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January 8, 2010 12:07 PM CST

Glass repair crews complete Dinkydome restoration

by [Brian Johnson](#) Staff Writer



Photo credit: Adam Jerstad

A painstaking refurbishing project has restored the luster to the distinctive glass dome over the Dinkydome near the University of Minnesota.

Doran Companies, which is restoring the 95-year-old building to its original appearance, enlisted the services of St. Paul-based glass repair subcontractor Inglas to return the iconic-but-long-neglected dome to its former luster.

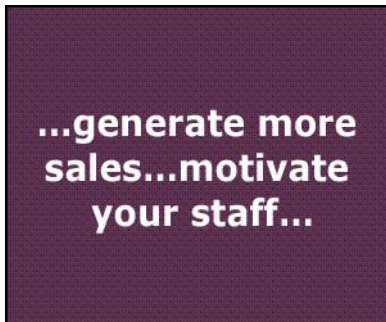
The dome restoration wrapped up just before Christmas after two months of work.

Doran Companies principal Kelly Doran says the dome atop the 1915 building at 15th and University avenues had

been in rough shape for "decades." Vintage photos offered proof that some glass had been broken for more than half a century, he noted.

"We have pictures of that building that go back to the 1950s that show cracks in the glass that were still there when we took the glass out," Doran said in a phone interview.

"I think it's exciting to see an old building come back to life," Doran added.



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The dome restoration required the replacement of 240 glass panes – each of which has a unique size, according to Inglas owner Mark Morehouse. Each pane consists of two separate glass pieces, with a white plastic laminate sandwiched in between.

It's sort of like the glass in a car windshield, except that the plastic in a windshield is clear, Morehouse noted. The white plastic helps give the illuminated dome its distinctive glow, he said.

Inglas crews started the job by carefully numbering and removing each pane from the old dome.

"We took the glass out, brought it to my shop, made patterns of each piece and numbered each piece, and sent them off to the glass manufacturer, in this case Oldcastle Glass in Wausau, Wis.," Morehouse explained.

"They fabricated new glass based on the patterns we provided them and delivered the glass to us ... and we installed it," added Morehouse, whose 12-employee union shop has been in business for 15 years.

"It was basically a puzzle."

Doran said the dome restoration is a key milestone in the larger Dinkydome project, which will bring new life to a classical revival building that opened on May 2, 1915 as the home of the International Missionary Bible Association.

The dome was neglected to the point where water was leaking into the building. But the dome restoration and a roof replacement have addressed those problems, Doran noted.

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"We have done a number of things thus far in the building in terms of replacing the roof, putting the dome back in shape, replacing the electrical system. We are slowly bringing the building up to modern standards," Doran said.

The Dinkydome restoration is part of a larger \$36 million project that includes construction of a new 125-unit student housing building known as Sydney Hall. The student housing will be adjacent to the renovated Dinkydome, which will accommodate 15,000 square feet of commercial space.

Sydney Hall is slated for occupancy in August.

Doran said the overall project is on schedule and on budget. "We are seeing strong leasing activity on the Sydney Hall [student housing] portion," Doran said. "Apartments are leasing well and retail is leasing well."

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Matt

Jan 13, 2010 at 12:02 PM

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