



# Always Room for One More

keeping ahead of the demand is a struggle, but  
thus far there's a roof over every Sooner head

By CAROL J. BURR  
Photos by John Yack

A UNIVERSITY has a responsibility to provide the student with adequate classrooms, a thoroughly competent faculty, library and laboratory resources. But a university also has the responsibility to provide a much more basic living need—a roof over his head.

The man in charge of roofs at the University of Oklahoma is Housing Director Dr. Jodie C. Smith, '47m.ed, '50d.ed, a man with the refreshingly rare view that the best way to serve the students is to give them what they need all the time and what they want whenever possible. He

feels that it is one thing to turn students away for academic reasons—lack of aptitude or preparation, keeping the enrolment in line with maximum teaching efficiency, etc.—but that it is quite another to turn students down simply because the University has run out of living quarters.

"They may not always get *the* place they want," Dr. Smith concedes, "but they must have *a* place to live." In order to accomplish this objective the 550-employee housing department must make the best use of a myriad of different housing facilities al-

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## further expansion of University housing should reflect the preference of upperclassmen for apartment living

ready in existence and plan for the orderly construction of more suitable facilities.

In the year since Dr. Smith exchanged his job as assistant dean of students for the housing directorship, he has been faced largely with emergency methods of meeting the student housing shortage—a situation he feels is as undesirable as it is necessary. But he also recognizes that emergency adjustments must be made until the University can get far enough ahead of the game to begin a long-range planning



Dr. Smith knows that all housing problems will not be solved by new buildings. His concern is improving student relations by providing better service as well as suitable facilities.

program in earnest (which will be possible with completion of a new 12-story, 1,000-student dormitory and 100 married student apartments, now under construction).

This fall, for instance, the housing office was able to expand the capacity for single men from a normal 1,812 to 1,916 by making selected rooms in Cross Center 3-man instead of 2-man and “tripling” Boyd House in Woodrow Wilson Center (making single rooms double and double rooms triple). Similarly the housing capacity for single women was expanded from a normal 1,334 to 1,422 by adding some 3-woman rooms to Cate Center and tripling Franklin House. In addition 126 single women have agreed to temporary accommodations in Building 904 on North Campus until the expected completion of the first half of the 100 apartments between October 15 and November 15. These apartments will be released for married students when the new single-students dormitory is ready for occupancy next fall.

None of the emergency solutions is completely satisfactory—and the housing office is the first to admit the shortcomings. But the immediate problem is getting a bulging student enrolment into living quarters as quickly and as efficiently as possible until construction can catch up.

The key to long-range planning for student housing, in Dr. Smith’s opinion, is flexibility. In addition to basing future needs on the expected size of enrolment, the housing office must also be able to estimate the composition of the future student body—percentage of single men, single women and married students. With the completion of the towering new dormitory Dr. Smith believes that single housing for underclassmen will have been taken care of for the foreseeable future. His answer for further expansion of student housing is construction along the apartment plan.

Apartments have great flexibility and can be used to house single or married men or women or married students and their families as the needs vary from year to year.

Apartment units can be added gradually

as the enrolment grows, and each group of apartments can be let out to students upon completion without waiting for an entire dormitory to be finished. But there is an even more persuasive reason for going to the apartment solution—student preference.

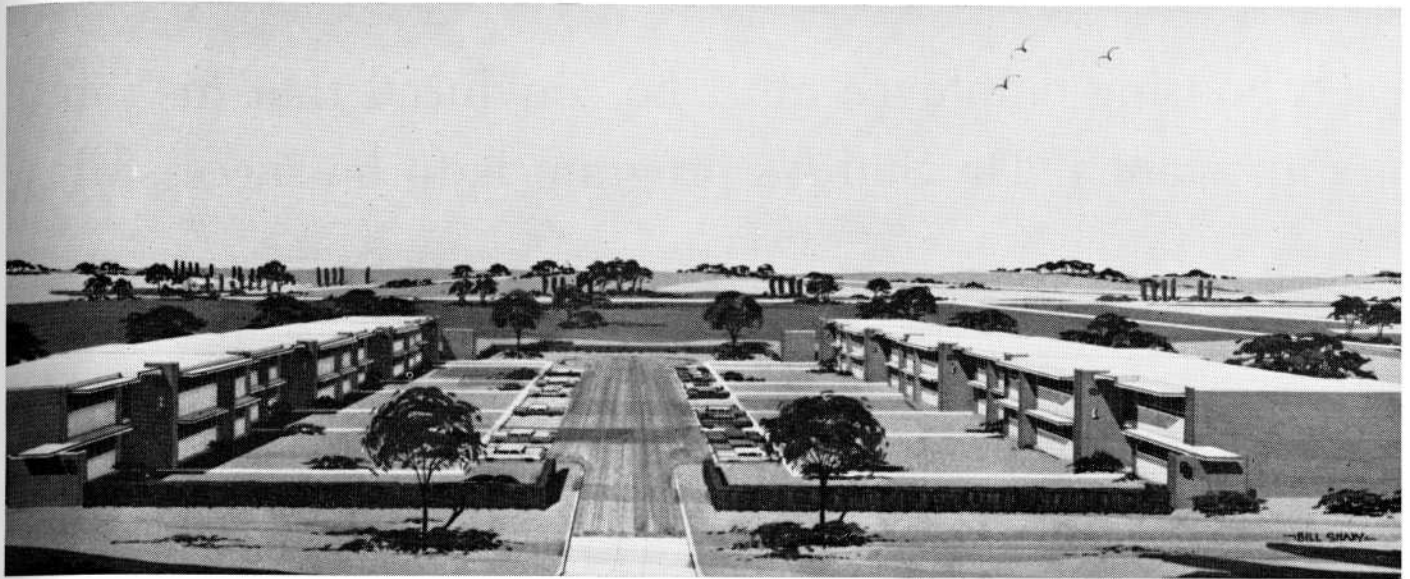
Dr. Smith is convinced that dormitory living is the best way for underclassmen to get a good start in college, since it instills some initial discipline and enables students to make a large number of friends whom they will encounter for the balance of their college careers even if they later move into sorority and fraternity houses or into apartments. But beyond the first two years, the trend toward having their own apartments is strong among college students. The housing office feels that the University should be able to provide this sort of accommodations for upperclassmen.

Such a program would make the University responsible for living conditions of students throughout their undergraduate years. Complete University responsibility for upkeep, reasonable rents, protection and supervision is impossible in privately owned housing, even though off-campus units for single students must have University approval.

But developing a housing program which serves the student needs involves more than providing the physical facilities. Dr. Smith’s main objective this year is to start developing a favorable attitude among student toward living in University housing.

“What we do one year to meet an emergency,” Dr. Smith explains, “we pay for the next year. When you triple a man up his freshman year, necessary or not, you cannot expect him to be impressed with your efforts to persuade him to remain in University housing for the balance of his undergraduate years.”

Dr. Smith admits that it will never be possible to provide ideal housing for everyone, but he also contends that with reasonable long-range planning the University can come close to fulfilling the future needs of its students.



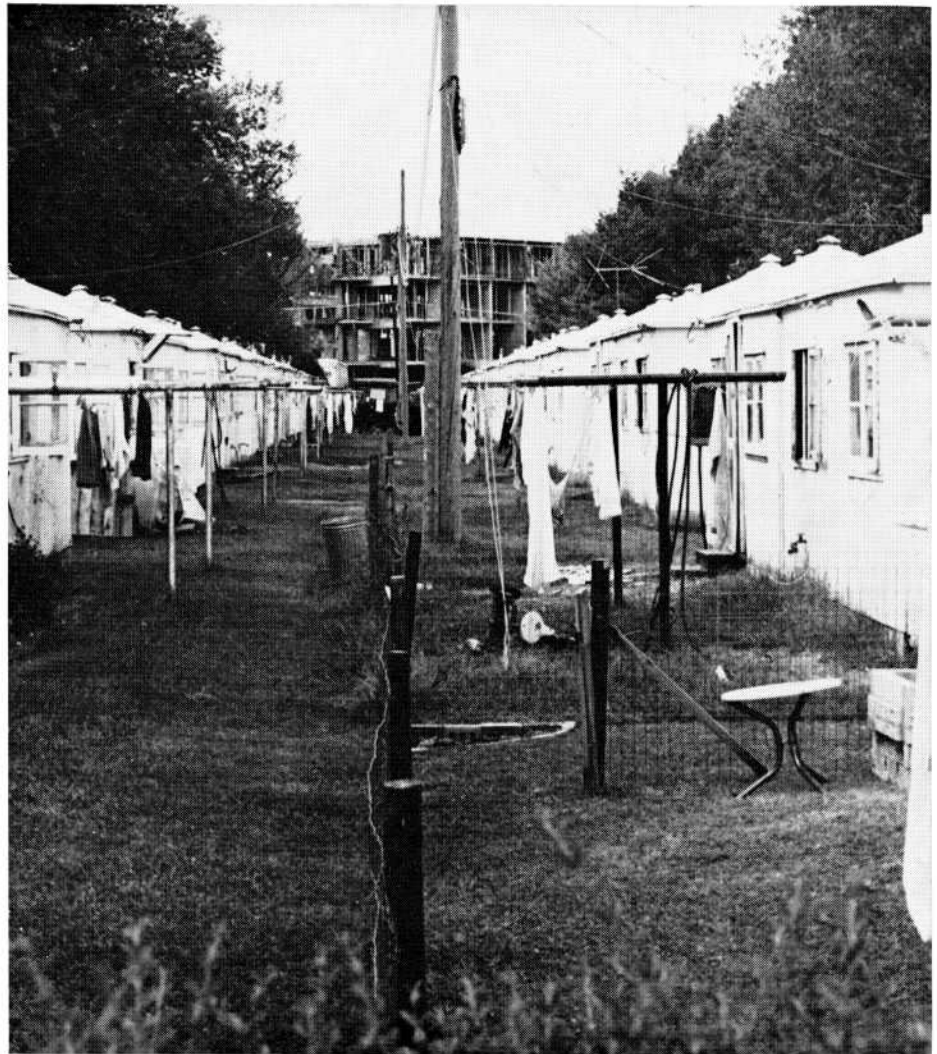
BILL SHAW

This architect's sketch of the married student apartments on South Campus is already taking form in brick and mortar, with completion expected in November. The modern design of these "permanent" structures is a far cry from fabled Sooner City (below), scheduled for final removal in 1965.

Housing for married students has been a problem area for colleges throughout the country since the end of World War II, and the demand continues to increase. Several fortunate acquisitions in the early years have eased considerably the pressures at the University of Oklahoma. The first was the pre-fab paradise, Sooner City, originally purchased in 1946 for \$1 million and intended for a maximum of 10 years occupancy. The final two blocks of the pre-fab units will be moved out by August of 1965, and few tears will be shed at their demise. One thing can be said for Sooner City, however, even in its least desirable years: its remarkably low rents—which can never be duplicated—enabled many married students to get through college who would otherwise have floundered in the attempt.

The backbone of married student accommodations — Parkview Apartments — was purchased by the University in May, 1954, from a private developer who had built the 244 units in anticipation of a big Norman veterans hospital which never materialized.

The apartments on the North Campus, formerly part of the old Navy base and in use since 1947, were condemned and replaced last year by 180 renovated South Campus apartments acquired from the federal government in 1960. The 1, 2 and 3-bedroom apartments will become wholly-owned by the University if still in use in 20 years. Dr. Smith estimates that the apartments will be in better repair than they are now, since the University



Only two blocks remain of the original pre-fabricated Sooner City, purchased in 1946 for 10 years occupancy. Repairs will halt in June, 1964, and the last unit will go by August, 1965.

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## each housing employee must be convinced that his job is important if Dr. Smith's program is to be successful

cannot show any profit from the apartments during the 20-year period. Any revenue will be immediately reinvested in building repairs and improvements. The housing office controls four more such buildings on the South Campus, now being used as warehouses, and Dr. Smith favors turning two or three of them into additional married students quarters.

The housing department, which is a self-supporting University enterprise, uses no tax money in the construction, operation or maintenance of any housing facility. Construction is financed by self-liquidating bonds, and all salaries, food, maintenance

supplies and bond payments come from room and board fees paid by students.

In the operation of the University housing units, the housing office shares responsibility in many areas with the office of student affairs under Dean of Students Dr. Clifford J. Craven. Basically the housing office is in charge of the physical condition of the housing and food facilities, and student affairs is charged with the supervision of the students themselves, setting and enforcing the rules, etc. In practice, however, operation of student housing is a cooperative venture. Since the housing office's custodial force does not go into private

rooms, for instance, the resident counselors and housing supervisors must communicate maintenance needs of the individual rooms to the housing office.

The two offices also share the job of room assignments. The housing staff determines the priority system based on seniority, date of application and record of previous residence and determines priority classification for each student applicant. Student affairs then makes the specific room and roommate assignments. A similar dual role is played in supervision of off-campus (approved private) housing. Student affairs determines which private housing shall be approved and which students shall be allowed to live out of University housing. The housing office maintains private housing listings and refers students to available accommodations.

The housing office is directly responsible for all food service to University housing units and runs the mammoth University commissary.

The sudden availability of more than 1,000 new living units next fall will probably necessitate reinstatement of the rules requiring undergraduates to live in University housing (greatly relaxed during the emergency period). Dr. Smith feels that the natural growth of enrolment and his own program for developing better student service and good relationships with the student residents may eventually make strict enforcement unnecessary.

It does appear that the success of the housing office's program can remove many of the traditional bones of contention between the students and the administration. Last year Dr. Smith and his assistants were chiefly concerned with organization of the department and the attitude of its many employees. They made great efforts to convince each employee that his job is important in providing proper surroundings for students whose education is important to us all. Whether the employee had a part

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Construction is proceeding on the new dormitory as workmen shoot for occupancy by September. Concrete will be poured by December and brickwork completed soon afterward.



# Explorers in White Coats

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structed—that is, the relationship of persons with their environment and yet separate from it. Some time in the future, we intend to use the mentally ill in the SI lab.

“Hallucination,” he continues, “is merely an interesting aspect of sensory isolation, however. We have a theory we’re checking out now—called information theory—devised by a Bell Telephone scientist named Shannon, and we’re applying it to information processing by the brain. We want to learn more about how the brain processes information. We are testing rate and speed operations by feeding in bits of sensations to the senses. We feed in describable amounts of information to a person in the tank with his sight removed, hearing removed, temperature steady, an appreciable amount of gravity removed—gravity provides us with a rich amount of gratification—and in this way we first find out how he responds to ‘nothing.’ Then we insert discreet stimuli: ticks, buzzes, flashes of light. We recover these signals for measurement by recording them on the electroencephalograph.”

Dr. Shurley, a six-foot four-inch Texan, has been working in the field of sensory isolation since 1955. He began at the National Institute of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, working with Dr. John Lilly, who has since left the field. In 1957 Dr. Shurley came to Oklahoma City on a dual appointment to the V.A. Hospital and the O.U. faculty.

The Behavioral Science Laboratory is supported by grants from the Veterans Administration, and Dr. Shurley uses University students in psychiatry to assist him in the work of the Laboratory, a rare opportunity for a practical application of their knowledge while still in school.

Dr. Shurley received his medical degree from the University of Texas Medical School and took his psychiatric training at Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia.

In October, 1961, he became the fifth scientist in the nation and the first psychiatrist to receive the career research post of Senior Medical Investigator awarded by the Veterans Administration. Dr. Shurley has also gained wide recognition from laymen for his work through newspaper and magazine articles. The most recent account of the Laboratory’s work appeared in the *National Observer*. Dr. Shurley and his as-

sociates have presented numerous papers to scientific gatherings, and a trip to Antarctica is planned in the future to apply Laboratory findings to conditions on that icebound continent.

Explorers of today may differ in appearance from the Lewises and Clarks, the Amundsens, the Pearys; their equipment and techniques may have changed; the regions they explore may not be the same, but the challenge of discovery never disappears or fades. New horizons will always be sought by men who seek to learn more about Man and his environment.

## *Always Room*

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in food preparation, house cleaning, building repair or furniture renovation, the housing officials wanted him to develop a pride in his work.

Dr. Smith believes that the students eventually become aware of such an attitude on the part of a University employee, whether he is a classroom teacher with a Ph.D or a Cross Center cook with a gift for apple pie. He also believes that students will do their best when they believe that others are going out of their way to help them.

“We only worry when we reach the point of being afraid to try something new to improve our program,” Dr. Smith maintains. “In other words, we’ll try everything we can think of until we get the job done.”

## *Another Feather*

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80 volumes on the history of Oklahoma and has told the story of such neighboring states as Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, Texas, Arkansas, and Colorado—all of which are represented in the Press list either by full-statured histories in one volume or by multi-volumed projects on various aspects of state history.

“Oklahoma has a record of being a good neighbor,” says Lottinville, “But our responsibility extends even further than that: it asks that we develop and share the history of our neighboring states, whose progress is linked indissolubly with our own. Perhaps we can grow together to even greater heights in the years to come.”

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