

Environment

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Seattle U has completed a new 'signature building'

- *Green features and public spaces are intended to reflect the school's values.*

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Seattle University has completed its \$7 million Alumni & Admissions Building, providing a front door to the school while energizing 12th Avenue for future development.

Michael Kerns, associate vice president of facilities support services, called it one of the school's signature buildings. It will influence the first impressions of potential students who come to tour the school campus, and also represents relationships the school has forged with departing students.

"It absolutely needs to be an important impression and it needs to speak to what's important to the university," he said.

The 11,000-square-foot one-level building is at the corner of 12th and East Marion Street. It also has a gallery and community meeting space.

James Cary was architect and Charter Construction was general contractor

The project is part renovation and part new construction. The school bought the building in 2007 for \$3.3 million. About 90 percent of it was reused and a 3,500-square-foot addition was built on the former parking lot. Parking now is being provided in other places.

Cary said the office space is located in the original structure, which was a big wooden box. The meeting space and a vestibule are in the new construction.

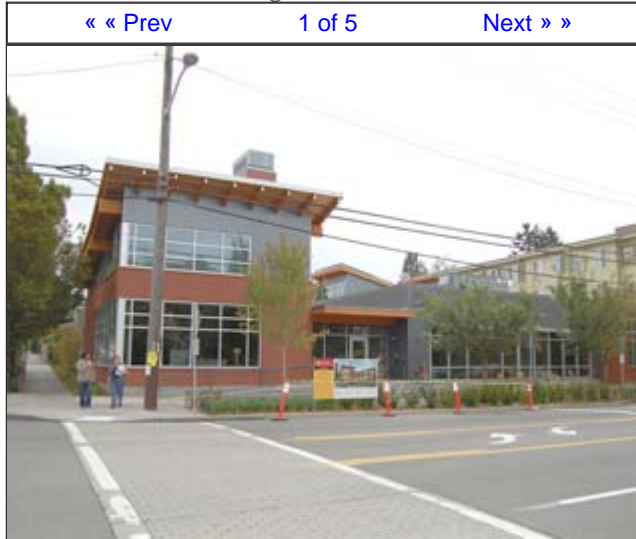
Re-using the building helped the team meet sustainability goals. This should be the first Seattle University building to receive LEED gold certification.

Strategic location

The site is strategic in a number of ways. The campus moves out from the corner in multiple directions. The building helps create "an active front door," Kerns said. The school plans to build future projects near the corner.

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Photos by Katie Zemtseff [enlarge](#)

The \$7 million Alumni & Admissions Building creates a front door for the school and sets the stage for future development along 12th Avenue.

Kerns said 12th Avenue eventually will become the school's spine. Seattle University has 2 million square feet of space today, but the master plan calls for another 2 million square feet in the next 25 years. Most of that new space would be east of 12th Avenue.

Seattle University has about \$125 million of projects in some phase of design or construction.

The new building also is meant to strengthen the school's connection to the community.

“For us to have a real strong, active and effective campus, we need a strong and effective neighborhood as well,” Kerns said. “It's really about designing a campus that's integrated really well with the neighborhood.”

Most of the building along 12th Avenue is glass to provide a direct connection to the street. At the 12th and Marion corner is the 1,000-square-foot meeting space, which is intended to feel like a living room, with sofas and lounge space. The room can be used by both the university and the community. Community groups can use it for free and design review meetings for Capitol Hill have already been scheduled there.

The gallery will be open to the public. A garden behind the building is also open to the public and provides neighborhood green space.

“It's sort of putting our hand out to the neighbors maybe in a way we haven't done before,” Kerns said.

LEED gold

The team worked with the Integrated Design Lab to maximize daylight by adding light monitors, windows and skylights. Rainwater from the rooftop will be used to irrigate the landscape.

Seattle University is also putting in its first green roof: a 450-square-foot space above the addition. It will be visible from the street and in the office through skylights, and will use a pallet-system with tall, drought-tolerant grasses.

The vestibule is naturally ventilated but the office space is not. The office has a raised access floor with air distribution, power and data underneath it. Cary said the team is hoping this provides better air quality and comfort while being easier to alter.

Photovoltaic panels are expected to produce about three percent of the annual electrical needs. Cary said the solar panels are worth it so other people can see them and learn.

“We like to put prominent features like this in prominent buildings so that people know about (them) as opposed to tucking it away in private residences or places that don't get much exposure,” he said. “It's a way to learn about the technology.”

Though the building's red brick and distinctive landscaping will help link it visually with the rest of the campus, Cary said the design ended up looking quite modern.

“We struck a nice balance between all the competing interests,” he said. “We wanted something that allowed people to learn about the building itself.”

Other team members include Swenson Say Faget, structural engineer; Rushing Co., mechanical & electrical engineer; Springline Design, civil engineer; Swift Co., landscape architect; 33 Design, interior design; and JGL Acoustics, acoustical engineer.

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