



Staff photo by Jen Roppel

Workers connect the onion dome to its top on Monday morning before it can be placed atop Harrison Hall. The domes are part of the inauguration festivities of the new Havighurst Center for Russian and Post-Soviet Studies.

Harrison sports Russian look

By Jen Roppel

OXFORD PRESS

Miami University is adopting a Russian look for its building named after an American president.

In celebration of "Imagining Russia" festival of events inaugurating the Havighurst Center for Russian and Post-Soviet Studies, workers began to place newly constructed golden Russian onion domes atop Harrison Hall's twin towers this week. The political science building is named for Miami graduate and U.S. President Benjamin Harrison.

Russian natives and Havighurst Center academicians Stanislav Touronok and Galina Ptitchnikova said the domes, usually only found on Russian churches, are authentic looking, but on a lesser scale.

Touronok said true Russian

cupolas are much more ornate.

"They must be covered with real gold," he said.

Project manager, MU Physical Facilities Assistant Director Steve Pohlman said the Miami cupolas are designed to withstand spring weather conditions, and to be re-usable. The domes will come down after graduation but can be placed atop Harrison Hall to commence Imaging Russia events for years to come.

"It's constructed out of a wood frame with a foam coating painted with as bright a gold as we could find," Pohlman said.

Designed by a Cincinnati structural engineering firm and built by a local contracting firm at the Miami Airport, each dome weighs 5,000 pounds and is more than 15 feet from base to top. The domes were crafted in two pieces that were joined on

site Monday. Funding for the \$30,000 project came from a multimillion dollar gift from the late Walter Havighurst, longtime Miami English professor.

Ptitchnikova, a Russian architect, said she is impressed that Miami is embracing such an important symbol of her homeland, which she said is the beacon of a Russian spiritual revival.

"It is a symbol of new Russia. It's very positive. It's very interesting, the use of an old symbol of Russia as a symbol for new Russia.

"I think it's a very good idea."

The mastermind behind the creation of the domes is Havighurst Center Director Karen Dawisha.

"I would look up at those two cupolas and think this would be so cool if they were domes," Dawisha said of Harrison Hall's copper towers.

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