



LP® SmartSide® Streamlines Work in Complicated Student Living Project at Purdue University.

SUMMARY

In late 2013, Morris Rentals approached Lebanon-based UsU Group, LLC to oversee development of a new student living complex on Fowler Street, immediately adjacent to the Purdue University campus.

The new four-story, 14-unit housing project would replace several single-family homes owned by Morris. The project would require a significant re-zoning process which faced community push-back due to the perception that the new building wouldn't fit within the character of the neighborhood. Working with ARKOR Architects & Engineers, the UsU team developed a design to solve this challenge.

The approved design closely followed the craftsman styling of the homes in the surrounding community, which necessitated exterior cladding products that could replicate the look and feel of wood lap siding and cedar shakes, as well as pair well with masonry elements.

OBJECTIVES

Like any high-profile student housing project, durability and aesthetic impact were key in order to separate the new complex from the competition—and were especially important due to the high visibility of this project in the community.

Additionally, the UsU Group team placed a great deal of emphasis on handling and logistical considerations due to the very tight construction site, as well as seeking products that would minimize installation time.

IMPLEMENTATION

In order to further expedite construction, the UsU team specified pre-finished LP SmartSide in three different colors, saving time and delivering a progressive, high-end aesthetic.

In Brief

LOCATION

West Lafayette, Indiana

WEBSITE

www.morrisrentals.com

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Superior workability allowed contractors to shave weeks of installation time off of the project schedule
- Multiple styles and pre-finishing options allowed ARKOR and UsU Group to achieve a design aesthetic consistent with the surrounding community
- On-the-job and installed durability make the complex's façade nearly maintenance-free, contributing to quality perceptions and high rents



"If we had used SmartSide instead of fiber cement on some of our earlier projects, we could have saved weeks of time."

Jim Morog, President, UsU Group, LLC





MORRIS RENTALS

The LP SmartSide product's superior workability allowed crews to rapidly install the 140 total squares, moving as fast as 35 squares per week—a rate that the team couldn't come close to matching when working with fiber cement.

"Once we started working with SmartSide, I started to ask myself why anyone would ever use fiber cement—and actually started doing repair jobs on fiber cement structures with the LP product," notes Morog.

SOLUTION

The UsU team had frequently specified fiber cement in the past due to its "wood-like" aesthetic. However, they experienced challenges with fiber cement on previous projects due to the need for specialized tooling and too-frequent cracking, chipping and moisture intrusion. So when a distributor brought LP SmartSide to the team's attention, they were all ears.

"Our biggest challenge with fiber cement was the workability. It takes a two-man team to hang fiber cement, it cracks and chips during regular handling and storage, and I can't tell you how many masonry saw blades we burned through cutting that stuff," said Jim Morog, President of UsU Group, LLC.

In addition to its unmatched durability, the superior workability of SmartSide was the deciding factor. The UsU team found that LP SmartSide was far easier to handle, move and store without incurring damage, and could be cut and installed with traditional woodworking tools—a huge benefit that allows for faster installation and fewer challenges on-site.

OUTCOME

Despite an unusually harsh winter which cost the team over two months of construction time, the new complex was completed in September of 2014 to wide acclaim. The new 2-bed, 2-bath apartments have become Morris Rentals' premiere properties, marketed as top-of-the-line luxury accommodations for Purdue's student population.

Despite the early hurdles with the community, the finished complex blends in beautifully with the surrounding community—critical due to its location just off of a main thoroughfare in West Lafayette. Morog attributes the project's success in large part to the beautiful aesthetic created with LP SmartSide, and reports that the cladding continues to look "like new" after two years of wear and tear, and the complex continues to be fully-occupied and attracts high rent value. "I'd use SmartSide again in a heartbeat," said Morog.

"SmartSide looks great and holds up beautifully. The durability will prove itself for years to come."

Jim Morog, President, UsU Group, LLC



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