



VECTORWORKS CASE STUDY



VECTORWORKS ARCHITECT BEATS AUTOCAD
IN DESIGN-BUILD COMPETITION



VECTORWORKS
ARCHITECT'S 3D
MODELING AND
RENDERING CAPABILITIES
HELP NEW YORK
ARCHITECTURAL FIRM
WIN DESIGN-BUILD
COMPETITION OVER
AUTOCAD USERS AND
DELIVER ON DEADLINE

Just ten months before the start of the fall semester, Union College awarded a \$10-million renovation project to Sacco + McKinney Architects, largely on the strength of the firm's presentation to college trustees and administration.

The liberal arts institution had recently purchased a former Ramada Inn and wanted to convert it into a residence hall that would include housing, dining and a conference center. Six firms were invited to compete for the design-build project. And VectorWorks Architect users Sacco + McKinney—an eight-person firm—beat out five competitors, most of which were much larger AutoCAD firms.

BURYING AUTOCAD ALIVE

"We won the design-build competition largely due to our presentation power," says Jim McKinney, one of the firm's principals and lead architect on the project. "Once we got the job, we saw the presentations from the much larger AutoCAD firms we were competing against. And the modeling capabilities within VectorWorks Architect absolutely buried them alive. Most of the AutoCAD firms were floundering around with black and white line plans and hand sketches. I was surprised that that's all they could launch with more than ten times the number of people. These 100-plus seat AutoCAD firms simply couldn't produce the level of modeling we were able to produce as a four-person team using VectorWorks."

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He continues, "Once the administration saw the exterior models and interior renderings we created with VectorWorks Architect, they were sold. Our ability to produce these robust images, as well as the ability to communicate the design clearly and accurately really cemented the deal."

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ELIMINATING THE GUESSWORK

Within the two-week time period the firm had to produce designs and pricing, the ability to go from 3D to 2D very quickly gave them another advantage. The builder was able to produce an accurate estimate that was very competitively priced, which also helped the firm win the job.

"We were able to take the 3D model, project it into 2D, generate some elevations and give them to the building contractor to do an estimate," explains McKinney. "Being able to quantify everything very quickly and succinctly in 2D with VectorWorks Architect gave the builder confidence to tighten his numbers. When estimators can do that, they're more competitive, because they don't have to guess."

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RACING AGAINST THE CLOCK

But competing against five big firms wasn't the only challenge. The New York-based firm had just ten months to complete the renovation before students arrived for the fall semester. According to McKinney, the builder allotted the firm two months to produce all construction drawings.

"Again, the ability to go from 3D model to elevation to plan in VectorWorks Architect helped us immensely; we could keep moving off the work we had done," says McKinney. "Being able to auto-generate door schedules and finish schedules, as well as use other built-in VectorWorks capabilities saved us a lot of time, since we didn't have an army of people to do all this."

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SAVING TIME WITH RENDERWORKS

Being able to create renderings without having to export drawings into another program also saved the design team a lot of time.

"We were under tight time constraints, but VectorWorks Architect's built-in rendering features and RenderWorks allowed us to get started on our presentation right away," explains McKinney. "We were able to achieve the results we wanted without having to go outside the program into another program. Now, with image props, our results are even better."

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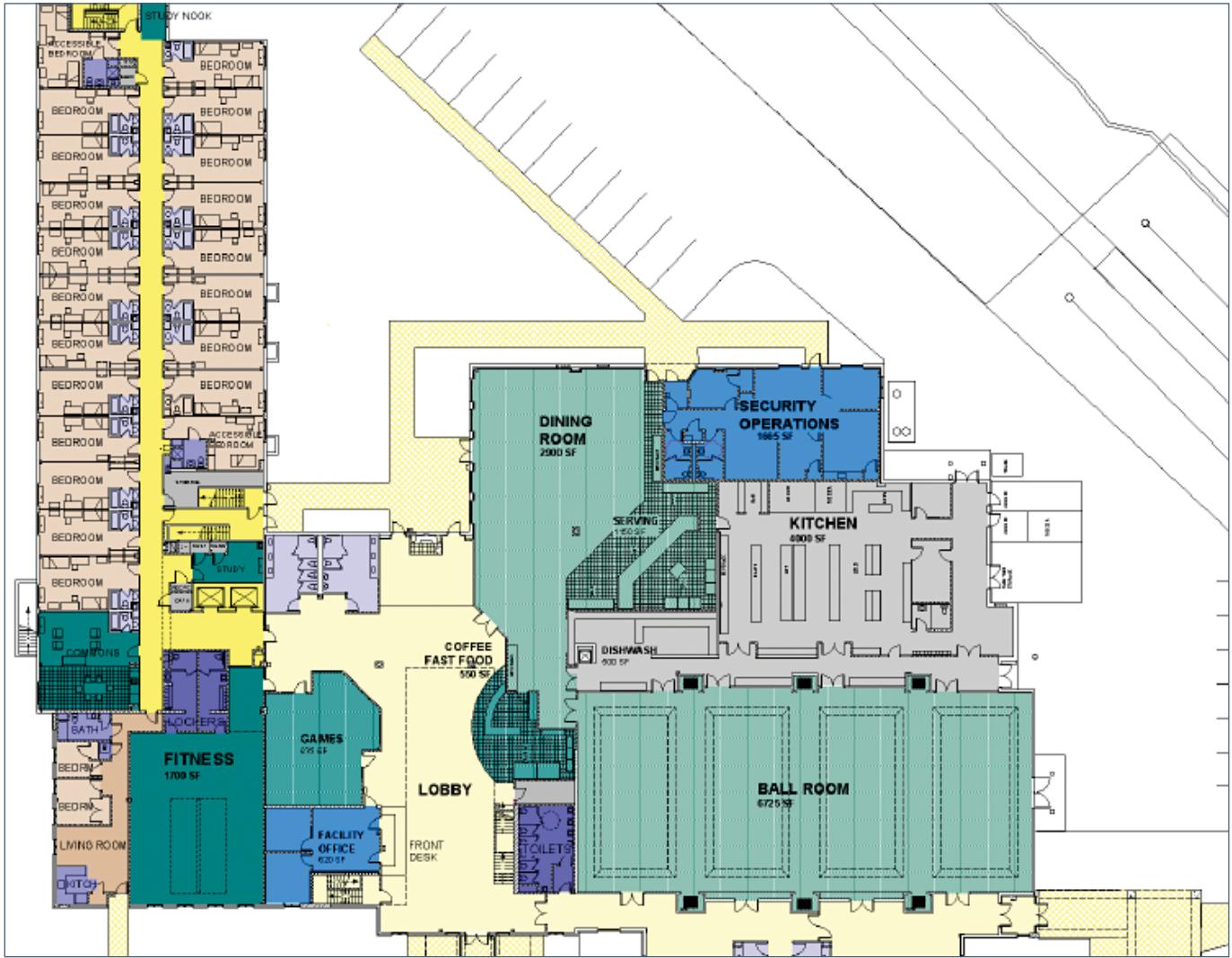
TRANSITIONING FROM DESIGN TO CONSTRUCTION

Another benefit Sacco + McKinney realized with VectorWorks Architect was the seamless interchange of technical documents among consultants and subcontractors in the field. The firm worked with teams of structural, mechanical and civil engineers, as well as an interior design firm to complete the job without a hitch.

"All our VectorWorks files translated seamlessly into AutoCAD files all our engineering consultants used," says McKinney. "There were no issues or stumbling blocks with the translations—there never are.

"In fact, the interior designer used our renderings as a basis for their designs," adds Kristen Sallee, another architect in the firm who worked on the project.

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TAKING FULL ADVANTAGE OF VECTORWORKS

McKinney made the switch after seeing a CAD shoot out at a trade show eight years ago and has been using VectorWorks ever since.

"As a small office, we can't afford an IT department, so we want software that's easy to use without extensive training," he explains. "The simplicity, the reliability and the sheer power of VectorWorks

Architect are big benefits for us. And you just can't beat the cost. VectorWorks is an extraordinary value for all the capabilities you get."

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