



DTH FILE PHOTO/BRIAN CASSELLA

A construction worker completes final renovations to Connor Residence Hall in August. The repairs to Connor were one of several construction projects that made it more difficult for students to move around campus.

Officials aim to curb construction woes

Most say benefits outweigh negatives

BY JACKIE RANDELL
STAFF WRITER

When perusing the Princeton Review college search Web site, one can read student input on UNC.

Recently, students have complained most consistently about the perpetual construction on campus.

This year is no exception. The UNC Housing and Residential Education Web site states that students living on Stadium Drive can expect additional noise, dust and shifts in pedestrian access throughout the 2003-04 school year.

Students are complaining again, but the construction doesn't seem to be driving them to consider off-campus housing.

Trends in recent years indicate that there actually has been an increase in both the retention of students in on-campus housing, and the amount of incoming students choosing to live on campus.

These promising trends might be attributed to the fact that the UNC Housing and Residential Education Committee has taken care to accommodate the students.

Christopher Payne, director of housing and residential education, said the committee works hard to

advocate for the students.

For example, the committee tries to keep noise to a minimum during study or sleep hours.

"We work very closely with contractors to be reasonable about when they start and when they stop," Payne said.

The committee also keeps the students aware, informed and involved. Students have had a say in the design of renovations and new construction. Students are responding to the committee's attempts at accommodation by extending their tolerance of the construction's inconveniences.

For example, despite the fact that he had to relocate to Grimes Residence Hall this year due to a leaky ceiling in Joyner Residence Hall, freshman James Wolfe has decided to live on campus again next year. "If you live in a dorm, you're going to have problems when things need to be replaced," he said.

Wolfe also said that he didn't mind the construction because the noise wasn't bothersome.

"It doesn't really affect me much besides the occasional having to walk around taped-off areas." This year, McIver and

Alderman residence halls are under complete renovation, while others such as Avery and Carmichael residence halls are under less extensive construction that allows for residents. Joyner was slated for renovation this year but due to housing needs, the construction had to be delayed.

The committee has a housing master plan that dictates the renovation and construction of new buildings until 2009. Payne said that soon, it will draw up plans that will look even further into the future to accommodate increased enrollment.

He stressed that the immediate inconveniences of seemingly perpetual construction are outweighed by the long-term benefits. "A great example would be the Ramshead, and the Student Union."

The UNC Housing and Residential Education Committee has made a valiant effort to keep students informed of construction progress through its Web site and minimizes the inconveniences to students, faculty and staff.

So far, its efforts have been enough to keep students living on campus.

Contact the A&E Editor at artsdesk@unc.edu.

New halls attract upperclassmen

BY LAUREN HARRIS
STAFF WRITER

Exploring South Campus, it is obvious that the housing community is no longer a place dominated by freshmen.

Since their introduction at the beginning of the 2002-03 school year, Ehringhaus South, Hinton James North, Craige North and Morrison South residence halls have changed the face and culture

of South Campus.

The addition of the new residence halls has drawn a number of students to the area, particularly upperclassmen, who are attracted by the quiet, studious atmosphere and the promise of a four-person suite in which one large private bathroom is shared.

Unlike the older high rises on South Campus, the relatively new residence halls feature hall-style

floors similar to those found in North Campus residence halls.

Ellen Jones, resident director of Hinton James-North, said this infusion of North Campus-style residence halls onto South Campus as well as the quiet atmosphere, is convincing an increasing number of upperclassmen to remain in the area rather than move to North Campus or into apartments.

"These buildings are more academically focused," Jones said. "You're focus changes completely when you become an upperclassman."

Different social atmospheres also exist in old and new residence halls on South Campus.

Many South Campus residents said that there are more parties and better opportunities to meet people in the high-rise residence halls.

Meghan Smith, a sophomore living in Morrison South Residence Hall, attributed this social variation to open balconies in the high-rise residence halls that facilitate more mingling among residents.

Also, many students living in the new residence halls said that most of their hallmates keep their doors closed all the time, which

often prevents the students from getting to know each other.

However, some residents of the new halls said closed doors do not prevent social activity.

Asia Carter, a junior and resident of Craige North, said many of the upperclassmen in her residence hall already have established peer groups and do not feel the need to seek new friendships.

But, Carter said, many underclassmen tend to venture out of their rooms to meet people since they can't prop their doors open.

Despite more frequent partying and social activity in the high rises, many students still aspire to live in the new halls.

"Everyone wants to live in the new dorms," Smith said. "The new dorms have encouraged upperclassmen to stay on campus and particularly on South Campus."

Many said they prefer the new residence halls to other housing options both on- and off campus. "I really love the South Campus feel," Carter said. "I would like to stay on South Campus for the rest of my life."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.



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Chase Dining Hall, located on South Campus, affords the variety of students who live in the area's residence halls the chance to interact.

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