

*Colorado College*  
*Cossitt Hall Restoration and Renovations*



# Cossitt Hall

## *Restoration and Renovation Team*

- **Colorado College –**
- George Eckhardt
- **Michael Collins Architects –**
- Mike Collins & Kevin Shell
- **Jean Sebben & Associates –**
- April Rain
- **Bryan Construction (2008-2009)**
- Brian Burns
- Rich Coleman



The 1914 Frederick H. Cossitt Memorial Hall filled a long-felt need for a building that would provide athletic and social facilities for the men students of the college. The building's eclectic design contains Neoclassical and Modernistic elements, while its materials combine the Castle Rock rhyolite found on several of the major historic buildings of the college with concrete components used in many later campus buildings. Completion of Cossitt ended the period of major development during William F. Slocum's presidency, which saw greatly expanded and improved campus facilities, recruitment of a distinguished faculty, growth of the student body, and recognition of the college's national reputation. Cossitt was the last building erected on campus until Shove Chapel in 1931.



By 1909, support for the construction of a men's multi-purpose gymnasium gained momentum in the college community. The Tiger student newspaper editorialized about the specter of "grinds," students who focused on academics to the exclusion of physical activity and died at an early age. The campus rallied in support of a building where athletes could train and supporters gather to engage in booster and pep activities.



Students staged drives to marshal support for such a building, but the campaign relied on the fundraising prowess of President Slocum to gather most of the large sum required. Slocum persuaded a distant New York cousin, Helen Cossitt Julliard, a resident of New York, to donate the entire \$113,000, with the provision that previously-raised funds would go to other campus projects. Mrs. Julliard, whose husband's family had ties to the Julliard School of Music, asked that the building be named after her late father, Frederick H. Cossitt, who had been prominent in New York real estate, insurance, and banking.



The college selected Denver architect Maurice B. Biscoe, who had prepared plans for 1908 Bemis Hall, to design the building. Biscoe moved to Denver from Boston in 1905 to oversee the construction of Denver's St. John's Cathedral and subsequently opened his own office there, working on such commissions as the Dickinson Branch Library and Clayton School for Boys, as well as buildings at the Myron Stratton Home in Colorado Springs. In 1920, the architect returned to Boston and joined the firm of Andrews, Rantoul and Jones, the successor to Andrews, Jacques and Rantoul, which had designed 1904 Palmer Hall at Colorado College.



Cossitt Hall, dedicated in June 1914, included a basketball court, training rooms, locker facilities, and shower rooms. The presence of the new gymnasium with spectator seating stimulated campus interest in basketball, and beginning in 1922 the college teams won Rocky Mountain Conference championships for four consecutive years. An oval stadium (“Cossitt Bowl”) projecting from the south end of the building featured tiered seating and was used as an outdoor running track, playing field, site for pep rallies, and theater. Cossitt Hall also functioned as a social center or men’s club, with a 200-person capacity dining room, a kitchen, a common room for informal gatherings and reading, and a large room for student meetings. A pool table was located in the basement. The college adopted a three-year physical education requirement for graduation after the completion of the facility.



# *Cossitt Hall Rotunda*





## *"Settlement of the West"*

In 1948, artist Eric Bransby painted a mural in the entrance rotunda of Cossitt. "Settlement of the West" depicts goldseekers, migrating settlers, the cattle industry, and trappers and traders. Born in Albany, New York, in 1916, Bransby studied at Colorado College and taught at Yale University, the University of Illinois, Western Illinois University, and the University of Missouri. Other Colorado Springs area sites with murals executed by Bransby include the Colorado Springs Medical Center, U.S. Air Force Academy Planetarium (later installed at the Colorado Springs Municipal Airport), Air Defense Command Headquarters, and the Colorado Springs Pioneer Museum. In 2002, Bransby, then in his eighties, returned to restore his mural in Cossitt's rotunda.



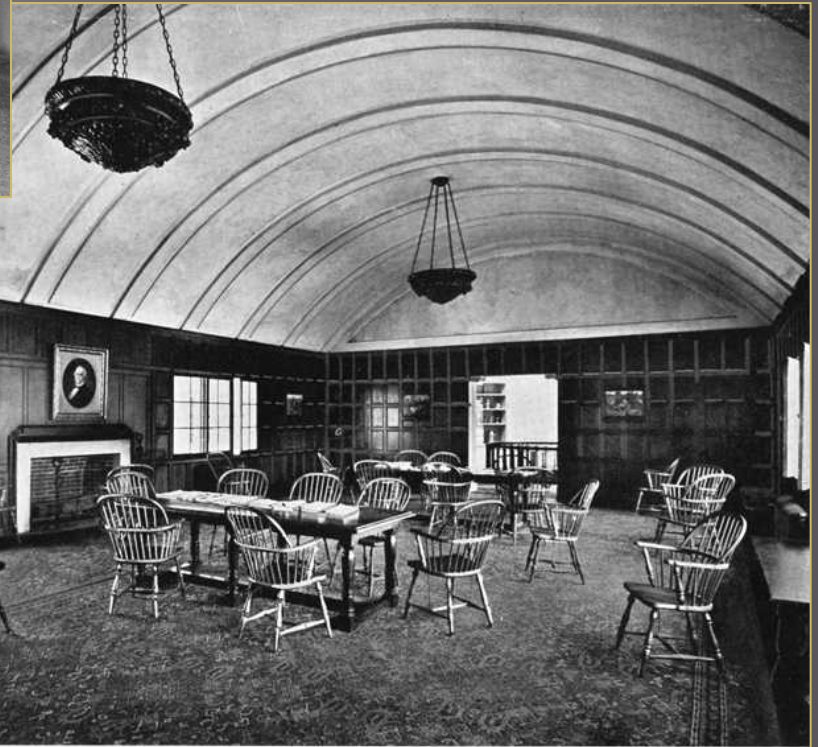
## *Cossitt Hall - Project Goals*



- ❑ In 2002, Colorado College Identified Cossitt Hall as a building that had become worn and in need of renovation due to it's high use.
- ❑ The project team started by creating a historic assessment of Cossitt, along with a code study analysis to address life safety concerns.
- ❑ Both reports were studied and a plan was devised on how to keep the historic elements of the structure, while updating the spaces to meet the current needs of the College.



# Classroom C - circa 1920's



*Conversion of Classroom G to Faculty Commons in  
2006*





- ▣ 2005 – Classroom E was constructed in the West area, along with new Western facing windows and a heating upgrade.
- ▣ 2006- Classics and Literature offices were created in the North wing off the Rotunda.
- ▣ 2006 – Exterior restoration. This phase included the installation of a new ceramic tile roof, masonry cleaning and pointing and the re-installation of copper gutters and downspouts.

# ADA Projects

- ❑ Lower level accessible restrooms
- ❑ Elevator installation in the center of the building
- ❑ Handicap ramp to the front entrance of Cossitt. Careful consideration of the project design and material use were implemented to make sure the ramp fit with the buildings architecture.



## *Phases Continued*



❖2007 - Classroom space in the lower north wing at the Rotunda

❖2008 - Creation of new dance professor offices in the vacated area of the college newspaper.

❖2009 - New locker rooms, practice areas, green rooms and offices for the Dance Program.



## *Challenges*

- ▣ Installation of modern products, while keeping the historic architecture in tact.
- ▣ Sustainability – CC wants to make sure Cossitt Hall will continue to be an icon to the campus for many years to come.
- ▣ Building use – This building is occupied year round. The construction phases had to be such that the classes and dance programs were not disrupted.

## *Benefits of Cossitt to CC*

- ❑ Cossitt Hall continues to be one of the cornerstone buildings on the Colorado College Campus. It is alive with activity with literature and classics classes in the mornings and dance programs in the afternoon into the evening.
- ❑ The Colorado College Summer Dance Festival is held in Cossitt Hall every summer for students wanting to enrich their dance skills.
- ❑ The amphitheater is now used daily for students to gather in small groups or study quietly. On nice days, it is not uncommon to see professors teaching their classes in the area.

# *Sustainability*

- ▣ The project's work also included numerous methods to make the building more sustainable and environmentally friendly.
  - Mechanical upgrades to provide fresh air to classrooms and offices.
  - Energy efficient windows that are historically accurate.
  - Reuse of building materials. Both limestone and rhyolite stones were re-set in the construction of the handicap ramp.

*"Cossitt Hall is an excellent example of how historic buildings can be restored, preserved and adapted to use for modern day needs"*



# Cossitt Hall Today



## *References*

- ▣ Original pictures provided by Colorado College.
- ▣ Cossitt Hall history from the Colorado College Historic Walking Tour Package.
- ▣ Current pictures by Bryan Construction.
- ▣ Floor Plans provided by Michael Collins Architects.