



Room Boom

Proposed site of new residence hall.

The scenario has played out hundreds of times. John or Joan Q. Freshman lives in a residence hall for a couple of semesters, makes plenty of friends and gets involved in campus activities.

Then, for a variety of reasons, John or Joan moves to an apartment off campus. The bonds to the campus are loosened as he or she joins the legions who commute to Boise State each day.

Student housing officials hope that this familiar pattern will change after the university is finished with an ambitious construction plan — the largest in Boise State’s history — that will increase the volume and variety of housing options for students.

“We are basically a one-year-and-out housing program ... we hope to change that by providing students

with more choice and variety,” says Greg Blaesing, the director of auxiliary services for student affairs.

Two major additions to the housing system are now in the design pipeline — a new 340-bed residence hall and a 175-room apartment

complex. Together, they will increase Boise State’s housing capacity by 40 percent, the largest single addition to the university’s inventory since the John B. Barnes Towers were built 30 years ago.

The nature of the campus will change as more and more students are accommodated in university housing, says Peg Blake, vice president for student affairs.

“Housing on campus is one of the things that helps students connect with the university and each other,” she says. “It produces a community of students who participate more in campus activities and who enhance the co-curricular offerings of the university.”

Blake adds: “Research clearly shows that students who are involved in co-curricular programs and activities get better grades, are more likely to stay in school and become involved alumni. We believe that living on campus promotes more student involvement.”

The residence hall will be built near Chaffee and Driscoll halls, while the apartments will replace the existing World War II-era University Courts south of University Drive. The cost: approximately \$15 million for the residence hall and \$14 million for the apartments. Both projects will be funded through revenue bonds backed by housing receipts. No student

‘We are basically a one-year-and-out housing program ... we hope to change that by providing students with more choice and variety.’

TO INCREASE FOR STUDENTS



Proposed site of new apartments

fees or state appropriations will be used to construct or maintain the new buildings.

Boise State's current housing system, which includes 889 residence hall rooms and 283 apartments, is at capacity, says Blaesing. There are almost 100 students on a waiting list for apartments, and residence halls are full at the beginning of each fall semester.

Boise State last added to the residence hall inventory in 1995 with a 125-bed addition to Chaffee Hall. The last apartment addition also came in 1995 when the 66-unit University Village apartments opened. In the meantime, Boise State's enrollment has increased by more than 2,000 students.

Blaesing says a recently completed Master Plan for Housing points to a pent-up demand for housing, especially among sophomores and juniors.

"We have a good supply of traditional residence hall rooms — double occupancy with a shared bathroom. These are a good fit for freshmen.

"But we don't have residence hall rooms or starter apartments tailored to the needs of sophomores and juniors, who prefer more privacy," he says.

While the detailed design of the new residence halls hasn't been decided, Blaesing says they will feature "suite-style" rooms that offer separate sleeping rooms with a common lounge and study space.

As for the new apartments, they will replace units that have long passed their shelf life, says Blaesing. Living conditions are below standard in the old barracks-like buildings and maintenance is an ongoing headache, he adds.

The university already owns most of the land for the project and is negotiating with the owners of seven houses and one small business that are located in the building zone. Those properties, most of which are located on

University Drive, were identified for possible Boise State use in the university's master plan that was adopted in 1997.

The bonds to pay for the design and construction of the residence halls and apartments have been sold and architect selection is under way for both projects.

While timetables are still tentative, the University Courts site will be cleared as soon as property can be acquired. Current Courts residents will be given first choice in other university housing, says Blaesing.

Construction on the new apartments could begin by this fall and open by fall 2003 using a design-build schedule.

The residence hall will be designed first and then bid for construction. Design will take one year, with construction scheduled to start by the summer of 2003 and completion before the opening of the fall 2004 semester.

"A better residence hall system means a better university. We have needed these facilities for many years, so we want to complete construction as quickly as possible," says Blaesing.

—Larry Burke

CAMPUS HOUSING

Current capacities:

Driscoll Hall	80 beds
Morrison Hall	79 beds
Chaffee Hall	429 beds
Barnes Towers	300 beds
University Courts	83 units
University Manor	54 units
University Village	66 units
University Heights	36 units
University Park	47 units

Projected capacities:

New residence hall	340 beds
New apartments*	175 units

*will replace University Courts