

Arcade in final stages of rehab



18 HOURS AGO • BY TIM BRYANT

Busy from basement to rooftop, workers are in the final stages of converting the Arcade Building from empty office space to downtown St. Louis' largest apartment project in decades.

Dominium Development, of Minneapolis, is renovating the Arcade, which will have 80 market-rate apartments, 202 artists' lofts and two floors of classrooms, offices and other facilities for the downtown campus of Webster University.

Jeff Huggett, the Dominium vice president heading the \$118 million project, said during a tour Wednesday that work might be proceeding quickly enough to allow the building to open a bit earlier than December, as projected previously.

Huggett is especially happy with the Arcade's 19th-floor rooftop deck and club room, which will have a gas fireplace, a billiards room and a panoramic view of downtown.

"It's not close to being done yet but I just love going up there," he said.

Apartment applications aren't yet available but Dominium is maintaining an "insiders' list" to provide potential residents first crack at the rental units. Some apartments are nearly completed.

The project includes installation of 2,500 windows whose appearance must match the originals to be in compliance with standards required to get historic preservation tax credits.

A panel of art experts will screen potential occupants of the artists' lofts, which will have rents lower than the market-rate units. Loft renters must meet income guidelines. Huggett said the experts will evaluate a potential resident's commitment to his or her art more than the artist's skill.

The new Arcade will have a recording studio, a dance studio and places for artists to sculpt and paint. Webster will occupy the first two floors, including the building's namesake arcade.