

# “Lehigh-Affiliated” not “Lehigh” (12)

The Bethlehem Gadfly Gadfly's posts, Lehigh University, Serious Issues November 6, 2018

*(12th in a series of posts on Lehigh University)*

## Lehigh Breaks Ground for SouthSide Commons

### SouthSide Commons changes living conditions as construction begins

Gadfly doesn't know how he missed it.

The new SouthSide Commons – the stunning complex of buildings on the west edge of the Lehigh campus that snakes down Brodhead from Packer toward 4th St and will house 400+ students – is not a Lehigh dorm but a “Lehigh-affiliated” apartment complex.



Gadfly assumed that SouthSide Commons was a “Lehigh” dorm. In the first press release Gadfly saw about it at ground-breaking time, it was termed “an apartment-style residence hall.” Residence hall.

However, the University architect “said Lehigh leased the land for SouthSide Commons to collegiate housing developer EdR, which will own and operate the building for 50 years.”

That land is leased to a developer.

Gadfly is not sure if there is anything to make out of this. But his antennae have been up since a follower several posts back in this sequence raised concern about “Lehigh sprawl.”

And Gadfly knows there has been a concern about developer impact on the community for a long time.

Gadfly – who has no business sense – wonders why Lehigh is building another dorm, solely its own, within sight of SouthSide Commons, which is being run by a developer, at exactly the same time. Just asking.

SouthSide Commons has a rental office on Adams St. and [a fancy web site](#). Take a look!

The key question:

Is there a difference for the community between Lehigh as landlord and a developer as landlord?

And is there a difference for a community between Lehigh as a neighbor and a developer as a neighbor?

The developer said such projects tend to be good for the community:

“When a university grows . . . the local neighborhood and the city in which it resides also feel a positive impact.”

“Let’s face it,” the Lehigh president said, “parking lots make lousy borders. Neighbors shouldn’t be separated by large stretches of asphalt, and universities should not be separated from the community in which they reside by a large stretch of asphalt. SouthSide Commons will help change all that.” He said the new residence hall will create new possibilities for how students interact with the surrounding community. Gadfly thinks what the president is thinking of is economic impact. For that is what was on the Mayor’s mind: “The partnership between the city and Lehigh University is strong and is instrumental to the future prosperity of South Bethlehem. This facility will bring more foot traffic and attention to South Bethlehem’s businesses as the revitalization of the South Side continues to move forward.”

Good for the business community.

Is there another community affected?

What are those neighbors thinking about?

Just asking. May be all good.

Gadfly just wondering because of his belated realization of this significant change in Lehigh’s housing system.