From steep staircases to leaky roofs, Griffin Hall hasn’t changed much over the last 20 years

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Students and faculty at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette are expressing frustration with an ongoing problem: the condition of H.L. Griffin Hall.

Built in 1972, Griffin Hall is often noted for a noticeable stench upon entry, worn-down ceiling tiles and unreliable elevators, among other issues.

“There'll be days when you walk in there and there's just leaks in the hallways and entranceway, and there's just a bucket chilling under it,” said Kayla Telhiard, a French major and Cajun and Creole studies minor. “It smells when you walk in the doors and the tiles that hang from the building...It's literally falling apart.”

The vast majority of degrees at UL Lafayette require at least one interaction with what has been affectionately dubbed “Mount Griffin” by many students. The building is a central hub for English, history, foreign language and philosophy classes. A trip up and down Griffin’s halls and its extensive and steep staircase serves as somewhat of a prerequisite to a degree from UL Lafayette.

“That building is something that almost every student on this campus has to access at least once, and it is in one of the worst conditions of all the buildings on campus,” Telhiard said.

Associate professor of philosophy István Berkeley, Ph.D, said he has worked within the building for over 20 years, and its condition hasn’t changed much since he arrived. He also recalled a particularly bad experience with the elevators.

“They’ve neglected this building for far more than a decade,” Berkeley said. “Griffin Hall is a poster child for asbestos. The floor tiles? Asbestos. Many of the ceiling tiles? Asbestos. The insulation? Asbestos...The elevators have minds of their own and they break down with amusing regularity. One time when I used to ride a bike into the university, I tried to bring it in and the elevators closed on my back wheel. The elevators are nuts.”

Associate professor of English Clancy Ratliff referenced deferred maintenance as a potential roadblock for repair efforts. Louisiana state budget makes money to repair Griffin Hall and any other buildings in need of renovation on Louisiana campuses hard to come by. The Louisiana Board of Regents website indicates over $1.5 billion in deferred maintenance funds, and over $3.8 million dedicated to the University of Louisiana system. Deferred maintenance refers to the practice of postponing repairs to save costs.

According to Berkeley, the poem has been around for years and no one knows who wrote it. The poem describes Griffin Hall by personifying the building and making light of its issues.

“Decay is your mantra, your siren song. We hoped you’d die soon, you’ve lasted too long,” the poem’s last stanza reads, “Only Ray could love you for being tawdry and cheap, But we all hate you, you decaying heap!”

Requests for comment from various UL Lafayette officials were not returned.

Berkeley referenced an amusing poem called “An Ode to Griffin Hall.”