Honors College.

When the University bought the white stone building in 1981, it was in terrible shape, with its interior almost in collapse. "We knew we could not renovate it and salvage it as it was," Groshong says. "We bought that one knowing we would have to rebuild it. It probably cost us as much or more money than if we'd torn it down and started from scratch."

What they did was gut it until just three exterior walls were standing. The footings had deteriorated, allowing the building to settle. So workers built giant telephone-pole tripods, wired the remaining walls to the poles and actually rebuilt the foundation. "That's a whole new building inside the shell," Groshong says.

In the process they created an architectural jewel. The limestone wall on the east that was torn out was replaced with two brick walls forming a right angle.

"So if you're approaching it from the east, you see the red-brick walls against



PHOTO BY STEVE MORSE

*Lowry Hall was near collapse when MU bought it and demonstrated the campus commitment to historic preservation. Once the home of the Missouri School of Religion, the building was gutted, and a brick addition replaced one of the crumbling limestone walls.*

the Red Campus. If you're approaching it from the west, you see the limestone-gray walls against the White Campus in the distance beyond them," Overby says.

"It gives it a very lively and intriguing exterior form and creates nice spaces around it. It's pretty ingeniously adapted to its new function."

That same ingenuity is being applied to other older buildings on campus. "We have buildings that were built for one purpose, but different units have used them over the years, and they've had two or three lives since then," Groshong says. "In many ways they're functionally obsolete and need to be renovated."

For example, older buildings have expensive and inefficient window air-conditioning units instead of central air. Electrical systems can't meet the demand for computer-intensive offices and classrooms. Many laboratories and classes were designed for now antiquated, turn-of-the-century teaching models. Some ceilings in Jesse Hall even have the remnants of gas lighting fixtures.

Read Hall started in 1903 as one of Mizzou's first women's dormitories. It has since been renovated as office space for the history department. Some offices even retained the original fireplaces that

once graced student commons areas.

The renovation of Townsend Hall, completed last summer, turned the historic College of Education building into a new center for teacher education. From the outside, it looks the same as it did when it was built in 1937 as the laboratory elementary school and University High School. Inside, though, there's a new look, with the kind of teaching technology that its first residents could only have imagined.

Another prime example will be McKee Gymnasium, built in 1922 for women's physical education classes. Back then, men and women were segregated for physical education. Today, the University doesn't even offer formal PE classes.

Architects are drawing up plans to renovate McKee and build an addition to the north and east. The new incarnation of McKee will house the State Historical Society of Missouri, now located in the east wing of Ellis Library. Although plans call for the renovation to retain most historical details, at least one bit of Mizzou history is likely to be lost—the ground-level swimming pool where the Mo Maids, MU's women's swimming club, formerly practiced diving and presented synchronized swimming programs. \*