

'Faulty construction' source of complaints

By LARRY GALLONE and MIKE SILLUP
Daily Collegian Staff Writers

Minor construction errors are the cause of complaints from Beaver Terrace residents, Centre Region code enforcement officers said.

Cracks in the ceilings and unlevel floors in some apartments are probably due to an error made by the contractor during construction, Code Enforcement officer Harry Burd said.

"An error was made down below, and it carried up all the way," he said.

Several apartments with 01 and 02 as the last two digits in their addresses show a uniform difference of about one inch in the ceilings and floors.

The cracks are in the same place on each floor.

Burd said some of the cracks could be due to building settlement, "but there are no visible stress cracks."

The ceilings are made of dock planks, (long reinforced concrete slabs laid adjacent to each other), Burd said. They are supported by bearing walls made from highly pressurized brick, he added.

The error probably came when the dock planks were laid, Bob Nellis, code enforcement officer said.

The dock planks were laid by a different company than the one that built the building, said Nellis, who was at the building site during construction.

Margot Semple, vice president in charge of rentals for federated Home and Mortgage Co., owners of Beaver Terrace, said statements about structural problems in the building are "unqualified statements and hearsay."

She said it is a pre-stressed concrete building and

not made of individual blocks.

Drake Nicholas (11th-history) a resident in apartment 402, said he saw flakes falling from the area between the dock planks.

Burd said the flakes were probably thin mortar falling due to vibrations from upper floors.

Mitch Shahan (grad-pre-law), a resident of apartment 502 said he also noticed flaking.

"It felt like someone was eating crackers in my bed and left the crumbs," he said.

Nellis said the building was built on solid rock. The contractor had to blast to pour the foundation, he said.

Burd said if there was a crack due to settling it would be visible from the outside.

"If there is a settling crack, I don't see it," he said.

PennPIRG leaders seek state official's support

Jeff Goldsmith, coordinator for students for the Pennsylvania Public Interest Research Group, said yesterday he will meet with Nat Goldhaber, the assistant to the Lt. Governor William Scranton, over term break for a possible endorsement for the PennPIRG project.

"I hope to get an appointment with the governor and then get a similar endorsement from him," Goldsmith said.

The endorsement will lend credibility to the project and may help the University's Board of Trustees approve the project when the proposal is submitted to them in July, he said.

"The purpose of PennPIRG is to help involve students in government. Endorsement by government officials

should be encouraged," he said.

If the board approves the proposal, Goldsmith said, the new officers for PennPIRG will handle the transition from Students for PennPIRG to PennPIRG.

If the board turns the proposal down, the organization will continue, he said.

"We will find another way of getting PennPIRG approved without a lawsuit and without the Board of Trustees," he said. "I don't see the first three efforts for PennPIRG as separate efforts. I see them as part of one major effort."

"I guarantee the PennPIRG effort will not end until PennPIRG is established," he said.

—by Amy Smith

Asbestos being removed in White Building tunnel

By DAVID VANHORN
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

Although slight traces of asbestos have been found in some University buildings such as Hamilton Hall, the major hazard in White Building is being removed.

The ceiling in a White Building tunnel between the locker room and the universal gym was found to contain 80 to 90 percent asbestos, a substance connected with various forms of lung cancer.

University personnel under the direction of Safety Services Manager Howard Triebold Jr. have been working since Monday on sealing the corridor and removing the material.

As of yesterday, Triebold said a third of the material had been removed, packaged and sealed. One person is spraying the wetting agent on the ceiling, he said, while another is scraping the material off after allowing the agent to soak into the asbestos-laden material.

"The job is proceeding very nicely," he said.

Triebold said the two men working on the job are wearing protective garb over their coveralls, respirators, caps and booties. The outer clothing is changed when necessary, often more than once per day, he said. Filters in the respirators are changed daily, according to Triebold.

He said a clean room is provided so the workers can take off their suits before they enter the room. Showers are also provided, he said.

The tunnel is secured by barriers at both ends, Triebold said, and appropriate warning signs are posted.

He said he expects the material to be completely removed by some time next week. A visual inspection will be done, he said, and "no places will be missed." The original plan was to replace the

asbestos ceiling with a mineral fiber tile ceiling, but the concrete slab ceiling may remain with no tile.

"It may be that once we have the ceiling cleared, it will be left that way," he said.

Triebold said the procedure could be used again if necessary, but there are some definite problems. Some difficulties could be encountered in shutting off a corridor, and ceiling fixtures such as lights create obstacles. The process is also expensive, he said.

In other University buildings, slight traces of asbestos have been found. Although Triebold said he has not received the results of ceiling material sent to the Bureau of Occupational Health in Harrisburg, he has been told by phone that Hamilton Hall contains trace amounts of asbestos. He said there is no evidence of flaking in Hamilton Hall, unlike White Building.

The Daily Collegian sent two ceiling samples from Hamilton Hall and one from Thompson Hall to University Mineral Constitution Lab Director Norman Suhr for lab analysis.

Suhr found all three samples, Hamilton South, first floor, Hamilton North, first floor and Thompson B-level, contain 1 to 10 percent chrysotile, a common form of asbestos. The largest concentration is in Hamilton South, he said.

Suhr said the predominant minerals in the material are gypsum, a derivative of plaster of paris, and clay. He said that the amount of asbestos is not like that found in White Building, and that he expects the material is not flaking.

Triebold said he has called constantly for lab results, but has received nothing from the Bureau of Occupational Health. He said he may go to Harrisburg next week to pick up the results, if necessary. After the results are received,

Triebold said University management will determine a course of action.

"What we have to do is sit down with the management and put together a course of action," he said.

Triebold said certain buildings may be given priority, but a plan to deal with asbestos will be formed for the whole University, not for each building.

Triebold said he is confident some positive steps will be taken this summer to deal with asbestos.

Phil Zullo, chief of industrial hygiene for the Bureau of Occupational Health, said the bureau received a total of 21 ceiling samples in two batches on two dates, Feb. 23 and March 6. The samples were not analyzed and results compiled until a few days ago due to the backlog of work caused by the Three Mile Island incident. The results will be sent to Triebold as soon as possible, he said.

Zullo said most samples contained one to three percent asbestos. Two samples contained 2 to 4 percent asbestos, one sample contained 5 to 9 percent, and two samples contained .5 to 2 percent. One sample had 24 percent, he said, and three contained no such substance.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, any concentration over 1 percent should be investigated, Zullo said. The EPA may establish a formula to use in dealing with asbestos in relation to percent concentration and condition of the material.

Friability and the condition of the surface are two factors to be considered, he said. Friability, the ability to crumble the material by hand, is proportional to the amount of asbestos.

"The less friable it is, the less asbestos you will find in it," Zullo said.

When sampling with a bottle, he said, if the bottle cannot permeate the surface, there is a lower chance of asbestos.

"A hard surface is probably not much of a problem and probably does not have



These warning signs, posted on the tunnel connecting the men's locker room and the universal gym in White Building, refer to work being done in removing recently-de-

ected asbestos — a substance associated with cancer — from the area. Asbestos has also been detected in other areas such as Hamilton Hall.

much asbestos in it," Zullo said. Hamilton Hall resident Mike Peters (6th-architecture) said he feels better now that the facts are in, but is not absolutely convinced the situation is okay. He said "white stuff" comes down from the ceiling when someone punches it or

something is dropped from the floor above.

"If you get a hole punched in the ceiling, something's going to come out of it," Peters said.

A dropped ceiling, he said, would be a good idea to protect the ceiling from

being punched and protect residents from falling fibers.

Health Education Professor Elaine Young said she was reassured by the results, although it took a long time to get the information.

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