

LEED Silver for Street Dixon Rick's residence halls at Vanderbilt University - Largest green residential complex in Tennessee

NASHVILLE, Tenn., August 20, 2007 - When some Vanderbilt University students move in next week, they will experience living in the state's first LEED Silver certified residence halls, thanks to the architectural team that designed Crawford and Sutherland houses.

Baird Dixon, firm principal with Street Dixon Rick Architecture, PLC, said the project reflects the culmination of a long-time commitment the firm made to green building principles.

"We're very pleased with the LEED Silver certification," Dixon said. "With all of the attention this multi-year project attracts, we feel like the rock band that's an 'overnight sensation' after 30 years of practice."

"Incorporating smart design principles, including LEED-related concepts, just makes sense. We predict this will become the new standard for most design, much like the standards that were put into law with the Americans with Disabilities Act several years ago," Dixon said.

"Our work doesn't stop with this certification; there are several remaining buildings that are on target for LEED Silver certification," Dixon said.

In fact, working with students to continually improve designs was very important to Dixon's team.

"Along with Vanderbilt leaders, we met with students at a pizza party dinner to hear what they liked and what could be improved in the next buildings. After listening to their ideas, we were able to incorporate these into later designs," Dixon said.

The Commons project began with an overall Master Plan of the Peabody campus, which included these two new residence houses.

Environmentally friendly construction has become a new buzzword in design, largely through the efforts of the U.S. Green Building Council, which monitors the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System. Silver certification signifies proof that a building is environmentally responsible and a healthy place to live and work.

The Commons, Vanderbilt's new first-year student community, is scheduled to open in fall 2008 as the first phase of the university's residential college system.

Buildings are evaluated for site selection, energy efficiency, water efficiency, indoor environmental quality, materials and resources as part of the LEED certification process.

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Among the environmentally friendly features of Crawford and Sutherland Houses and The Commons are low-flow or waterless fixtures, state of the art HVAC systems, flooring made of bamboo, high efficiency kitchen exhaust systems, natural lighting in atriums and stairwells, motorized window shades to reduce heat and glare, and pervious concrete pavement which absorbs water rather than creating runoff.

Most of the new materials being used in The Commons structures came from vendors located within a 500-mile radius of Nashville in order to conserve energy.

When complete, The Commons will include six new buildings and five of these are residence halls. The remaining halls are on target for LEED Silver certification.

Building sizes:

Sutherland: 45,000 square feet

Crawford: 50,000 square feet

Stambaugh: 45,000 square feet

Murray: 50,000 square feet

Hank Ingram: 90,000 square feet

The firm has also renovated existing buildings as part of The Commons, including West and North Halls, at about 90,000 square feet.

Frank Wcislo, dean of The Commons, 10 faculty members and staff from the Office of the Dean of Students will live among first-year students in The Commons to create a unique living-learning environment.

"These buildings are part of one of the largest construction projects in the history of our campus and will affect students for generations to come. They will stand as a lasting legacy of this generation of Vanderbilt leaders, including students who have been at the forefront of working on environmental issues. LEED certification of these two residential houses reflects the dedication of The Commons to helping our students become leaders in the diverse, democratic and global communities of the 21st century," Wcislo said.

"We've really tried to think of creative ways to use and re-use building materials at The Commons – we used recycled glass in the new terrazzo flooring, and the carpeting also contains a high recycled content," said Tony Fort, project manager for The Commons in the Campus Planning and Construction Office.

Websites:

www.sdrarch.com

Construction time-lapse video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OezXZ-836ik>

Green building facts:

www.usgbc.org

www.vanderbilt.edu/sustainvu