

Art building undergoes roof replacement, phase one to be complete June 1

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Construction worker Miguel Mendez descends the scaffolding that surrounds the art building on Tuesday afternoon.

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Scaffolding and chain-link fencing continue to surround parts of the art building as UT's Project Management and Construction Services (PMCS) renovates much of the building's roofing.

PMCS project manager Mark Jones said that while most roofing on the building was intended to last no longer than 20 years, many of its sections are over 35 years old, which meant a comprehensive replacement was in order.

Mike Debow, associate director of PMCS's project management division, said the project's two million dollar budget is "a significant investment into the long term viability" of the art building.

In addition to fixing leaks that have plagued the building for years, the project will address updated building code requirements for insulation and drainage holes on the building's facade, Jones said. The new, more effective insulation should help lower the cost of cooling the building as well.

"There will be a tremendous increase in [thermal resistance] value, maybe tenfold, on the roof," Jones said.

Throughout the project, students in the art building have had to contend with noises from the construction, design senior Jolie Durand said.

"We'll regularly be in class, and it's extremely loud drilling," Durand said. "It's like you're at a dentist's office, and you just hear somebody drilling and drilling."

Durand said while the noise can be frustrating, she understands the necessity of the project.

"I'm annoyed, but my first thought was, 'They're probably doing this because they have to,'" Durand said. "I know this building's old ... it's just a byproduct, the noise."

Jones said the project is requiring the cutting of brick and the installation of a layer that will prevent moisture from ruining the roof when heated by the sun, which can add to the noise levels — but they try to work as much as possible during times when they anticipate less people are in the building.

"There aren't as many students there in the morning and the evening," Jones said. "This contractor is working down to dusk, and most weeks have been seven-day work weeks. He's going as much weekend work as he can."

Phase one of the project, which encompasses most of the roof, including the north and southwest ends, is set to be complete June 1, Jones said. Phase two, which will include an overhaul of the decking leading to the graduate student area and the addition of a wheelchair ramp, is set to begin immediately after and take 90 days.

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