



postscript. Parkview Apartments

As often happens, history repeated itself at the University of Oklahoma in fall 2006. Parkview Apartments, home to decades of OU married students and later to other upperclassmen seeking a low-cost housing option, finally gave way to more upscale successors. The scenario was a near replay of the demise of Sooner City, the sea of post-World War II prefabs, replaced in 1954 by the gleaming, almost-new Parkview complex.

Today all that remains at the corner of Lindsey and George are 30 acres scraped clean of 39 two-story buildings once containing 244 comfortable, relatively spacious two-bedroom apartments. Compared to the recently completed OU Traditions Square, East and West, Parkview was an aging dinosaur, but for its day, it was a perfect answer to a major dilemma.

With the end of WWII, married veterans flooded the nation's campuses. In 1939-40, OU had 500 married students, but by spring 1945 there were 1,836 with more on the way. With only 96 one-bedroom Niemann Apartments to meet the demand, frustrated veterans threatened to pitch a tent city on Parrington Oval.

In a leap of faith, President George L. Cross hastily ordered 500 "temporary" prefabricated huts—300 singles and 200 doubles—then talked the OU Regents into floating a bond issue to pay for them. Bleak as they were, and uninsulated to boot, the two-bedroom units always had a waiting list. By January 1954, however, 170 of the single bedrooms, boasting 16-by-16 total floor space, were unoccupied. Then nearing the end of useful service, Sooner City had to be replaced.

Fortuitously the Federal Housing Authority had put Parkview Apartments up



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When private developers built Parkview Apartments in 1949, the complex was still outside the city limits. Purchased by the University in 1954 as married student housing, the 244 units accommodated Sooner students for more than 50 years.

for bids. Parkview had been constructed in 1949 by private developers for \$2 million and more than \$1.8 million remained on the FHA mortgage. Located on two separate pieces of land totaling 15.6 acres, the property was described as being "furnished completely" with "concrete foundations, pumice block exterior walls with gunite finish, asphalt tile floors, built-up roofing."

Representatives of the Norman Real Estate Board appeared before the Regents to oppose removing the apartments from the tax rolls. With the two Regents from Norman voting nay, the OU board eventually authorized a bid of \$1,135,000, which the FHA accepted.

Money for the purchase came from refinancing the dormitory bonds and included \$25,000 for furniture and equipment, the furnishings not being quite as complete as advertised. The University then purchased for \$14,000 two small pieces of land, totaling another 15.4 acres, that separated the

two Parkview tracts and built a workshop and utility building to serve the complex.

In 1954 Parkview Apartments rented for \$50 to \$62.50 a month. Fifty years later, in the last year of their existence, the cost ranged from \$508 to \$529.

With the closing of Norman's WWII-era Naval Air Technical Training Center in 1961, the University acquired an additional 180 south campus apartments from the federal government. The Regents could finally pull the plug on what remained of Sooner City.

No shortage of apartments exists today, on campus or throughout Norman, OU Traditions being among the best. They feature cable TV and wireless Ethernet connections, swimming pools, volleyball and basketball courts, putting greens and workout rooms. Parkview could scarcely compete. But for the half-century of Sooners who lived there, a lot of memories went the way of the wrecking ball. —CJB