



Krista Goodman/Index

The former Traveler's Square Hotel closed two years ago and now waits to undergo a potential renovation, transforming it into apartments. Carlson Gardner Inc. applied a second time with the Missouri Housing Commission to get its plans approved.

Traveler's Hotel transformed

Carlson Gardner Inc. expects to get approval for renovation plans by December

BY JESSICA RAPP
News Editor

History and modern times clash inside the former Traveler's Square Hotel on Washington Street.

A glance through the dusty windows of the vacant building reveals an elevator no longer in operation, an empty bar and rows of lamps, sinks and toilet bowls. A bit of imagination might bring the lobby to life, where a visitor juggling suitcases stops at the counter for a drink.

Century 21 associate Mark Whitney said the former inn currently is being used for storage. He said the building has been used as a hotel, a bed and breakfast and apartments during the past 85 years.

Carlson Gardner Inc. expects to hear by

December whether or not it can begin drawing official plans to turn the hotel into housing. Part of its goal is blending the historical aspects of the building with livable conditions, said Tammi Creason, who works in development for Carlson Gardner Inc.

"It's kind of a dance when you bring it up to modern code and you're trying to preserve the historical character," she said.

Creason said the company works closely with the National Park Service and the State Historic Preservation Office to decide what can be restored to maintain historic relevance and what needs to change for the building to meet modern requirements concerning safety and energy efficiency.

Carlson Gardner Inc. first applied for approval with the Missouri Housing Commission in October 2007 but did not receive a grant because of a lack of funding, said Brad Selby, codes and planning director. Creason said that when the company applied for the second time Sept. 5, it chose to designate in the application that a specific number of units

meet a certain rate.

Carlson Gardner plans to designate 26 units for low-income housing and the remaining eight units for sale at the market rate, Creason said. Students can apply for housing, although they will have to meet specific requirements for the less expensive spots.

"It isn't intended for student housing, but it does certainly accommodate students in certain needs," Creason said. "There's several exception categories that says students can live there."

She said that for example, one unit couldn't house three full-time students but might allow three part-time students or students who are married.

Creason said if the company receives approval this time, work and planning would start soon after, leaving a speculated completion time of spring 2010.

"We'll be very anxious to see how that turns out," she said. "... In the end, we usually hit the target."

REACTION | Faculty, students push to keep Truman moving forward in light of resignation

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also important to keep in mind that the University still has to pursue its mission as a highly selective, public liberal arts university.

"That mission is bigger than any one of us," Guffey said. "We need to make sure that we're single-minded and tirelessly pursuing that goal."

Senior Cody Sumter, student representative on the Board of Governors and the only student to be both present for Dixon's review process and have a seat on the search committee for a new president, said he thinks the situation is under control and that even though the instability the situation causes might not be in the best interest of the University, he thinks Truman as an institution will be fine.

"I'm happy in the direction that things are moving," Sumter said. "I can't say that I'm happy about what's happened, but now that it's said and done I'm quite content with what will be happening."

Sumter said he could not com-

ment on the actual events of the Board's closed sessions.

"Maybe that just wasn't her personality"

With the announcement of Dixon's resignation came outpourings of both disapproval and support from the student body. Student Senate President junior Lizz Esfeld said she has heard the entire spectrum of reactions to Dixon's presidency and that students are divided in their opinions of her resignation. She said negative views of Dixon might stem from a misunderstanding of her role as president — a role that made her an external representative of the University who was often away from the University for purposes like fundraising.

"She's not out on the Quad talking to students and being all involved in coming to student organizational meetings, but I don't know that that was necessarily a bad thing," Esfeld said. "I don't know that that was as much her

role as maybe we think it is. ... Then again, it's student perception, and I can't say that maybe another president would be more involved on campus, maybe that just wasn't her personality."

Dixon was scheduled to attend Sunday's Student Senate meeting prior to announcing her resignation, and Esfeld said the appearance still is planned. Although the focus will be less on future issues, Esfeld said students still will have the opportunity to talk to Dixon about what is on their minds.

"I think it is one of the last times that she's going to interact directly with students, especially the Student Senate," Esfeld said.

Senior Brittainy Cavender said she wasn't particularly surprised by Dixon's announcement Tuesday because she had heard whispers of Dixon having differences of opinion with the Board of Governors. Although she said she thought Dixon was effective at managing the University, she said the president was much less visible around campus than those of other universities she is familiar with.

"I know, for example, when President Magruder was here everybody knew who he was, and I didn't get the vibe that a lot of students knew who President Dixon was," Cavender said.

Senior Leigh Wickell said she

thinks Dixon has made a lot of innovative changes regarding academic restructuring but that she doesn't feel qualified to pass judgment on her success as a president. Wickell also said she was caught off guard by the announcement.

"I thought that it was kind of strange — I mean, it feels like she hasn't really been here for five years, and it's weird that she would be resigning and citing disagreements with the Board of Governors," she said. "I think that's a very interesting development."

Constituencies inside the University aside from students and faculty felt the aftershock of Dixon's announcement as well, especially in areas where progress was made during Dixon's term. Head football coach Shannon Currier said Dixon was a supporter of the athletic fee (passed in spring 2007), which is something that benefits both athletes and students. He said she was also instrumental in campaigning for funds for athletic programs and facilities.

"Prior to her, we hadn't done a lot of campaigning [for athletic funds]," Currier said. "Then they got the biggest gift ever this past year — two-point some million dollars in one gift. I really appreciate the things she's done."

Additional reporting by Blake Toppmeyer

New law allows students to rate professors

BY MARGARET HOOPER
Staff Reporter

In 2007, the Missouri State Legislature passed Senate Bill 389, which requires public universities, including Truman, to post students' instructor ratings online.

Faculty Senate President James Guffey said a committee composed of administrators, faculty and students was appointed to create a system that would meet the requirements of the new law.

The committee developed a series of possible questions and posted the list on TruView, Guffey said. Students then were asked to pick eight questions from the list that they thought would provide the most useful information.

"With this being a student tool, we wanted to get student input," Guffey said.

More than 700 students responded to the survey, which closed Wednesday, and the results will be used to help determine the ultimate structure and content of the questionnaire.

Although many of the final details have yet to be decided, Guffey said the committee intends to have students complete the rating questionnaire at the end of the current semester, and the information collected will be available when students begin registering for fall 2009 classes. The data will be compiled so students can see how a professor was rated for the specific class in which the student is considering enrolling.

"The intent will be, once this has been running for a while, it will keep a previous number of semesters of data," Guffey said. "It'll take a couple of years to get there."

Junior David Hayes, academic affairs chair for Student Senate, said the new rating system would exist alongside the traditional course evaluations, which the University uses in instructor evaluations and determining course effectiveness.

"The evaluations that we do at the end of each semester are primarily for the department chairs," Hayes said. "The questions we're putting up there, those are just for students."

The proposed survey questions range from the subjective, "The instructor was an effective communicator (strongly agree to strongly disagree)," to more objective queries such as "Most of the test material in this class came from..." (check one: Readings, Lecture notes, Laboratory assignments/activities, Other.)

"Hopefully in the end there will be a mix of those kinds of questions," Hayes said.

Freshman Emily Haight said she filled out the survey on TruView and wished the information had been available when she registered for classes.

"I have a teacher at 7:30 in the morning that has such a thick accent I can't understand a word she says," Haight said.

Haight said that if ratings had been available, she probably would have taken the class with a different professor.

DIXON | President announces resignation effective Oct. 15

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to work alongside Dixon, so he did not expect her resignation this early in the academic year. He said he thinks it's his responsibility to facilitate a smooth transition and that he's supported by reliable faculty and staff.

Paino said he thinks the University will move in a positive direction from here partly because Dixon helped prepare everyone in the case of a major shift in leadership.

"She told me really the sign of a strong president or an effective president is that you won't miss him or her when they leave," he said. "You've done enough to sort of build a strong team of leaders on campus. ... She's very confident that the team she has helped put together is strong enough that we will carry on and not miss a beat, and I'm sure of that."

Mark Wasinger, Board of Governors vice chair, also said Dixon's parting occurs on friendly terms and that plans for an interim president are in the works.

"Several viable candidates or possibilities have been suggested and ... we feel that those discussions will reach fruition by the end of the week, such as the Board feels the best person to act in that capacity will hopefully be on board by the end of the week," Wasinger said.

He said the process of selecting a new president is in its infancy.

"I anticipate having further discussion with the other board members to establish a committee ... to conduct a search and to come up with viable possible replacements and to ultimately undertaking an interim process to hopefully get someone on board," he said. "We don't think that's going to be an instantaneous process because it's going to be done right the first time."

Additional reporting by Julie Williams



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