What is the Central District Development Project?

Project Profile: KU Student Body President Jessie Pringle

From Stouffer to State-of-the-Art: How KU is Transforming Student Housing
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Spread over 55 acres, the Central District Development Project—which broke ground in early 2016—will include a number of new facilities and spaces for students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors to enjoy for years to come, including:

- Student Housing: A new Residence Hall and 475-seat Dining Center, as well as Student Apartments (left)—around 1,250 beds total—will include common areas for students to socialize and study.
- Integrated Science Building (ISB): Contains teaching and lab space, including a cleanroom with nano-fabrication, an auditorium, and break-out common spaces for students and professors to meet, collaborate, and study.
- Student Union: Includes numerous student services in addition to a full kitchen, coffee shop, reflection room, a convenience store, and a main event hall.
- Central Utility Plant and other related infrastructure: A new Central Utility Plant as well as student athletic fields for KU Athletics and rec fields for intramural and club use.
- Additional Parking: Over 2,000 parking spaces will be added to the Central District, including surface parking and a new 500-space parking deck.
- Jayhawk Trail Construction
- Utility Plant as well as student athletic facilities for intramural and club use.

From Stouffer to State-of-the-Art: How KU is Transforming Student Housing

When Stouffer Student Apartments first opened on the University of Kansas’ campus in 1957, the life of the average KU student was dramatically different. Built for the “post-war generation,” these 25 buildings were practical, spacious, and over the years, became home to hundreds of thousands of students with families and international students.

When Stouffer Place closed for good on June 30, 2015, it left many KU students wondering what the future of residence life on campus would look like. For that answer, we need only look to the recently completed One Daisy Hill Residence Halls and Quad and the University’s Master Plan—which, in the Central District, called for a state-of-the-art residence hall, dining center, and student apartments full of top-tier student amenities.

Long gone are the days of two-story duplex student apartment-style housing—the new student residence hall and dining center that will open in Summer 2017, and student apartments that will open in Summer 2018 in the Central District will be chock-full of 21st-century student housing amenity trends that are being incorporated in universities across the country. From flexible common areas, study spaces, and moveable furniture to larger bedrooms and apartment-style layouts, student housing has definitely moved beyond the Stouffer Place duplex-style living that was common in the 1950s and 60s.

Q: How do you think the Central District Project will impact the student body from a teaching, research, student life, student housing/dining etc. perspective?

Jessie: First, I think the student body recognizes the need for more lab spaces with the ISBs, and that this project provides student with access to more research opportunities. As an AAU, R1 institution, KU is committing itself to creating more opportunities for more students. Second, with resources such as Legal Services for Students, the Emily Taylor Center for Women and Gender Equity as well as the Sexual Assault and Prevention Education Center in such a new and important Student Union, the emphasis for supporting students is front and center. And last, the Project provides enticing and updated on-campus housing as well as the connectivity from West Campus to Main Campus with the Jayhawk Trail.

“I am most excited about the new Student Union… I cannot wait to see how it turns out and is utilized by students.”
The Central District Project broke ground in January with the demolition of the Stouffer Place Apartments and construction of temporary parking, roadways, and stormwater control. Concrete foundations for the new Residence Hall Building are already being poured.

The sites for the new Integrated Science Building (ISB), the Parking Garage, and the new Residence Hall Building and Dining Facility are cleared, and demolition of the Burge Student Union has already taken place.

Project Stats
- 20 of 25 Stouffer Place Apartments have been demolished
- 800 tons of steel is being recycled
- 20,000 cubic yards of concrete are being recycled
- 360 Drilled Piers to support the buildings
- 11 miles of new underground piping or ductbank is being installed

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