Renovations slated to end this month

The red brick facade of Montgomery Hall hasn't changed much, but inside nearly $2 million in renovations are nearly complete.

Home of the chemistry department, the two-story building is undergoing an interior facelift. Electrical, mechanical and remodeling improvements were made for the first time in its 30 history.

The chemistry department hopes to move into the building this month, with lecture classes slated to resume there this summer. All classes and labs will resume in Montgomery in the fall. They have been housed in Hamilton Hall pending completion of renovations.

One major change to the building's exterior is restoration of the main entrance facing Dupre Library. It had not been blocked off for many years to use the foyer as office space.

"The main entrance has been restored with a ramp and automatic doors for handicapped persons, and the benches along the entrance ramp will provide a place for students to visit between chemistry classes," said Sam Hamilton, architect for the project.

Other improvements inside, such as conversion of the freight elevator to a passenger elevator and the remodeling of the bathrooms to accommodate wheelchairs, brings the building into compliance with national codes for making public buildings accessible to handicapped persons.

To make the building more energy efficient, insulation throughout the structure and special insulated panels in portions of some windows have been added. The building was not previously air conditioned, so an air conditioning system has been added as well as a new boiler for heating.

Other renovations include new ceilings and floors in the labs and classrooms, new blackboards, a fire sprinkler system, some new lab furniture and emergency eye wash showers in the lab.

Dr. Sigred Lanoux, chemistry department head, said the renovations are bringing the building up to date.

"Thirty years ago we had no research going on, but now we have moved into research, and professors had their research labs and offices in the same room, which wasn't good. Now we have converted space into separate labs and offices," Lanoux said.