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Best in Real Estate

Winner: University of Minnesota 17th Avenue Residence Hall

Student Housing Development or Redevelopment

Holly Dolezalek, Contributing writer

On-campus housing was getting crowded at the **University of Minnesota**. A 2009 study showed there was significant demand for housing that the university couldn't meet anymore.

"We had been guaranteeing housing on campus for all first-years admitted by May 1, and we were placing a lot of students in [temporary] housing," said [Laurie McLaughlin](#), director of Housing and Residential Life.

To rectify the situation, the university hired **Mortenson Construction** to build the 17th Avenue Residence Hall, a \$62.5 million, 230,000-square-foot building that broke ground in February 2012. The hall is scheduled to be completed this August.

The six-story, 600-bed hall has 290 double rooms and 20 single-bed units on floors two through six. A 350-seat dining facility takes up part of the first floor, along with other amenities like community rooms, a lounge with a fireplace and a technology resource center.

The building is located between several historic fraternity houses, and the U wanted it to fit in architecturally. Mortenson used a precast concrete exterior with embedded brick to give the building a consistent appearance, and the choice saved the U almost a million dollars. It also shortened the construction schedule so the hall would be ready in time for fall semester.

Connections to existing steam and chilled water lines were several blocks away from the building, however, and Mortenson had to bore under University Avenue and Fourth Street.

"That took a lot of coordination, because we didn't want to run into the fiber optic lines, and there were city utilities and street lights to avoid, as well," said [Kevin Swanson](#), a project manager for Mortenson.

The U wanted the residence hall to include sustainable features. It will have a green roof, occupancy sensors and a storm water reclamation system that can hold up to 130,000 gallons and recycle it for gray water usage. The features are projected to save nearly \$600,000 a year.

“It was a tight fit to get all those features into the existing site, but we had great architects who did a lot of creative work to get it done,” McLaughlin said.

The hall will be fully occupied in its first year.

STATS

Location: 326 17th Ave. S.E., Minneapolis

Groundbreaking: Feb. 13, 2012

Expected completion: Aug. 9, 2013

Size: 230,000 square feet

Value: \$62.5 million

PLAYERS

Owner of property: University of Minnesota

General contractor: Mortenson Construction

Architects: TKDA, Mackey Mitchell Architects

Interior designer: Mackey Mitchell Architects

Landscape architect: Kestrel Design Group

Structural engineer: Ericksen Roed & Associates Inc.

Civil engineer: Larson Engineering Inc.

Mechanical and electrical engineer: Michaud Cooley Erickson

Legal representation for owner: University of Minnesota

Finance provider: University of Minnesota