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The Courtyards changed the market for off-campus student housing at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor as an excerpt from AnnArbor.com notes. Bob Hetherington & Associates provides pro-active media relations and crisis support for student communities operated by **A&O Education Services** in Ann Arbor and around America.

Developers: The Courtyards 'pioneered' upscale student housing at University of Michigan

This fall's opening of the final phase of [The Courtyards](#) high-rise near North Campus closes at least seven years of development by two successive companies that saw potential in building new student housing near the University of Michigan.

The project at the eastern intersection of Plymouth and Broadway still has vacancies as the third and final building in the complex opens to residents, developers said this week.

But they also said the original vision for the project - to build hundreds of upscale rentals with privacy and onsite amenities - has taken hold in Ann Arbor as three additional new projects reconfigure the student rental market.

"We were in a bit of a pioneering situation," said Jim Smith, managing principal at [Kensington Realty Advisors](#).

Kensington - a Chicago-based investment company with about \$1 billion under management - bought the rights to the plan from initial developer Bill Conlin of Ann Arbor. Conlin was working with Melrose StudentSuites on what that team called "North Quad by Melrose."

When Kensington took over the development, it purchased the 5.4-acre property for \$1.8 million in August 2005 and renamed it The Courtyards.

"What excited us about the site to start with was that with a five-acre site surrounded by University of Michigan property ... we thought it was an ideal spot for student housing," Smith said.



In 2005, no other large-scale projects had been proposed. Since then, Zaragon Place and 411 Lofts opened near Central Campus, and U-M's North Quad mixed-use dormitory is under construction on State Street. Kensington pulled in partners on The Courtyards, including student housing company [Allen & O'Hara Education Services Inc.](#), the property management subsidiary of Education Realty Trust Inc. Said Jim Lee, senior principal at Kensington. "We came in and redesigned the interiors. We did extensive studies on what we thought the students would want." The property has 896 individually leased bedrooms - each with its own bathroom - in three buildings, plus underground parking. The units range from one to four bedrooms and onsite amenities - like tanning - are in the largest building