

PRESS INFORMATION | March, 2024

Cornell University

ONE OF THE LARGEST US CAMPUS-PROJECTS

2022, Cornell University received the Best Project in the Higher Education/Research and Excellence in Safety Award and the title of New York Project of the Year. New halls of residence were planned as a campus extension by IKON 5 Architects: LEED Gold certified and with ceramic facades by Agrob Buchtal.

A new 776,000 square meter residential complex has been built at Cornell University, providing accommodation for first and second year students with 2,000 beds on two separate neighboring sites on the North Campus. This visionary plan - which envisaged first-year students living on the North Campus - was developed in the late 1990s by the university president at the time. His goal: to create greater cohesion and a welcoming experience for new students. His vision: a unified educational experience that would introduce the breadth of Cornell's intellectual environment and allow students to experience the diversity of Cornell's undergraduate offerings.

In a synthesis of living rooms, a dining hall, collaborative learning and study spaces organized around courtyards, the newly designed complex by Ikon 5 Architects now provides this exceptional learning environment. In order to incorporate the adjacent campus, respond to the existing site conditions and promote the diversity of interdisciplinary exchange, they have divided the dormitories in their design into 3 to 5-storey courtyard buildings. At the center is a 1,000-seat dining hall that accommodates a variety of micro-restaurants. The residential lounges are enveloped by ceramic façades of the Agrob Buchtal KeraTwin series: unglazed natural ceramics in a design ranging from salmon to golden red, they structure the campus like lighthouses. Surrounded by the residential blocks, the canteen stands out in contrast with a tonality of gray and black. A highly transparent first floor encourages social interaction with the entire ensemble.

The five-building, 776,000 square meter student residence and canteen project was completed despite the global pandemic. This was made possible by the willingness of everyone involved to innovate and trust in partnership. Because construction sites, supply chains and skilled workers were largely paralyzed by the pandemic, the team of construction participants from Ikon 5 Architects, Welliver and Architectural

Polymers, together with Cladding Concepts - Agrob Buchtal's US partner - implemented an innovative prefabrication strategy.

The KeraTwin facade system from Agrob Buchtal is actually a series for curtain walls. However, the customized ceramic panels of the residential buildings were embedded in precast concrete elements and installed as wall panels. This saved important time and costs during the pandemic and the architectural masterpiece in Ithaca, NY could be brought to a successful project completion within budget.

It took the entire team to design, fabricate and place 69,371 ceramic panels of various sizes, colors and textures to meet deadlines and ensure completion before students arrived.

"It was a collective effort," says Ben Robertson, senior project manager at Welliver, the lead contractor, "with the design team expediting reviews and Cornell itself stockpiling materials in yards and warehouses - or on campus." Anne Welliver-Hartsing explained, "We've done a lot of really cool construction projects over the years. This particular project - the scale is something we haven't done in the past.... It was a tough schedule, it was a big project, it was very visible" .

The design required a team of experts in their respective fields to bring the vision of breathtaking campus experiences to life with collective facade expertise. One of the largest projects in North America now stands and demonstrates the enormous possibilities that ceramic facades from Agrob Buchtal open up: with ceramic quality "Made in Germany", tested ceramic facade systems and local partners who have always relied on Agrob Buchtal.

(3946 letters)

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