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University of South Carolina Upstate

Palmetto House

Palmetto House sets a new — and higher — standard for student housing at the University of South Carolina Upstate in Spartanburg. The Carolina Piedmont Foundation developed the 105,000-sq.-ft. project as the first in a planned complex of new housing facilities. By acting as a private development and financing entity, design/build project delivery could apply and save significant time versus traditional design-bid-build procurement normally used for state-funded projects. The facility ownership transfers to the university in 20 years, upon retirement of the financing.

Cost-saving structural solutions complemented the fast-track schedule and reduced the budget from an anticipated \$14 million to \$11.8 million for the 10-month project. Half of the units could then generate revenue a semester earlier than initially anticipated.

Traditional steel column and bar joist framing delivered the clear spans sought for

the main lobby. Load-bearing reinforced masonry encloses the stair towers. An efficient, load-bearing, steel-stud panel system defines the building's exterior, suite partitions and corridor walls.

The five-story plan accommodates up to 346 students in 87 suites (including handicap-accessible units) based on a shared, 11-ft. by six-ft. common living room with a combination microwave/refrigerator kitchenette. One-third of the units offer four private bedrooms, and the rest offer two double-occupancy bedrooms off a shared living area. Bathrooms have double-sink vanities, twin showers and commodes with privacy features. Each unit has cable hook-up, Internet access and telephone service. Communal amenities include an on-site ATM, mailroom, laundry, 20-station computer lab, four study/tutorial rooms, three TV/recreational rooms and a catered kitchen.

Architect Kurt Ludwick, AIA, used split-face concrete block at the base with a traditional cornice treatment and modern accents to reflect the predominant architectural style of the campus. McMillan Smith & Partners, PLLC, in Spartanburg served as project architects, with general construction services provided by Clemson-based Trehel Corporation. The Highlands Group served as the project's construction manager. **CPM**

