

University of Scranton

NEWS

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SCRANTON--A new residence for the Jesuit community at the University of Scranton has been approved by the institution's Board of Trustees.

The building, to be located within the former Scranton estate grounds, will house 27 full-time residents.

"After comprehensive discussion and planning, the members of the Jesuit community believe that a new residence is essential and I am pleased that the University's Board of Trustees has approved of the proposed site and the general plan," said Rev. Charles Gonzalez, S.J., rector of the Jesuit community at the University.

The new building will be located adjacent to Scranton Hall and behind the present Jesuit Residence on an area now partially occupied by a tennis court. The tennis court will be relocated to a spot near the University's athletic field.

"Great care has been taken to ensure that the architectural integrity of the Scranton estate and its grounds will be preserved," noted Fr. Gonzalez.

The current Jesuit residence, home to 17 of the University's 36-member Jesuit community, is the former Scranton family residence, which was given to the University by the family in 1941.

Built in 1871, the estate building provides adequate living space for only a few of the older Jesuits, some of whom are infirm, according to Fr. Gonzalez.

"And younger Jesuits will increasingly require living areas which facilitate serious and productive work, spaces which encourage a deeper human and spiritual community with one another and with our students and faculty than is now possible," he said.

Fr. Gonzalez added that fire safety in the present structure, which is 114 years old, is a serious concern for the Jesuits who maintain living and sleeping quarters there.

"Renovating the present building to meet our needs would not only be very expensive, but would also adversely affect the architecture of the estate," he said.

"We believe that the proposed structure is the best way to deal effectively with the changing character of the Jesuit community and to secure, for the future, the most appropriate and efficient facility."

The planned facility will be designed to accommodate active, retired, elderly and handicapped Jesuits. The 26,000 square-foot structure will provide office space, dining, kitchen and community living facilities in addition to private living quarters for the residents.

There will also be a chapel, guest rooms and private counseling rooms.

The building has been planned to be comfortable and well-constructed, but not elaborate," said Fr. Gonzalez. "It will permit the Jesuit community at the University to realize significant operating cost savings."

The building has been designed by the architectural firm of GSGSB and is being planned as a flexible facility, Fr. Gonzalez noted.

"If the number of Jesuits at the University should decline in the future," he said, "areas of the new building could be converted into public University use."

Tentative plans, he said, call for the Scranton estate building to be used for offices and meeting areas by other elements of the University community. Specific uses have not yet been determined.

Fr. Gonzalez said that construction on the new residence, which is expected to cost the Jesuit community between \$1.7 and \$2 million, could begin as early as this summer with completion by the summer of 1986.

He noted that the building is being financed from the Jesuits' own resources.

"This is viewed by myself and the Board of Trustees as an affirmation of the commitment by the Jesuit community and by the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus to a continuing Jesuit presence at the University of Scranton," he said.