

Campus under summer construction

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As Reverend Heidi Weatherford broke ground for the new Presby House on Sunday, Dave Bechtel read aloud a dedication.

"To everything there is a time and purpose," he said. "A time for tearing down and a time for building."

For Campustown, the time for building has come.

Around campus yellow tape and temporary fences have become common. The University is getting ready to tear down Illini Orange, and Memorial Stadium is undergoing the "Illinois Renaissance." The city of Champaign is redoing Sixth Street north of Green. The old Illini Media building, former home to The Daily Illini, will become the new home for the old Mobil gas station.

However, much conversation is centered on large housing projects - especially the development at Fourth Street and Springfield Avenue and a 24-story high rise being built at 309 E. Green St.

"I am interested in (the high rise) because it's a new building," said Sarah Gleason, sophomore in LAS. "Many of the apartments on campus are not so nice, and the layout along with the location really makes it attractive."

The new complex, situated on the former Burger King lot, will not only have businesses on the lower level, but also a fitness center, a pool and a hot tub.

"Many of my friends are looking into these apartments because of the things they offer, the amenities. And prices are something you have to consider, but all of the extras make the price worth paying for," Gleason added.

Price is something that is on the minds of many students.

Owen Kulemeka, graduate student in Communications, is concerned with this issue, especially since the University is currently looking to redevelop the graduate apartments at Orchard Downs.

"The University says that the price is going to be market driven, but by how much?" Kulemeka said. "Look at the University of Michigan. Look at College Park at the University of Maryland. What has happened? The universities redeveloped the public housing, and all of the prices went up because of all the extra people wanting to rent."

The real question is what effect these costs will have, Kulemeka said.

"For grad students, and for all students, housing is a big expense and some will not be able to afford the increases," he said.

For some, however, these new buildings are something much more.

"This will be financially viable housing (focused on) student ministry," said Reverend Heidi Weatherford about the new Presby House. Sara Cain, a member of the McKinley Foundation's board, the board responsible for Presby House, also believes that the overall housing boom has been good. "In addition to the apartments, Hillel, Newman and Stratford House have all been constructing. I am really glad we are able to do this."

Construction at a glance

- 09 Green Street

Located at the lot where Burger King used to stand, this still unnamed building will be the tallest structure on campus, surpassing The Tower at Third. Roland Realty will manage the property, and the apartments, of which there will only be two to a floor, furnished with appliances, high ceilings and hardwood floors.

- Burnham 310

On the corner of Fourth Street and Springfield Avenue, the former site of Burnham Hospital, this apartment will stand next to a 28,000 square-foot Country Market grocery store. The high-end apartments will be open for move in for the fall semester of 2008.

- Presbyterian House

This seven-story dormitory will house more than 250 male and female students when it is completed. With an eye on the environment, the building will achieve the LEED Silver Certification for environmentally-conscious homes.

Reader's Comments

