

New student apartment complex, and what's happening to Voertman's
Alex Helm | Oct. 8, 2015

If the new student apartment complex is constructed on Hickory Street, the owner of Voertman's said the bookstore is not going anywhere. Construction, if approved, could begin as soon as February.

Owner Brent Erskin said the bookstore was already seeking a more efficient and clean space when the developer of EdR Collegiate Housing approached Voertman's with the proposal of the apartment complex.

"That's the most important thing," Erskin said. "We're not going anywhere. Voertman's name is not going anywhere. But we did want to become more efficient and not have so much wasted space. The building is too big for us. We don't need all this space."

EdR has plans to extend their apartments all the way to Jack in the Box. But both Subway and Voertman's will still be in the same general location, though no official zoning permits have been approved.

There's some concern about what will happen to Voertman's during construction. The store, Erskin said, will have a temporary location in the back parking lot and empty lots next door.

But students like accounting junior Patricia Qualls feel it wouldn't be that big of a deal if Voertman's were no longer available to students.

"I bought books there my freshman year mostly because I didn't do much research on where else to buy books," Qualls said. "But since then I've stopped because their prices are a lot higher than some of the other bookstores near campus. I wouldn't be upset if Voertman's is no longer available for students to buy books. There [are] a lot of other places for students to buy books near campus or online."

Qualls, who is a commuter from Highland Village, is mainly concerned about the added traffic issues that could occur should the plan be approved.

"My biggest worry [is] the traffic problems it could create," Qualls said. "Mostly during construction, because even now with all the construction happening on the other side of traffic, it's hard for me as a commuter to get around campus in my car."

In addition, students who live on Fry Street would have to find alternate ways to get around, especially those who drive. Communication design sophomore Jared Oller lives at U Centre on Fry Street and said Denton does not need more apartments.

"It would be a massive pain in the butt to have that kind of construction there," Oller said. "It would suck even more of the life and Denton-feel out of the area."

Qualls said as long as the apartments still kept the down-to-earth Denton vibe, then more housing would be a good thing.

“With how fast our school enrollment is growing, I think adding more diverse housing would make it easier for students to live near campus, especially the upperclassmen,” Qualls said. “Many other schools in the area have student apartments near campus, and they seem to be popular with students who want to move out of the dorms but still want the extra security of having their living area associated with the university.”

The construction plans will have to be voted on by the city council. Erskin said if they are approved, there will be more information by the end of the year.