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News Release

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Columbia Theological Seminary to Celebrate "Ground-blessing" for New, Green Residence Hall

Lord, Aeck & Sargent designs facility for LEED silver certification

DECATUR, Ga., March 28, 2008 – Columbia Theological Seminary trustees will gather on the campus April 1 to celebrate a "ground-blessing" at the site of a new $9.6 million student residence hall that is expected to enhance on-campus community life.

Designed by architecture firm Lord, Aeck & Sargent, the 60-bed residence hall will feature a variety of sustainable design strategies. The building is registered with the U.S. Green Building Council and is targeted for LEED[1] silver certification. Construction will begin on the four-story, 34,000-square-foot structure this spring and should be completed by spring 2009.

"This new residence hall, badly needed by our students, is a critical part of our plan to keep Columbia competitive not only with other theological schools but with other professional schools for the most talented leaders of the 21st century," said Laura Mendenhall, Columbia president.

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Sustainable design features

The new residence hall is expected to use approximately 50 percent less energy use than a conventionally constructed facility. To improve energy efficiency, lighting strategies will include motion sensor switching, energy efficient lamps and generous amounts of daylighting.

"We sited the building to enhance its energy efficiency," said Meg Needle, AIA, LEED AP, a Lord, Aeck & Sargent associate who is serving as project manager during the design and construction of the residence hall. "In orienting the facility, we minimized its east and west exposures to reduce sun angles, thus reducing unwanted glare and heat gain. We also preserved many nearby trees to provide natural sun shading from the south. With large windows we will take advantage of natural light as much as possible, provide access to views and use sunscreens to reduce direct solar gain where appropriate."

Needle said that other strategies for reducing energy use include an exterior building envelope with above average insulation values, energy efficient windows, and a geothermal mechanical system that will provide low operating costs and a long lifecycle. Water efficiencies, she noted, include rainwater collection for landscape irrigation, and water saving plumbing fixtures. Indoor air quality will be protected through the use of low VOC adhesives and coatings. Recycled and regional construction materials will be used, and construction waste will be recycled or reused to the greatest extent possible.

Architecture draws from campus tradition and adds new elements

Columbia's campus, which in 1927 was moved to its current Decatur location from Columbia, South Carolina, comprises many classic gothic buildings of red brick. "In designing the new residence hall, we drew from historic details on campus, so the vocabulary of the facility will complement the campus vernacular but also will integrate some more contemporary elements

that respond to sustainability, such as the engaged, sunshaded entry tower that marks the lobby and the panoramically glazed community kitchen and fireplace room that overlooks a new outdoor courtyard," said Joe Greco, AIA, LEED AP, project design principal. "The entry tower will be the signature beacon for the building. Inspired by ecclesiastical bell towers of the region, we designed the tower to help create a memorable three-story atrium space with larger, vertical glass openings punctuated by stepping masonry piers and cast stone detailing. We also employed modern metal detailing in the top of the tower and in the sunscreen system to relate the building to its time."

"Lord Aeck & Sargent has designed a building that will be very polite to Columbia's traditional, brick gothic architecture, and yet inside will provide residents the space and amenities appropriate to their commitment as graduate students and leaders for the future of the church," said Jim Philips, a Columbia trustee and chair of the new building's planning committee.

Building plan

The residence hall will include studio and one-, two- and four-bedroom apartment units, a recreation/workout area accessible to the entire student body, a community kitchen with indoor and outdoor seating and fireplaces, a laundry area for residents, and mechanical and facilities support spaces.

The building's layout efficiently organizes residential units on both sides of a central organizing spine on three residential floors. Major common spaces are located on the level below the main entry level, which overlooks recreation fields. "The character of the living spaces can be categorized as a 'soft loft,' with natural linoleum flooring, use of bold accent walls and high ceilings in the unit living areas," Needle said.

The three-story atrium includes an open staircase that connects the tower levels and is designed to encourage students to traverse the floors rather than taking the elevator. Balcony common areas on the second and third floors overlook this "tower" within the lobby. "We anticipate that the lobby and atrium space along with the community kitchen will become the gathering spaces for groups to meet, greet and collegially interact in an informal environment," Needle said.

The project team

The new Columbia Theological Seminary graduate student residence hall project team comprises:

- Columbia Theological Seminary (Decatur, Georgia), owner
- Lord, Aeck & Sargent, Inc. (Atlanta), architect
- Morgan & Bartos Constructors, LLC (Atlanta), program manager
- Andrews, Hammock & Powell, Inc. (Macon, Georgia), MEP/FP engineer
- KSi/Structural Engineers (Atlanta), structural engineer
- Eberly & Associates, Inc. (Atlanta) **,** civil engineer / landscape architect
- New South Construction Co., Inc., (Atlanta), construction manager and general contractor

About Lord, Aeck & Sargent
Lord, Aeck & Sargent is an award-winning architectural firm serving clients in scientific, academic, historic preservation, arts and cultural, and multi-family housing and mixed-use markets. The firm's core values are responsive design, technological expertise and exceptional service. In 2003, The Construction Specifications Institute awarded Lord, Aeck & Sargent its Environmental Sensitivity Award for showing exceptional devotion to the use of sustainable and environmentally friendly materials, and for striving to create functional, sensitive and healthy buildings for clients. In 2007, Lord, Aeck & Sargent was one of the first architecture firms to adopt The 2030 Challenge, an initiative whose ultimate goal is the design of carbon-neutral buildings, or buildings that use no fossil-fuel greenhouse gas-emitting energy to operate, by the year 2030. Lord, Aeck & Sargent has offices in Ann Arbor, Michigan; Atlanta; and Chapel Hill, North Carolina. For more information, visit the firm at www.lordaecksargent.com.

About Columbia Theological Seminary
Columbia Theological Seminary, located in Decatur, Georgia, was established in 1828 and is one of 10 theological institutions of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The seminary offers six graduate degree programs: Master of Divinity, Master of Arts in Theological Studies, Master of Theology, Doctor of Ministry, Doctor of Educational Ministry, and Doctor of Theology in Pastoral Counseling. Currently 421 students are enrolled, representing 32 denominations, 35 states, and 10 countries. For more information, visit the seminary at www.ctsnet.edu.

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[1]The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™ is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings. LEED gives building owners and operators the tools they need to have an immediate and measurable impact on their buildings' performance. LEED promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in five key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality. For more information on LEED, visit the U.S. Green Building Council web site at www.usgbc.org.