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Cannon Design of WPI's East Hall Residence earns LEED Gold

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According to Cannon Design, East Hall, a residence hall at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), has received Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold Certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. WPI selected Cannon Design to plan and design the residential building to serve as a model for all future sustainable buildings on campus. In concert with the East Hall building design process, WPI integrated educational research projects to support academic programs on campus. In addition, the project creates an active green space on a previously underutilized site. The building, unveiled in August 2008, was constructed by Gilbane Building Co.

"The most exciting aspect of East Hall is that it's a showcase of sustainable design - from the green roof to the incorporation of energy saving features throughout the building," said Philip Clay, dean of students at WPI.

"Cannon Design was a great fit for WPI and the East Hall project. As an ideas based practice, we embraced their motto of 'theory in practice' and worked with educators and students to bring them into the design process with the goal of transforming their academic environment while providing an educational experience that will last beyond when the project opened its doors," said Lynne Deninger, AIA, LEED AP, project leader and associate principal, Cannon Design. "Achieving Gold LEED status is truly a wonderful team effort."

The East Hall project includes central courtyards on the building's east and west sides and a landscaped 40-foot-wide "Arts Walk," envisioned in WPI's campus master plan, to connect the center of campus with the city of Worcester's Arts District. The first floor includes administrative offices along with game, community, music, exercise and project rooms. The remaining floors of the five-story facility accommodate 232 students in various unit types. To promote the school's mission of a living and learning community, "technology suites" are located on each floor.

East Hall includes many sustainable design strategies, including a green roof, storm water management, water conservation, indoor air quality, and thoughtful use of recycled building materials. Green and white reflective roofs provide insulation and improved energy efficiency. Abundant, glare-free day lighting, high air quality and localized thermal and lighting controls create a comfortable living environment. Water use is reduced 32% by low-flow plumbing fixtures and the fact that surrounding landscape requires no irrigation. Energy performance optimization results in a 31% reduction in energy consumption. The building encourages alternative transportation with bicycle storage and parking spaces reserved for carpool or hybrid vehicles.

The East Hall has also received two awards for its sustainable design from the New England Chapter of the Construction Managers Association of America and the Green Building of America Award from Construction Communications, publisher of Real Estate & Construction Review.

According to the U.S. Green Building Council, LEED is an internationally recognized certification

system that measures how well a building or community performs in key areas. These areas include energy savings, water efficiency, CO2 emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts.

Clay said,"The building is setting a new standard for student residences. East Hall is a living-learning laboratory designed to educate students and the WPI community about the important role each individual can play in preserving the environment for present and future generations."

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