

University Houses Brick Repair Project FAQs

Why is the work being done now?

Originally, the plan was to complete the exterior work during the interior renovation project. Unfortunately, the State did not agree to bid the exterior portion during the interior project due to complications with that project. Ultimately, the University had to go back to the State Building Commission and request approval to spend more money on the project than originally expected and this process took time. The State put the exterior project out for bid in January of 2016 and the contract was awarded in late May. The exterior work on University Houses buildings needs to be completed in order to protect the investment made in the interior renovation project.

Why were residents allowed to move back in to the University Houses neighborhood?

The interior renovations had to be completed before residents were able to move in. We chose to open the complex knowing we still needed to complete the exterior work. There were many factors that went into this decision. First, we are committed to supporting the University's mission and want to help provide homes for students and their families. Second, we were not sure of how long it would be before the exterior project would be approved for the second time by the State. University Housing receives no money from the University or the State, we are completely self-funded by rent and user fees. There are no state tax dollars for any of our projects. Trying to be the best stewards of resident monies also went into the decision to have residents move back.

What is University Housing's role in this project?

Major projects such as this one are managed through the State of Wisconsin. The contract is between the contractor and the State. University Housing is considered the "owner", and while we have a time and place to share our concerns and opinions, we are not officially the agency affiliated with the project, the University is. We technically participate in an advisory capacity. University Apartments facilities staff attend construction meetings and share relevant information with our residents and staff.

What about the lead paint removal project? What's next with this?

In the Spring of 2016, we notified the community about our intention to remove as much exterior lead paint as possible from the exterior of the buildings. In order to minimize the impact to residents we asked the state to add this additional scope of work to the brick repair project. We started a new project with the State to "design" this work so it can be priced out by the existing contractor or another sub-contractor. We are now waiting for the cost estimates from the contractor and for State approval to do the work. Because the estimate for the work has exceeded the allotted contingency funds in the project, approval is required from the State Building Commission and the Board of Regents. We are, however, working closely with the architect and engineering firms on the project to get as much done in this project as possible.

Is the work dangerous?

There are strict protocols that must be followed by the contractor removing the potentially asbestos containing caulk and the lead paint. All removal of regulated hazardous materials must be done by staff who are trained and certified by the State to perform that work. The caulk is being removed by a certified abatement contractor and the lead paint on the lintels, part of the original project scope, is being removed by lead safe renovator certified staff from the painting contractor. This work is closely supervised by the State Department of Health Services.