

UNL Culture Center may relocate

By Janet H. Chu

What was once an old garage with abandoned tools and dried grease on its floors at 1012 N. 16th St. is now the UNL Culture Center. But, provided financing is feasible, the Culture Center may move from that old building once and for all to a more student-accessible location.

The formation of the Culture Center was initiated by the Afro-American Collegiate Society in 1969. Through the Division of Student Affairs, the society worked with the Department of Multi-Cultural Affairs to find and operate a "cultural pluralistic facility" on campus that minority and ethnic students could use, said Ennio Quevedo, activities coordinator of Campus Activities and Programs.

Beginning in 1973, conversion was under way to turn the garage into the present Culture Center.

"With our sledgehammers and crowbars we tore out the insides and scooped everything out the back door. It grew from nothing to a culture center," said Daryl Swanson, director of the Nebraska Union.

In July of 1978, the Culture Center came under the jurisdiction of the CAP office in the Nebraska Union staffed by graduate assistant Wardell Smith and four work-study students.

A place for events

The original function of the Center was to provide a place for events for ethnic and minority students. This is still true

East Union . . .

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The union sits on an L-shaped lot and its design is the second draft made by the specialist who designed it.

"It is a parallelogram," Swanson said. "The committee turned down his first design because the specialist had planned for Miller Hall to be torn down," Swanson said. "The university said Miller Hall had to stay."

Swanson said the East Union is very functional and is operating under the costs prorated for it.

"Nineteen and a half percent of the student population is on East Campus," Swanson said. "Last year, the East Union

today, with an added effort to promote educational activities like lectures and workshops, Quevedo said.

Presently, the Center serves a variety of purposes. Some of the programs of Black History Month in September were held, as are fund-raising dinners and dances. ASUN meets there once a month.

According to Swanson, flexibility is a key characteristic of the Culture Center. He said it is much like the Nebraska Union, only in a smaller context, so it is more flexible for special needs.

Presently, the Culture Center is working with a special task force to investigate the possibility of relocation. This task force of students, staff and faculty, was appointed by Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Richard Armstrong in 1981, Quevedo said.

Building 'falling apart'

"The present building is very old and is falling apart. It has structural problems and it is not feasible to put more money into it. That was the catalyst for the search," Quevedo said. Swanson said there is a definite need for a new facility that students may find more accessible.

Quevedo said the possibility of building a new Culture Center has been ruled out because it would cost too much.

Therefore, the task force has made a recommendation to Armstrong to renovate the Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity house at 425 University Terrace. The TKE fraternity currently is renting the building

used only 15 percent of the fee resources, so it is doing very well. The East Union food service also is equal in its output of food sold to the City Union," he said.

Swanson said he feels the parallelogram design has worked out very well within the union. He said it is a nice-looking, yet functional structure.

"Some buildings that are pretty aren't functional," he said.

Anthony said she feels the union helps give the university a good public image.

"Some of us have felt for years that students on East Campus had been cheated," she said. "Now they've got a place of their own."

from the Office of University Housing. That recommendation is now in an approval process and Quevedo said he thinks Armstrong is pleased with the idea.

The task force is now soliciting input from different student organizations to find out what type of a building will be useful for them, he said. This will allow the task force to draw up a floor plan for the proposed renovation of the new building and, in turn, determine its cost, he said.

The plan to renovate the TKE house, however, is still in a preliminary stage.

"We have to determine the dollars needed to convert the building. Since the Culture Center is a student fee-funded entity, if it is not financially feasible, then we will not renovate the building," Swanson said.

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