

Globe Hotel renovation welcomes feng shui, but parking remains problematic

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Sam Sibold, an apprentice carpenter with Time Frame Inc., nails a rim joist on the top floor of the future OCOM campus in Old Town.

(Photo by Sam Tenney/DJC)

The \$15.2 million renovation of the 100-year-old former Globe Hotel in Portland's Old Town Chinatown neighborhood is more than 50 percent done, but three challenging and sometimes conflicting goals continue to require extensive consulting work. And the last big hurdle may be availability of parking.

The building, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, has required significant brick work and off-site refurbishment of original windows. Also, pursuit of a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design gold rating has generated energy efficiency and material-use concerns. Plus, out of respect for the Chinese traditions that inform the practices of the incom-

ing tenant, the Oregon College of Oriental Medicine, a feng shui master was hired.

"LEED stuff is getting to be pretty standard practice now – you recycle materials and use local suppliers; but in this case you're limited by the historic guidelines," said Jeff Hamilton, principal-in-charge of the project for Ankrom Moisan Associated Architects. "It's a bit of a challenge to meet city, state and federal expectations. Usually they have common goals, but sometimes they can differ from each other."

OCOM presently operates out of a clinic in the Hollywood District and another in Southeast Portland. The college plans to keep its clinics



Erik Waite, left, a carpenter with Time Frame Inc., cuts a glu-lam column that will be used as a support beam on the top floor being added to the Old Town building for the the Oregon College of Oriental Medicine.

(Photo by Sam Tenney/DJC)

Martin Ramirez of D & R Masonry Restoration lays bricks in a window-sill of the former Globe Hotel in Old Town Portland Nov. 16. The building is being renovated for the Oregon College of Oriental Medicine.

(Photo by Sam Tenney/DJC)

open, but move college operations into the renovated building. The relocation will double the school's classroom space, expand its clinical services and add a community space to its campus.

"We're really excited because the move really is in many respects going to strategically position the college for the future – it was extremely important for us to have a presence in the metropolitan area," OCOM President Michael Gaeta said. "And we're doing something really interesting – the feng shui analysis of the site enables us to maximize characteristics of the building that are important to Chinese philosophy."

Feng shui consultant Alex Stark joined the project during the initial assessment and cleansing ceremony of the building before construction began. Quartz crystals were placed in the building at designated areas, and Stark worked with Ankrom Moisan to orient the treatment rooms in a way that will maximize their healing potential, according to the ancient design philosophy.

"(Chinatown) is going through a renaissance, and we are very excited about coming into the neighborhood on the heels of the University of Oregon and Mercy Corps," Gaeta said. The one major issue still being discussed is parking. The school is expected to bring 400 students, staffers and instructors into the historic neighborhood. However, no parking facilities are planned to accommodate the influx. Gaeta believes parking will always be a point of contention.

"No matter what size the college campus is – 30,000 (students) or 300 – in surveys, parking is always listed in the top five major concerns," he said. "We feel strongly about the importance of emphasizing a decreased carbon footprint and emphasizing mass transit as much as possible."

But with realization that some students and college personnel will choose to drive, Gaeta said the school is discussing options with the city and owners of area parking spaces. A Smart-Park public parking garage exists nearby, but spaces there are limited.

"There is some difficulty there – even when I was going in for construction meetings there were days when it was full," Hamilton said. OCOM has an advisory committee still examining options for downtown parking, but Gaeta said he is confident that transportation concerns will be addressed by the time the school opens next fall.

Crews from LCG Pence Construction this week are working at a fever pitch to finish framing and roofing the fifth floor, which is an addition to the original structure. The original roof had to be torn out in order to create a more seismically stable frame for the top floor, which will include executive offices, board rooms, a wooden deck and a Chinese herb garden.

"I remember when we were just talking about this as an idea," Gaeta said. "Now it's starting to manifest on a physical level, and it's a pretty powerful feeling."