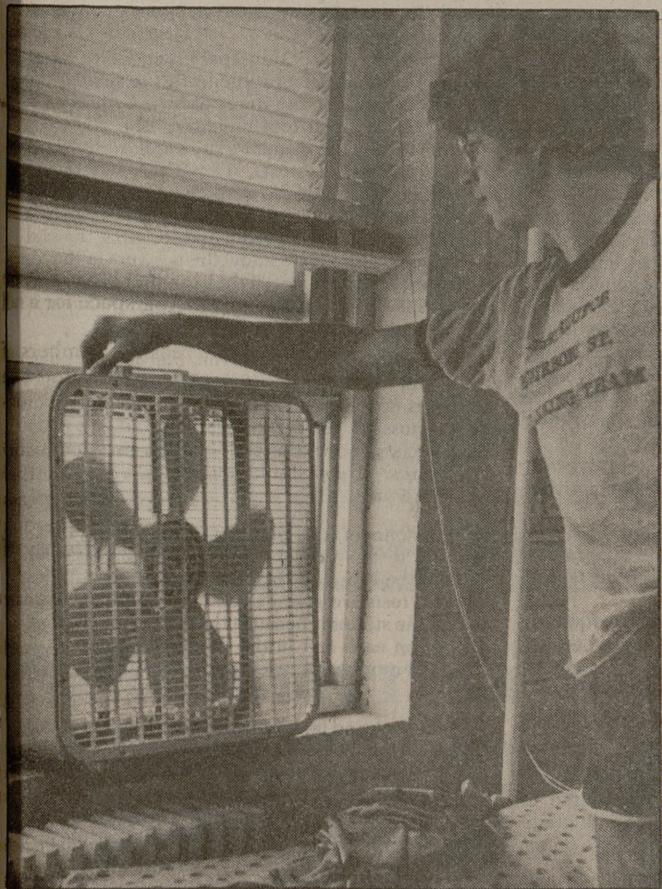


Local

Hotard residents find out fate of renovations today



By GWEN HAM
Battalion Reporter
Despite its age, Hotard Hall — affectionately called "The Hotard Hilton" by its residents — has survived razing proposals, but the old dormitory can't escape modernization.

Renovation is due Hotard this summer — hallway carpeting, room phones and air conditioning. Most Hotard residents protest the renovation because it would raise a semester's rent 120 percent over what they pay now.

Hotard residents recently learned the improvements would raise their rent from \$193 to that of Corps-style halls, expected to be \$424 after the Board of Regents acts on dorm rate increases today.

"They're pricing us out of a house," Mark Mitchell, a Hotard resident, said.

Glenna Witt of the University housing office said, "Plans are made based on five-year projections. The decision to renovate Hotard was made several years ago by staff, the physical plant, RHA, students and members of the Hotard council. No one likes to raise the rent but the decision was made several years ago and the improvements are going to be made."

The Board of Regents is expected to approve the Planning and Building Committee's contract recommendation at today's meeting. The committee is recommending awarding the \$289,000 contract to Drew Woods, Inc., of College Station. Resident Joe Civileto said,

"We have no objections to the phones, we have no real objections to the carpeting. The modernizations that they've done so far have been fine. But air conditioning is not a necessity. If the heat's that bad, we can go out and spend \$20 on a fan ... that's about all we can afford over here."

Mitchell, Civileto and residents Mark Robinson and Carl Hussman formed an ad hoc committee to stop the air conditioning, to which they say 90 percent of the residents are opposed.

"We took a petition around and had it signed by almost all the guys," Mitchell said, "but we didn't ask the RA's to sign it. That wouldn't be fair, because even if they don't want the air conditioning, they work for the University."

The four began working through the chain of command to try to stop the air conditioning.

Mitchell said they first went to see Tom Murray, area coordinator for Northside dormitories.

"It's (the renovations) the best thing for everyone concerned,"

Murray said. "We're trying to think about the future and new people coming in to the dorms who want air conditioning."

Then, Murray and the four residents met with Ron Blatchley, director of student affairs.

"He offered us an alternative to move in to Law, Hart or any other one of those dorms that are not air conditioned," Mitchell said.

Murray said, "I think a large part of the problem has just simply been poor communication between us and the residents of Hotard. The renovation project has been going on for some time. Air conditioning plans have been around for a while so the news shouldn't be all that shocking. We feel what we're doing is in the best interest of the students."

The University administration continued with its plans to renovate the dorm, plans which Vice President for Business Affairs Howard Vestal presented to the regents Sunday.

After the regents meeting this morning, the issue will be decided. Robinson said, "We think it's a good example of how the Uni-

versity isn't as concerned as it could be about the welfare of the students."

Some Hotard Hall residents are upset with University plans to install air conditioning and carpet which will increase rent next semester. Jason Green, a freshman geology student living in Hotard, says he would rather turn on his fan to stay cool.

Environmental group to meet tonight

The Environmental Awareness and Action Club will meet at 7 p.m. tonight in C111 Langford Architectural Center.

Lon Garrison will speak on "The Political Realities of Conservation" at 7:30 p.m.

Garrison has 40 years experience in the National Park Service and has written numerous articles on the outdoors, parks, fishing and youth activities. He is also a past president of the National Conference on State Parks.

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