When the fire occurred, fundraising was already underway and architectural plans were in hand for a new and larger novitiate and juniorate, to be built on open farmland and pasture some 400 yards west of the old building. Construction was put on an accelerated timetable and in the late fall of 1958 the new Shadowbrook received its first group of novices. The building was spacious and charmless, with a non-descript brick and concrete exterior and much painted cinderblock inside. Its scale made it seem even less homelike since it was conceived for an expanding number of vocations, which never became a reality.

The building served as a novitiate for only a dozen years. Vatican II set in motion currents of change in the church and religious orders quickly speeded up their own pace of renewal. The documents of the Jesuits’ 31st general congregation, which ended in 1966 just after the council, emphasized that Jesuit formation is for apostolic ministry and contained a carefully worded set of statements that amounted to saying that novitiates should not be remote from the world where young Jesuits are going to work. This official encouragement reinforced—perhaps, more accurately, responded to—the desires already bubbling up from below for a less isolated and rural Jesuit formation.

In 1969, the juniorate program was moved to Boston College and the scholastics lived in several Boston locations. In 1970, the novitiate was relocated to the largely vacant building in Weston, Massachusetts, where the philosophy and theology studies programs had been (the former by now at Boston College
and the latter in Cambridge). A year later the novitiate moved to Boston’s Back Bay. The new Shadowbrook stood empty until, in 1983, it was finally sold to Kripalu, originally an ashram community with roots in Indian religious tradition, now a secular yoga and wellness center. Since Cranwell prep school, on the other side of Lenox, had closed in 1975, with the sale of the Shadowbrook property the Jesuits’ institutional presence in the Berkshires came to an end.

~ J. A. A.