



## Breaking News

# New Dorm Not to Open in Time for Fall '01 Semester

## Sudden Cancellation Shrouded in Secrecy

By: Miriam Colton

In a recent turnaround with significant ramifications, the new 36th street dormitory originally slated to open for the fall '01 semester will not be ready. "The dorm will not be opening in time for the beginning of next semester," said David Himber, Dean of Student Services.

"We were very disturbed by this news," said Associate Dean Zelda Braun.

No reason is being given for the delay. Jeffrey Rosengarten, who as Director of Supporting Services oversees university construction, would not confirm that the new facility is not opening, and wouldn't respond as to what is holding it back. "There are factors I can't talk about and you shouldn't be talking about, because when you talk about them they become true," claimed Rosengarten.

Rosengarten was also unwilling to make a statement about the progress and timetable of the construction. In the April issue of the *Observer* Rosengarten said that "outside of unforeseen problems, the schedule is quite sound. While a crazy scenario could happen, it's not likely." *Observer* reporters attempted interview workers on-site in order to ascertain the current stage of construction. They were informed that the workers are under a "gag-rule."

In keeping with the secrecy surrounding this issue, the SCW administration said that they have not been official notified of the new developments. "No one has informed me either directly or formally that the dorm is not opening," said Dean Karen Bacon.

Students are upset that the university officials have failed to give them an explanation. "It's incredibly frustrating that I'm not informed as to a reason," complained Suzanne Anziska, SCW junior. "When I asked the administration they said they don't know. What kind of answer is that?"

Although listed on the housing application as "if available," students felt that they were given every indication that the new dorm would in fact be opening for next semester. The hiring of three additional Resident Advisors and one Graduate Advisor contributed to this impression.

"I'm extremely upset and disgusted by the way the student body was lied to," said Toby Goldfisher, incoming TAC president. "I was at the student life committee and Jeff Socol said it was opening. They offered it, they said it, and they have to live up to their word. It's very unprofessional."

Though no official statement has been issued, conflicting accounts for the delay are circulating around YU. According to one version, the problem is YU's inability to find a main donor for the building. However, Dan Forman, Vice President for Development, has denied the validity of this claim. "We are still looking for a lead donor of five millions dollars," said Forman. "However, the university generally proceeds with renovations separate from finding a donor."

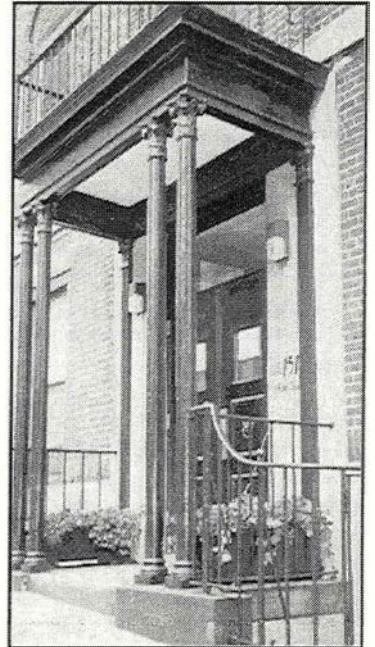
"I get the sense the issue is time and labor," suggested Himber. "It cost a lot of money to expedite the construction."

To Tamar Bacon, SCW senior, this scenario is all too familiar. "I don't think that anyone is

maliciously trying to stall the opening of the new dorm per se, but unfortunately the delay is consistent with what I saw throughout my tenure on the student life committee as a pattern of unprofessional and careless behavior," said Bacon.

As an example, Bacon cited the delayed opening of the 2nd and 3rd floors of 215 Lexington. Though the SCW administration had been assured that these floors would be ready for the spring '00 semester, it was not until the last minute that the Deans were informed otherwise.

The renovations of the 151 E. 36th Street building began in March, a few months after the building was acquired. Since the building was previously a woman's residence, the basic architectural structure for the dorm existed, and a major overhaul was not planned. The renovations are intended update the building and provide safety measures.



36th Street Will Still be Under Construction in the Fall

## Cancellation of Dorm Causes Dismissal of RA's

### Controversy Surrounds the Removal of Three Resident Assistants and One Graduate Assistant

By: Adina Levine

The first students to know that the 36th Street Dormitory would not be opening in time for the fall semester were not those students who had requested to live there. They were not members of the Student Council or Student Life Committee. No, the first students to be told of the new dorm's closing were those who would be hurt by it the most: the three Resident Assistants and one Graduate Assistant who were suddenly told last week that they didn't have a job.

"I would not have expected this kind of behavior from YU, a school that prides itself as a bastion of Torah values and commitment to Torah way of life," asserted Chana Rosenblatt, the would-be GA who now must make alternate arrangements for next year. "This is not in following with a Torah lifestyle and appears to me

completely unethical. We had an agreement and it was broken."

The three RA's who were slated to work in the new dorm were not those who were dismissed. Instead, three random RA's - Ruthie Ephron, Leeba Krausz, and Rachel Turk - were selected to have their job offers withdrawn.

"Why wouldn't they fire the RA's who were supposed to work in the new dorm?" questioned Atara Gutfreund, SCW senior. "They're the people without jobs."

Having already completed their working papers, the RA's had only their verbal agreement to hold onto, as RA's are never given a written contract. They were thus quite surprised when they were informed last week that they would have to pay for dorming next year, and in fact find additional roommates.

"I was shocked

because I changed my life for it," stated Krausz. "I stopped my job, switched around my classes, changed around the relationship with my friends - all because they accepted me as an RA. My parents and I were depending heavily on the financial aid that my RA job would have given me."

"Finding roommates is hard enough as it is," commented Turk. "Now it's all the more difficult because everyone else has already been placed. It's completely unethical to offer someone a job and then take it back at the last minute."

The Office of Residence Life refused to disclose why these RA's were dismissed, but an exclusive *Observer* source revealed that the RA's who wouldn't make a big commotion were chosen.

"I think they took advantage of Rachel's good

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# Students Worry What Alternative Will Be

By: Miriam Colton

With the delayed opening of the new dorm, the office of Student Services will be faced with the task of housing a growing student body in already overcrowding SCW housing facilities. Enrollment at SCW has been steadily rising over the past four years, and the precariousness of the situation in Israel is expected to bring a large incoming freshmen class. "Currently, the indications are that enrollment will be up, though we don't know by how much yet," said Michael Kranzler, Director of Admissions.

YU officials were unwilling to comment on how they plan to deal with the lack of space. "We're waiting for the numbers to come in," said Dean Himber.

"Registration at the midtown campus was just done and students in Israel are currently enrolling," said Kranzler. "We won't have concrete numbers for a few weeks."

While renting additional housing units would be the natural solution, Himber said that option is not probable, stating that given time and money constraints, available apartments are hard to get.

Many students are concerned that University Housing will take desperate measures to deal with the situation. "I hope we don't return to the days of bunk beds in Brookdale," said Rebecca Feldman, SCW senior. "It was constricting and puerile." One *Observer* source indicated that some incoming freshmen might not be assured of on-campus housing. "A building only stretches so far, and it certainly feels like Stern has already done that," said Ariela Dworetzky, SCW sophomore. "At this point they might have to turn down incoming students for housing and that would be unfortunate."

"We're already

stretched beyond capacity," said John Fischer, Director of Enrollment Management.

Students already suffered the results of over-crowding this fall semester, when study halls were converted into bedrooms. "I really don't want to lose the study halls again," asserted Rivky Borg, SCW sophomore. "Brookdale has four students in each room and that's makes it difficult to study. An alternative is a necessity."

This year, additional students were also placed in independent-housing apartments, with up to six or seven student in each unit. "There is not going to be room," claimed Toby Goldfisher, SCW junior. "They're going to squish in more students in each Windsor and Lexington apartment. The students urgently need to respond."

Students who checked off the new dorm as their 1st housing preference are currently being called by Student Services to give other requests. They are the only students being informed by Student Services of the cancelled opening, in addition to the three Resident Advisors and one Graduate Advisor who were dismissed.

Students expressed anger and frustration upon being informed of the cancelled opening of the new dorm. "I signed up to be in new building and was just called this morning to fill out new rooming forms," said impassioned Elisheva Douglas, an SCW sophomore from South Carolina. "Now I have to find people to room with all over again."

A small minority of students didn't expect the dorm to open. "The current living situation is ridiculous and I don't know of college that has four girls in a room," said Meira Weinstein. "However, I don't think the new dorm not opening is going to make much of a difference."

Talk of student protest measures is circulating. "A student protest is needed," said Yael Fischer, SCW junior. "It is a real pity that student apathy exists to the extent that students are negatively affected by policy and refuse to stand up to it."



Students are Fearful That Bunk Beds Might Replace New Dorm

**We Want Answers!  
Sign the Petition!**

**Located: Observer box in Student Services  
office  
or  
Observer Office, BH 4C**

## The Observer

245 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY, 10016.

(212) 683-4943. Fax: (212) 340-7773.

Observer@ymail.yu.edu.

**Adina Levine & Miriam Colton**

Editors-in-Chief

**Lea Colton and Tamar Bacon**

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## Dismissals Upset Students

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nature," commented Melissa Chames, SCW sophomore. "She's probably more responsible than any other RA, so why her?"

"The school stepped all over certain people who are nice people and pushovers and won't fight back," angrily asserted Chanie Glowitz, SCW senior. "It's ridiculous that it's the nicest RA's who had to go, when really being nice is what an RA is all about."

The fact that Ephron is a returning RA heightens the anger over her abrupt dismissal, with some students claiming that the Office of Residence Life needed to make more room in Schottenstein and chose Ephron only for her good nature. Ephron was not given a reason for her dismissal, and the Office of Residence Life could point to no flaw in Ephron's current service that would justify a dismissal.

"I love Ruthie," commented Celia Sporer, GA. "I've never seen a better R.A. She's always responsible and competent. Once she sorted a whole bag of mail by herself because the RA before her forgot! She goes out of her way to be there for everyone."

"I've always thought that Ruthie is one of the best RA's," remarked Chana Michels, SCW sophomore. "My interactions with Ruthie have always been that she gives of herself 110%"

Some students point to administrative mistakes that could have been avoided to prevent the dismissal of these RA's.

"If they weren't sure that

the dorm was going to open, they shouldn't have hired that many RA's," asserted Lea Colton, SCW senior.

However, Dean of Students David Himber explained that Student Services had been informed that the dorm would open in time for the Fall. "We were under the impression that it was going to open," commented Himber. "If not, we wouldn't have hired RA's and GA's."

Some students claim that the administration could still provide additional compensation for the dismissed RA's.

"It's disgusting and they deserve compensation," remarked Shira Rivkin, SCW senior.

The students suggested that additional RA's could be delegated to independent housing, to allow an RA in both Windsor and Lexington, or to create an RA on every floor in Schottenstien.

"The dorm closing does not necessitate rescinding their job offer, which had already been extended and accepted," explained Rosenblatt. "There's plenty of room in SCW for another Graduate Assistant."

Other proposals to compensate the RA's for their broken agreement include providing them with the promised free housing, or at least a decreased rate of housing fees.

"If I were in their shoes, I'd be asking for the same thing," remarked Himber. "But the reality is that if we don't have a building for them to work in, it's inappropriate for the University to hire them."

## Editorial

It's a great injustice when the administration neglects the most important members of the SCW campus: the student body. We have the right to know the status of our living conditions. If there is a valid reason why the building is not opening, then we should be told formally.

Cover-ups lead to speculation that the reason is not valid, and that officials are inept at keeping their promises to use money wisely for improvements at the midtown campus. While officials are busy pointing fingers at other departments - Development points to Student

Services and vice versa - students are sacrificed for the sake of university politics.

The students should not sit idly by while the higher-ups discuss politics. If the administration needs to be reminded where its priorities should lie, then the students need to recognize that a wrong has been committed. Take time away from your final studying to tell the administration that the student body won't put up with the silent treatment; or else there may not be a Brookdale study hall for finals next year.