

Further Details on the Apartment Village

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Butler University is currently constructing a \$52 million upperclassmen apartment village and a fitness/health center. These apartments are located east of Hinkle Fieldhouse in a site between the Butler Bowl and Boulevard Place, while the fitness/health center will sit west of Hinkle at the intersection of Sunset Ave. and West 49th St.



According to the university, these new facilities are attempting to bring upperclassmen back to the campus and alleviate the university's neighbors' concerns about students living in off-campus rental housing.

According to the university's Commission on Undergraduate Residential Life (CURL), "Focusing on the housing needs of upperclassmen is consistent with points raised in President Fong's White Paper concerning better retention of upperclassmen as being vital to solving the University's fiscal concerns."

The more residential a campus is, the higher its student retention, Levester Johnson, Student Affairs' vice president, said.

Butler first realized a need for more student housing and a wellness facility in February 1999. The CURL provided evidence for these necessities, "With respect to variety and quality of housing options offered, Butler University is behind all primary institutions with whom we compete for win/loss applicants in all cases but one."

The CURL suggested that the university "develop housing facilities that send a visual or verbal message of how the University cares for its students, offer a wide variety of housing options and develop a student culture which suggests to a freshman that as one moves to the next level, housing options increase."

The CURL further stated, "Time is of the essence to begin the process of upgrading our residential environment."

A feasibility study related to campus housing and fitness and health facilities conducted by Brailsford and Dunlavey, a facilities planning firm, also noted the university's need for additional on-campus student housing and a fitness/health facility.

B&D recommended that the university build a 181,000 square-foot, three-story, 500-bed project containing two different apartment layouts for four occupants. These units would have approximately 1,020 square-feet of living space including a kitchen and two bathrooms. The facility would also house computer labs, conference and study rooms and shared laundry facilities.

The CURL continues, "Upperclassmen provide essential leadership, support and nourishment to freshmen and sophomore students. They set examples for building character, serving one's fellow man and society, establishing challenging professional and personal goals and developing leadership habits to accomplish each."

In the spring 2005, the Shiel Sexton construction company began the demolition of the Hilton U. Brown Theatre and the Butler Bowl's east-side bleachers to accommodate the location of the new apartments. In May 2005, Shiel Sexton began clearing the sites of the new facilities. During the 2005 fall semester, the Butler community has been able to witness the laying of the apartments' foundations and the rise of their structures.

Currently, the university hopes to have the apartments finished by August 2006. The 190,000 square-foot apartment village will feature several three-story, apartment-style buildings with 500 beds surrounding a communal center. Each building will contain apartment layouts for four occupants, featuring four single private bedrooms and a living space with a full kitchen and two full bathrooms, totaling 1,020 square-feet.

The communal center will feature a convenience store, student lounge, laundry facilities, the mail center, computer labs, a game room and a management office. Five staff members will serve the apartment complex focusing primarily on safety, maintenance and security. Residence life policies, procedures and services will still apply to the village.

The convenience store will not sell beer, wine, liquor or cigarettes. Noise restrictions will be enforced throughout the village, and two additional campus police officers will patrol the area.

Prior to the completion of the apartment village, 57 percent of Butler's student population resides in on-campus housing. After the completion of the apartments, the university will be able to house 70 percent of Butler's students.

"We want to provide variety for everyone," Johnson said about the apartments, "we believe in having choices."