

Sheldon gallery prepares to go underground

Expansion project will shed some light on UNL's artsy gems

By Chris Anderson
Staff Reporter

Fundraising for the \$5.5 million project to expand the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery could start this spring, said Sheldon Director George Neubert.

Plans for the underground expansion, which originated in 1981, are accelerating now that the Lied Center for Performing Arts is under construction, Neubert said.

Neubert said the money for the project will come from private funds and would be a joint effort by Sheldon and the Nebraska Art Association.

So far, the gallery has received a \$250,000 donation for the project from the estate of Nebraska artist Charles Rain, Neubert said. Rain also donated more than 30 of his works worth approximately \$30,000 and an endowment to maintain them.

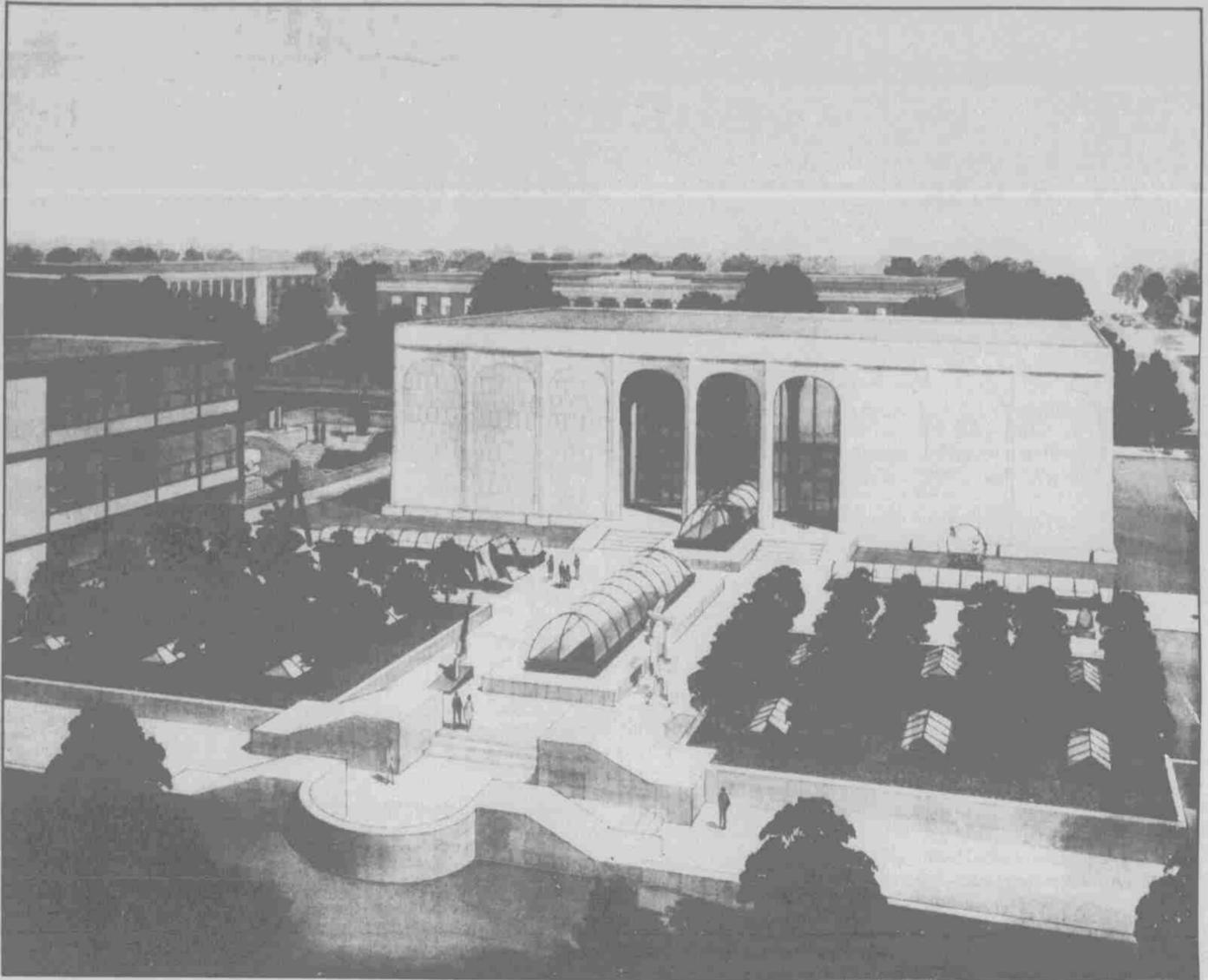
The project involves the expansion of 35,684 square feet to the northwest area of the museum and wouldn't change the present building design or exterior.

Plans for the underground structure would nearly double the present gallery space to 20,495 square feet. The new gallery space would be used for touring exhibits, Neubert said, while the existing gallery would be used to rotate the permanent art collection.

In addition, a monumental staircase, which would be located in the western part of the central open section of the building, would provide access to a sky-lit underground hall called the Untergarten.

On the northwest corner of the building, a two-story underground structure would be built to house staff-service areas and storage space, Neubert said. Administrative and curatorial offices would be added to the north side of the building.

Neubert said other additions would include expansion of the auditorium, a research center with artist files, archives



An artist's sketch of Sheldon Art Gallery and the proposed expansion looking east.

of 20th century art and a cafe.

A sculpture garden also is planned for the north side of the gallery and would cost an additional \$500,000.

Neubert said once a fund-drive begins, the project could take roughly

three years to complete.

Neubert said, the gallery now lacks adequate space to display or store the increasing number of art displays.

"There has been a need for 10 years," he said.

The addition also fits into the goals of the university, he said, by allowing more resources to serve students with a liberal arts education.

The additional space will allow the art collection to be available to the

students for study and research, he said.

Neubert said his next step for the project is to discuss a fund drive with the NU Foundation and UNL administration.

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