

A New Path: Cutler Wall, Mathias Hall Highlight Campus Renovations

Issue: [November 2010 \(story list\)](#) | Section: [Around CC Web Extras](#) <!--[Section: [Around CC, Web Extras](#)]-->



Photo by Leslie Weddell

If the hallmark of a successful renovation is that it appears as part of the original design, then the new wall at Cutler Hall is an unequivocal success.

The project involved new walkways at Cutler Hall (see top photo) a stone seating wall on the east side of Cutler Hall, a flagstone entry plaza at the east entrance to Cutler, and a flagstone-bordered walkway from Cutler to Cascade Avenue. The rhyolite stone in the wall was selected in part because it was used in the original construction of Cutler Hall. The wall “really defines our iconic building and gives it the respect it deserves,” says George Eckhardt, assistant facilities director.

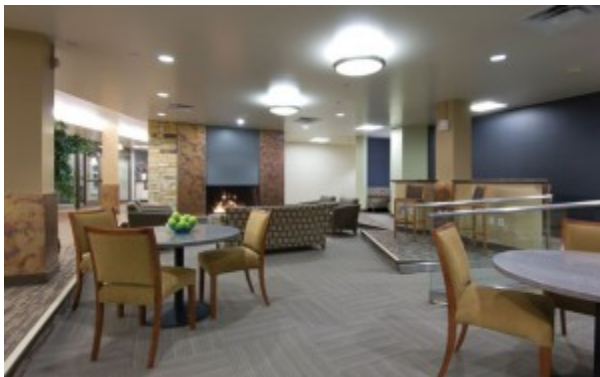


Photo by Paul Kohlman

Another major upgrade is the \$3.5 million renovation of Mathias Hall. The renovation created open lounges in the building's core, increasing the flexibility of common spaces; expanded the college's Living Learning Communities (LLCs) from one to four, and incorporated sustainability measures such as low-flow water fixtures, recycled content materials, Energy Star appliances, and energy efficient lighting. The bottom photo at the right shows the new common area at Mathias Hall, in which the existing walls were removed, creating an open space with flexible seating.

Other recent renovations to campus buildings include:

- Upgrades in McGregor Hall. The installation of an elevator allows access to first floor and basement which provided the basement. Upgrades to the basement include two accessible restrooms, lighting, flooring, and ceiling. Upgrades to the first floor living area include accessible student rooms, shower, toilet, and kitchen. McGregor also underwent energy efficiency upgrades, including replacing the steam heating system in the building to hot water and converting all single pane windows to an insulated window unit.
- ADA-accessibility renovations to Montgomery Hall. A wheelchair lift was added on west side of the building. First-floor bedroom, living room, laundry, kitchen, and bathroom/shower were brought into ADA compliancy.
- Renovations to the Community Kitchen in Shove Memorial Chapel. The renovations allow for more efficient food preparation and serving. The upgrades included moving the dishwashing operation out of the kitchen and into side hallway, and adding a rinse station and stainless steel countertops and backsplash; two new freezers and two refrigerators for storing food; an under-the-counter commercial dishwasher; new slip-resistant flooring in the dishwashing and kitchen areas; and the removal of all upper cabinets and the installation of stainless steel shelving. The changes were profiled recently; see the article at: www.gazette.com/articles/colorado-105258-springs-kitchen.html
- Construction of a pergola to protect the **Ritt Kellogg Jr. '90** memorial table. The original table was built from poplar wood in 1993 on the west side of McGregor Hall, overlooking the soccer fields and Pikes Peak. However, it weathered poorly and later was replaced with a Honduran wood. To help protect the table, Jerry Switzer and Cecelia Gonzales from the facilities services department designed a protective and decorative pergola, and the CC electric shop wired it for lighting. The Kellogg family was so impressed they recently sent a \$10,000 check to use for future maintenance on the table.
- Continuing Cossitt upgrades. During the summer of 2009, the anatomy lab was moved to Barnes Science Center from the west end ground level, and the spaces were remodeled into new ADA accessible restrooms and locker rooms. The final phase, completed this summer, includes conversion of two vacant offices to a single exercise/warm up area for dance students, improvements in the two west dance studios, and water, lighting, and electric service upgrades.

Dear Mr. Moore and Mr. Wise:

Homecoming weekend and my 50th Anniversary Class Reunion at CC were especially meaningful to me, in no small measure due to the hospitality showed by Mr. George Eckhardt. Mr. Eckhardt provided a private tour to a group of the Class of '60 to view Cutler Hall and

Cossit Hall. Both places are dear to my memories of time at Colorado College. Cutler Hall, was of course the office of President Benezet, and it was also where the Honor Council convened, which I chaired a year or two. Cossit was the site of pep rallies (I was a cheer leader as a freshman, which was pretty funny, actually).

The historical renovations of both buildings is nothing short of spectacular. The attention to detail of the period, and stories behind the projects are an exciting positive addition to the campus. George Eckhardt's work is brilliant and he deserves reward for his effort and full support from the college to continue what he does there. I hope you will pass on my appreciation to him. It was obvious that he is motivated, very creative, loyal to the College and knows how and where to get appropriate materials for his work, often at a bargain price (example: stone from the USAFA). The detail of the roof and spire, as well as the interior work are worthy of the best of preservations seen in Washington D. C., Colonial Williamsburg and countless other historic sites. The difference is this: at CC people actually *use* the facilities.

I am sure this type of care given to our historical buildings is more valuable an asset to the image the College conveys to visitors and potential students and their parents than the dollar cost to research, design, plan and implement and maintain the work.

Please accept my sincere thank you and congratulations to Mr. Eckhardt, yourselves and everyone at CC who supports this proud effort.

Very truly yours,

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[Around the Block](#)



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What's going on at Van Briggles?

Posted by [Leslie](#) on Tuesday, April 12, 2011

By George Eckhardt, Facilities Campus Planner

Is all the activity going on at Van Briggles over the past couple of weeks an extreme makeover, a building demolition project, an archeological dig, or a new construction project?

The correct answer is all of the above. Thanks to the generous support from the Schlessman



family, longtime

Colorado College benefactors, the Van Briggles building exterior and surrounding landscape is receiving an extreme makeover, to be concluded by mid-June.

Much like the nearly completed Cutler Hall and Cossitt Hall improvements, both part of the Long Range Development Plan (LRDP), there is an improvement project at Van Briggles, 1125 Glen Ave., and the Transportation Shop across the street, 1144 Glen Ave. The project is intended to greatly improve the “gateway first impression” appearance for Colorado College and for the entry to historic Monument Valley Park for vehicle traffic traveling on Uintah Street.

The goal is to attractively screen the maintenance vehicle parking area on the north side of the Van Briggles building, and the fleet vehicle parking area across the street at the Transportation Shop. A Colorado College campus stone sign replica of the Cascade and Nevada parkway median signs will be installed at an angle along the Uintah Street east-bound traffic lanes, just before reaching the Uintah Bridge, to announce arrival at the college.

The Western Ridge residential buildings will be visible, directly over the top of the new sign. Also, the improvements will eliminate the street side parking on the west side of Van Briggles, and add attractive landscaping around the historic Van Briggles building and the Transportation Shop property to greatly improve aesthetics.

The local community and many other interested visitors to the historic building will have more access and interaction with the west side of the Van Briggles building to explore and photograph the unique architectural features. Hardly a day passes that curious and historically knowledgeable visitors do not stop to take photos and drop in through the front office for a look at the building interior to learn more about the Van Briggles pottery history. Many, too, are interested in the Historic Walking Tour Van Briggles National Register listing: <http://www.coloradocollege.edu/welcome/walkingtour/vanbriggles.php>)

Decorative brick screen walls, much like the existing brick screen wall on the west side of the Van Briggles building, will be constructed around the north side parking area, and at the north side of the



Transportation Shop parking area. In both projects the brick screen walls will be set back significantly from the property line boundaries to allow for attractive landscaping, which will provide a softer park-like or garden-like appearance, and still provide an uninterrupted view toward the campus’ Western Ridge residences above Stewart Field as vehicular traffic approaches the college from I-25. The new landscaping will blend nicely with the attractive Horticultural Art Society garden on the south side of the Van Briggles building. The Van Briggles brick screen wall also will emphasize the northern view of the attractive upper Van Briggles building roof lines and showcase the building’s many unique architectural features, such as the decorative tiled dormers and chimney stacks. The utilitarian chain link fences and gates will be replaced

with attractive traditional custom wrought iron fencing typical for the historic period, containing subtle architectural elements borrowed from the Van Briggle building and existing screen wall.

The archeological dig is a result of demolition of the old Monument (Storage) Shed on the north side of the Van Briggle building along the Monument Creek bank and the excavation for the new screen wall.

From 1908 through the 1950's, Van Briggle Pottery used the backyard as a repository for kiln waste materials, used brick, and failed pottery and tile shards. Most of these bulky waste materials had to be removed and replaced with adequate soils for proper structural compaction for the new parking area surface and the new brick screen wall. The waste materials will be recycled as fill material in the deepest part of a large ditch on college- owned property located on West San Miguel Street just north of the Grounds Shop, which will provide a new storage lay-down yard replacing the lost Van Briggle storage yard. Many salvaged examples of 80 to 100 year-old glazed tile, terra cotta, and pottery shards will be useful for display and discussions for the annual Woman's Educational Society historical scholarship fundraising tour of Van Briggle, held each September (and scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 17, 2011).

Discarded monument markers with names and dates also were found under the Monument Shed



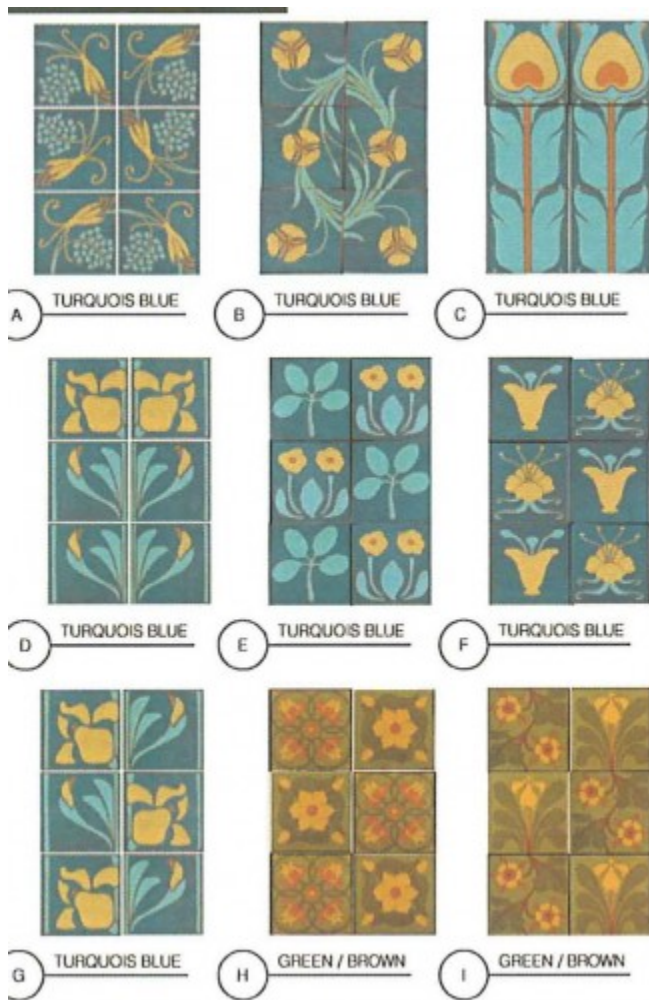
floors. Much of the discarded materials were used to fill in the undermined shed on the creek bank where soils were eroded and washed away during the infamous 1935 flood. It is noted on Van Briggle Pottery financial statements from 1937 and 1938 that the Monument Department was a significant part of the business as Van Briggle was recovering from the flood and the depression.

Unknown to most people, the Van Briggle building's three north side additions, done in years prior to college ownership, were constructed of exposed concrete block exterior walls. In 1968, after Colorado College purchased the Van Briggle Pottery, the building restoration and re-adaptation included removal of

the two large brick kilns. The used kiln bricks were cleaned and installed on the exterior faces of the concrete block walls on the north side additions to improve the historic look of the building. The 1968 restoration did not address removal of the plywood faced flat roof overhangs on two of the three additions.

This project includes removal of the two remaining flat roof overhangs and construction of raised brick parapet walls to match the northeast addition, which was topped with a brick parapet wall capped with sandstone in 1968. Roger Renck, one of the retired owners of Renck & Roberts Masonry Company, which originally did the brick restoration work 42 years ago, is acting as the project masonry consultant. Renck was able to locate oversized recycled, historically accurate, matching bricks in a used brickyard in Denver for constructing the two parapet walls. The north side of the building roof line will have a uniform historic appearance as viewed over the top of the new brick screen walls.

The west side of the Van Briggle brick screen wall will feature a projected 30-foot-long wall section framed by two pilaster columns containing art work including limestone floral carvings,



bas relief bronze plaques of Artus and Anne Van Briggle at work, and brightly colored glass tile mosaic artwork panels, all created by local artist and sculptor Larry Terrafranca. The artwork will depict and celebrate the Van Briggle Pottery story, adding another interesting feature for visitors to enjoy and to

photograph. Terrafranca previously recreated the black ceramic cat, which was missing from the southeastern brick chimney for more than 30 years. He also helped recreate very significant architectural art features on the Cutler Hall, Palmer Hall, and Jackson House historic preservation projects.

The brick screen walls also will incorporate decorative Van Briggie art tiles arranged in six-tile panels on each of the 13 brick pilaster columns. These art tiles are being produced by the current Van Briggie Art Pottery Company at 1024 S. Tejon St. The art feature wall will be surrounded on the west side by the Schlessman Family Garden, which will be a landscaped paver patio area with two bench seating areas for relaxation and enjoyment of the art works and scenery.

Removal of two rental houses on two college-owned properties near Van Briggie made these improvements possible. The loss of parking area at the north side of the Transportation Shop was compensated by removal of the college-owned rental house immediately south of the shop, creating additional fleet vehicle parking area. Likewise, the loss of indoor and outdoor storage and parking areas on the north side of the Van Briggie building will be compensated by the combination of two college-owned rental properties and construction of a new storage building at 228/232 West San Miguel St., directly north of the Grounds Shop. One rental house will be removed and the Facilities Services Construction Shop will move into the other rental house, which will remain. The perimeter of the new storage yard will be visually attractive with new landscaping and screening treatments which will include raised earth berms, new wood fencing, and new tree plantings.