

COLLEGE PLANNING & MANAGEMENT – MAY 2004**RESIDENCE HALLS**

Used to attract and retain students, the look and function of campus housing have become increasingly important. Here are some modern approaches at three very different campuses.

A Development Approach to Student Housing

Historically, the influx of baby boomers to the country's colleges and universities in the 1960s and 1970s demanded the rapid construction of student housing. These units are now outdated, lacking the capabilities to support technology, modes of communication and security systems. In many cases, the most cost-effective solution is to rebuild rather than renovate. As a result, new student housing developments are springing up on growth-focused campuses all across the country.

As this growth continues, new challenges arise: create high-end design within a limited budget; use the available space (which is often small and inconveniently shaped); and, especially for off-campus or edge-of-campus housing, design structures that maintain the architectural continuity of both the college and the surrounding community.

One architectural design firm, Design Collective has responded to these challenges by applying development principles to their design. Their long-term partnership with Capstone Development Corporation, which was founded in 1990 to concentrate exclusively on providing housing for college and university students, enables them to address multiple challenges to provide colleges with innovated, efficient housing solutions.

The South Campus Commons residence facilities at the University of Maryland College Park in Prince George's County, Md., is a recent example of a project that has been developed as a public-private enterprise that provides student housing adjacent to the historic South Campus. The plan sensitively incorporates six new buildings into the existing campus fabric by extending existing pedestrian and vehicular circulation corridors and enhancing site vistas. Meanwhile the massing, building materials and architecture of the new structures blend seamlessly with the historic residence halls.

These four-, five-, and six story buildings, however, are not typical residence halls. They are two- or four-bedroom apartment suites with separate bedrooms for each student (totaling 1,824 private bedrooms), a kitchen and a living-dining area. There are 498 units in all. Extensive common space to support the honor student's Living-Learning program student lounges and administrative offices are also provided. Outdoor areas are planned and extensively landscaped to provide opportunities for social interaction or outdoor study.

This project will be ready for students in the fall. The architect was Design Collective, Inc. based in Baltimore. The developer was Capstone Development Corp. headquartered in Birmingham, Ala. The general contractor was Whiting-Turner Contracting Co., headquartered in Baltimore.

