

## News Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Anne Taylor  
Lord, Aeck & Sargent  
404-253-6710  
[ataylor@lasarchitect.com](mailto:ataylor@lasarchitect.com)  
or  
Ann Kohut  
Kohut Communications Consulting  
770-913-9747  
[annielk@bellsouth.net](mailto:annielk@bellsouth.net)

### **New Residence Hall Fills Urgent Need for Growing College**

*Building's design driven by requirements to connect with existing architectural context, establish standard for buildings to come, create community and be a model of sustainability*

YOUNG HARRIS, Ga., Dec. 16, 2009 – As part of its five-year strategic plan, [Young Harris College](#) (YHC) is transforming from a two-year college to a more comprehensive four-year institution and already has grown enrollment by 11 percent since the 2007-2008 academic year. With enrollment of about 700 students at the start of the 2009-2010 year, a new residence hall was urgently needed to accommodate the influx.

The need was fulfilled at the beginning of fall semester 2009 with the opening of [Enotah Hall](#), a \$16 million, 200-bed facility whose design honors the campus' architectural heritage while heralding the arrival of a new chapter in the history of YHC. Architecture firm [Lord, Aeck & Sargent](#) designed the 62,500-square-foot, three-story building, which is targeting LEED silver certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.

### **Design Drivers**

As the last building to be situated on the historic campus lawn, the college's central green space, it was important that Enotah Hall respond to its existing architectural context. However,

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as the first of several new structures to be completed per a campus master plan, the facility also had to establish an architectural standard for new buildings to follow, with an emphasis on highlighting the natural setting of the campus, serving as a model of sustainable design, and creating a feeling of community among students.

With these design drivers in mind, Lord, Aeck & Sargent architects studied YHC's architecture and the mountain campus' connection with the surrounding Appalachians in north Georgia. "They spent a tremendous amount of time understanding the language of our architecture on campus," said Susan Rogers, vice president for student development.

### **Connecting to campus history and architecture**

"The building needed to fit into a fairly eclectic mix of existing architecture and be a forward-looking, contemporary structure of its place and time," said Joe Greco, the building's principal designer. He explained that while most of the buildings on campus were constructed in the 1950s through '80s, the Susan B. Harris Chapel, which was built in 1892 and sits at the opposite end of the campus lawn from Enotah Hall, is the most iconic.

"The Chapel is the oldest and most historically significant building on campus, so we drew from some of its iconic historic elements and created a new common language for Enotah Hall through material usage and scale. For example, we picked up on the Chapel's arts motif, battered base and string course," Greco said.

"We also tied in with other campus architecture. Enotah uses two tones of red brick, pulling from the color range of the Chapel and the newer campus buildings. The site walls, planter walls and amphitheater seating are Tennessee flagstone, used as an accent in a manner similar to other landscape wall features found on campus. The building's two residential wings mediate between the scale of the residence halls on either side, and relate with their masonry detailing and their hipped roofs with gabled roof louvers."

### **Capitalizing on the topography**

Beginning with Enotah Hall's site, the architects created what YHC's Rogers termed a building and location full of "wow moments." The building responds to the curving, sloping site.

"We capitalized on the topography to make the building more interesting," Greco said. "The cross slope of the site made it possible for us to create an outdoor amphitheater in the courtyard between the building's residential wings. The amphitheater provides the entire student community with a space for outdoor study, recreation and instruction, as well as open-air lectures and performances in the mountain surrounding."

### **A monumental pavilion**

The design of Enotah Hall, Greco said, speaks to the contemporary Craftsman mountain vernacular. The two angled residential wings are reconciled to one another through a central pavilion, which receives the wings and orients the entire building toward the central green space with a large curved portico. The pavilion takes on a more monumental quality, addressing the green space with a two-story porch articulated by brick columns and accented by a sunscreen designed to support growth of shading vines. The top of the porch forms an occupiable roof terrace at the third floor of the building, offering views of the campus green space to the west, athletic fields to the northwest and to the mountains beyond. Stone planters at the base of the brick columns create places for indigenous flowering plants. Creeping hydrangeas are grown in terrace level planters and trained to cover the sunscreen and integrate the building into the landscape.

Inside, a multi-level lobby is accented by a three-story monumental steel staircase cantilevered from a center plane clad in acrylic panels with four different botanical patterns. The lobby has large expanses of glass and is framed by two arched walls. "The lobby provides

wonderful views of the mountains and green space and is a really beautiful, airy, inspiring space," Rogers said.

### **Common areas**

In addition to the porch, lobby, terrace and courtyard, the building has many other common areas aimed at fostering a sense of community. Among them are a second-floor mezzanine that overlooks the lobby and provides study space, computers and laundry facilities; a large third-floor, vaulted ceiling common room that opens to the terrace and also provides computers; and a smaller third-floor meeting room, which Rogers said "became fully booked as soon as it opened. There's always competition for it."

Other notable areas include four state-of-the-art Wenger Corp. music practice rooms, available for use 24 hours daily, and study "sunrooms" at the far ends of the six corridors in the residence wings. The nooks, which have operable windows that offer dramatic views of the mountains, provide daylighting to the corridors in combination with floor-to-ceiling curtainwall glazing at the opposite ends of the corridors.

Enotah Hall's 50 residential suites are each comprised of two double-occupancy bedrooms, two bathrooms and a common living space that includes a kitchenette.

### **Sustainable design strategies employed**

"If you look at where LEED projects are registered, they tend to be located in urban areas," said Jackson Kane, a Lord, Aeck & Sargent associate who served as project manager for Enotah Hall. "One of the ways this project serves the community at large is by demonstrating sustainable design in the predominately rural north Georgia mountains."

Kane noted that the building was constructed with regional and recycled materials, FSC (Forest Stewardship Council)-certified wood, and low-VOC paints and sealants. Also, the building employs generous daylighting and sustainable site strategies. Robust energy-saving measures conserve natural resources and minimize adverse environmental effects.

The residential wings are oriented so that windows are within 15 degrees of due south or due north, maximizing daylighting while minimizing late afternoon glare. Deep roof overhangs help shade the upper terrace, and the two-story porch provides coverage at the building's west-facing curtainwall openings. Rainchains direct water from the terrace into the planters at the base of the porch's masonry columns.

Indoor environmental control is achieved through water-source heat pumps with individual thermostats installed in each suite; additional heat pumps serve the common areas of the building. The closed water loop that serves the mechanical unit passes through 72 geothermal wells, each 400 feet deep, where heat from the water is dissipated into the earth. When the system is in cooling mode heat from the water loop is transferred to the domestic hot water supply through an energy exchanger, further reducing the energy that would otherwise be required to meet what is typically one of the largest energy loads in a residence hall.

These efficiencies are further enhanced by an energy recovery unit that pre-treats supply air by recovering the embodied energy of the exhaust air, reducing the difference between the outside and inside air temperatures and humidity levels by 50 percent before the air is conditioned through the use of an enthalpy wheel.

"Through our in-house energy modeling capabilities, we were able to demonstrate that the building will perform at 35 percent above the baseline," Kane said. "However, the students may actually beat this standard, as they frequently leave the lights off in the corridors and

common areas altogether.

“For us, it was great to work with a client that was really committed to sustainability from design through occupancy.”

“This building sets the tone for how we move forward,” Rogers said. “It’s full of ‘wow’ moments – from the third-floor terrace, which is one of our most popular gathering spots for students, to the lovely little comfortable seating spaces with windows at the end of each wing. The students are crazy about it. When we took students through during our orientation weekends last summer wherever we took them their first response was ‘wow.’”

### **The Project Team**

The Young Harris College new residence hall project team included:

- Young Harris College (Young Harris, Georgia.), owner
- Lord, Aeck & Sargent, Inc. (Atlanta office), architect of record, design architect
- Eberly & Associates, Inc. (Atlanta), civil engineer and landscape architect
- KSi/Structural Engineers (Atlanta), structural engineer
- Andrews, Hammock & Powell, Inc. (Macon, Georgia), MEP/FP engineer
- Hardin Construction Company (Atlanta), construction manager
- Brailsford & Dunlavey (Washington, DC), owner’s representative

### **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, Georgia; and Chapel Hill, North Carolina. For more information, visit the firm at [www.lordaecksargent.com](http://www.lordaecksargent.com).

**About Young Harris College**

Founded in 1886, Young Harris College is a private, baccalaureate degree-granting college located in the beautiful mountains of north Georgia. Historically affiliated with The United Methodist Church, Young Harris College educates, inspires and empowers students through the highest quality liberal arts education. Long known for nurturing students during the first two years of college, Young Harris College received accreditation in 2008 to grant bachelor's degrees. The College currently has approximately 700 students across four divisions—Fine Arts, Humanities, Mathematics and Science, and Social and Behavioral Science—and plans to increase enrollment to 1,200 over the next few years. The historic campus in Young Harris, Ga., is currently undergoing major campus improvements to accommodate the College's growth. For more information, visit [www.yhc.edu](http://www.yhc.edu).

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