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Dorm Makeover: Ashton, Briscoe and Forest Quads to Be Renovated

By Amanda Bridgman

After months of talks, the IU board of trustees announced Thursday they have approved a five-year plan to upgrade student housing.

Construction will begin with the Ashton complex, which will become an 803-bed housing complex after renovations are complete. The new name for the dorm is yet to be determined, said Bob Weith, director of residential operations.

Construction on the Ashton project, which will be financed with University bonds that will be repaid with revenue from student housing fees, is expected to begin during summer 2008, and the units will be ready to occupy in fall 2010.

Larry MacIntyre, vice president of public affairs and government relations, said the Ashton renovation is important to IU.

"It is the first step toward a five-year plan to renovate these halls for better student living," he said. "This will create some new beds, and once we have students occupying the new unit, it allows us to close another existing facility to renovate there."

MacIntyre said he believes after the completion of Ashton, IU will probably move on to the renovation of Forest Quad.

The new Ashton housing complex will consist of apartment-style living, comparable to popular off-campus student housing in Bloomington, according to an IU press release. There will be seven buildings built around courtyards. An estimated 13 acres will be needed for the construction site. Each building will be four stories and there will be a five-story commons building that will also provide classroom space. Most of the apartments will have four bedrooms and two bathrooms.

IU decided to change the current dorm rooms to suite-style rooms as a result of student demand. Pat Connor, executive director of Residential Programs and Services, said in a Dec. 12, 2007 Indiana Daily Student article that IU hired Brailsford & Dunlavey Facility Planners and Program



Construction will begin this summer at the Ashton complex, which will become an 803-bed housing complex by fall 2010 following an IU trustee-approved five-year plan to upgrade student housing. The above rendition is a sketch of the potential dorm buildings. Courtesy Photo • IDS

Managers to conduct a market analysis. The group looked at factors such as current enrollment patterns and determined the dorm rooms do not meet students' demands, Connor said.

Suite-style housing consists of either two double rooms or two single rooms that share a bathroom, Connor said. Suites that share a bathroom may also share a common space similar to a living room, he said. There would still be a community lounge on each floor, but the suite-style rooms would most likely not include kitchens, Connor said.

Briscoe Quad is also on the list of student residences to be upgraded in the future.

Now, with the convenience of on-campus apartments, perhaps students will be persuaded to choose to stay on campus, Weith said.

"We think that top-notch facilities will help us be able to attract residents for a longer period of time," Weith said.