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Apartments coming to Antioch College

Property at Antioch College has changed hands — possibly with more on the way.

Earlier this month, Columbus-based real estate developer Windsor Companies purchased the vacant Antioch Student Union for \$500,000.

Across campus, two other prominent buildings — the Sontag-Fels Building, located at 800 Livermore St., and the Charles F. Kettering Building, at 150 E. South College St. — are under contract with Windsor.

According to Windsor's head designer, Jason Dorsey, who spoke with the News last week, the plan is to install over 120 residential rental units between the three sites — including efficiency and one- and two-bedroom living spaces. Upon purchase, Windsor intends to turn the Kettering building into 55-and-older senior housing.

Owing to the union's derelict conditions, Dorsey said the building will have to be demolished; two or three residential buildings will take its place.

As for Sontag and Kettering, Dorsey said Windsor intends to preserve their "historic charm" and to aesthetically blend their mid-century modern designs with that of the surrounding college.

"This will be a major milestone for our company," Dorsey said. "We own other developments, but they don't feel the same as this. It's not just about building homes for people, but improving the village and helping Antioch thrive."

Owning and managing over 1,000 residential units and more than 500,000 square feet of commercial spaces throughout Ohio, Windsor has a significant footprint in several neighboring cities. In Dayton, Springfield, Beavercreek and elsewhere, the company has invested millions of dollars in the creation of apartments, lofts, high rises, a library, an equestrian center and more — many of which, Dorsey said, were previously abandoned historic commercial buildings that his company adapted for residential use.

Because the joint sale of Sontag and Kettering has not been finalized — particularly because Windsor is still determining the cost of the union's demolition — Dorsey was not able to provide the News with exact rental costs of the future apartments. Based on the average rental rates of Windsor's Dayton properties, Dorsey said rental costs will likely range from \$900 to \$1,700 per month.

Also because a sale has not yet occurred, Dorsey declined to state the asking cost of the Sontag and Kettering buildings.

Presently, all the Antioch land — including Sontag, Kettering and student union buildings — are zoned E-1, or educational. As such, Windsor may have to approach the Village to rezone their newly acquired properties to allow for their high-density residences.

While the union sits vacant, the others, Sontag and Kettering, are not entirely empty.

Since 2021, early childhood education center Open Air Village has occupied some space in and around Sontag. Built in 1946, the building previously housed laboratories and administrative and faculty offices, then later, a business incubator, cafe, school dances and a student-run radical literature library.

The Kettering building, across East South College Street from Sontag, was built in 1950 to house classrooms, administration and faculty offices, as well as scientific research and development labs. Now, its sole occupant is Yellow Springs-based NPR affiliate 91.3 WYSO. Before Windsor announced its plans to purchase WYSO's present location, the station had already arranged to relocate operations to the Union Schoolhouse, which is presently under significant construction and renovation.

"So, [Kettering] will be the last of the three buildings we work on — giving WYSO enough time to move," Dorsey explained.

He continued: "We want to keep and enter into a new lease with Open Air Village. In fact, I want to help them expand and freshen up their space."

The Antioch College Union, which was built in 1957, closed its doors to students for good in 2007. In its previous life, the union housed classrooms, offices, a cafeteria, coffee shop and more. Now, it's overrun by black mold, asbestos and nature; the awning over the front stoop still reads "TRANSIENT MODE HOME."

"We'll tear it down safely," Dorsey reassured. "This won't be the first time we've had to address something like this. But it's a complete loss. So, let's put down something that's usable."

As Dorsey said, he envisions Windsor's future apartments as cross-generational living spaces — with the children at Open Air, seniors at Kettering and college students walking and learning nearby — leading to what he called a "village within a village," or a micro-community within the heart of Yellow Springs.

"I really want to cultivate a nurturing relationship between the college and the community as a whole," Dorsey said. "Yellow Springs must survive, and Antioch has to be a part of its survival. [These apartments] have the potential to breathe more college life into Yellow Springs, and life into the college."

A statement sent to the News from Antioch College administration shared this enthusiasm.

"I am eager to see what Windsor Development LLC has in store for the former student union space," wrote Dean of Admission Shane Creepingbear, with no

mention of the Sontag and Kettering buildings.

"In our continued search for new Antioch College students, I look forward to the revitalization of the property and all that it will mean for the beautification of campus as we welcome young minds to Yellow Springs," wrote Creepingbear. "Our leadership team is excited for the bright future ahead at Antioch College. It is through partnerships like these that we hope to continue improving the campus for our students and Yellow Springs community members."

Coldwell Banker Heritage Realtor Sam Eckenrode echoed that optimism.

"The village has had a perennial housing shortage since its founding," she told the News earlier this week. "There are always many people who feel connected to Yellow Springs, but are excluded from the village because we don't have enough space for them."

Eckenrode — a 1983 alumna of Antioch and a former staff and faculty member, and who served briefly on the Alumni Board — has led the effort to sell the properties with Coldwell Banker Commercial Realtor Patrick Williams.

"Having more studio, one- and two-bedroom apartments — contemporary and livable spaces — will be a great asset to Yellow Springs," she said.

While Dorsey imagines individuals and couples, young and old alike, getting a fresh chance to live — or perhaps stay — in Yellow Springs, he said not all will be welcome in the future apartments.

"You must have zero criminal record," Dorsey said. "We do extensive background checks to make sure we get the right people in our properties."

To ensure that, Dorsey noted that all operations by Windsor Companies — which is headed by his brother, Alex, and was started several decades ago by their mother — are completely in-house.

"We manage our own product," he said. "We construct it, design it, build it and manage it. There are no third-party property management companies. We have our own brokerage, our own procurement company, media department and more. We do it all."

However, Dorsey said that the creation of these new apartments could yield local jobs — jobs including building maintenance, custodial work and others that Dorsey hopes will be filled by Yellow Springs residents.

"And I also hope that Antioch art students will be willing to make sculptures and art installations around the properties," he added.

Additional sales

The sale of the student union and ongoing discussions to part ways with the Sontag and Kettering buildings have been a long time coming — it all follows a

plan Antioch unveiled last August to begin listing some of its land and buildings for lease or sale.

The effort, as previously reported in the News, was a part of Antioch's Social Enterprise and Enrollment Plan to support the college's "ongoing success and sustainability."

Around the time of last summer's formal announcement to begin selling property, Antioch sold a 0.3-acre gravel lot parking lot adjacent to the Yellow Springs Community Children's Center to Iron Table Holdings LLC, owned by local resident and comedian Dave Chappelle. Though under different ownership, the lot remains mostly the same today.

Also after that summer's announcement, Antioch sold a parcel of land at the corner of Livermore and East North College streets to the YS Senior Center for \$300,000. As the News wrote last December, the center aims to build and open a new facility on the half-acre lot.

Then, in January, the college sold West Hall to the locally based Emerge Recovery & Trade Initiative for \$760,000. The organization, headquartered in the former Greene County Career Center just outside of Yellow Springs, offers addiction recovery programs and housing. The newly renovated West Hall now functions as a men's dormitory, with approximately 40 beds available for those in recovery.

The News plans to check in with Emerge in a forthcoming issue.

Last week, two tracts of land at the southernmost portion of Antioch College's campus — at the intersection of Allen and Corry streets — were listed for sale online. One nine-acre tract was listed for \$809,400 and the other, at four acres, was listed for \$481,000. Both are also zoned educational.

Just a few days after those listings went online, they disappeared. That land, which surrounds The Antioch School, a portion of which is often used by the young students, is no longer for sale. The News will follow up with local realtors in the coming weeks about the status of the land.

As Creepingbear wrote in the college's statement to the News this week, the sale of the student union — as well as these other college-owned properties — is an effort from Antioch to "right-size" the physical campus and "mirror the size of the current student body while ensuring long-term financial stability."

In a separate correspondence, Creepingbear said there are "about 130" students currently enrolled at Antioch, noting that an exact headcount is difficult until the college conducts its census in the fall.



ANTIOCH COLLEGE

One Morgan Place
Yellow Springs, OH 45387
937.767.1286
admission@antiochcollege.edu



Learning Hubs

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Antioch Review
Coretta Scott King Center
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Foundry Theater
Herndon Gallery
Wellness Center

Publications

Antioch Engaged (Co-op)
The Antioch Record
The Antioch Review
The Antiochian Magazine

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