

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI - SCIOTO RESIDENCE HALL

CINCINNATI, OH

The second of two existing student residence towers at the University of Cincinnati has been renovated for modern day use. Built in the mid 1960's, the image and experience of the 15-story, 152,000 square foot Scioto residence tower was tired and depressing. The university was concerned with the number of students moving off-campus to spaces better equipped to handle their lifestyles.

The main goal of the project was to create the best possible living experience for students, and encourage them to make the most of their collegiate experience by living on campus. Besides a complete replacement of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems, the fifteen floor building was completely transformed with a new interior and a dramatically updated and more efficient skin. The thirteen floors of living units are a combination of one, two, and five bedroom units, each complete with their own modern kitchen and bathroom.

The newly renovated building overlooks a large parking lot and thus did little to showcase the view with its limited windows. However, that parking lot was replaced by the main campus green, creating a lush park-like setting for the building. With the complete replacement of the building façade, floor-to-ceiling glass now creates the sense of sitting within a park on the lower floors and presents beautiful vistas of the campus green from the upper floors.

The glass walls also make the relatively small spaces seem much more expansive, which has allowed the university to place more students within each unit. The previous exterior balconies, which went mostly unused and made the university uncomfortable, were enclosed as a part of the interior, creating a more usable area and thus a more valuable space to the university.

Concurrent with the renovation of the building and upgrade to the surrounding site also took place as a part of a larger Master Plan, by the architect. An imperative of the Master Plan recognizes the necessity for pedestrian connectivity through the site. The improvements generated in this project will link the 'Campus Green' pedestrian paths to the 'podium' which the residence halls sit upon. A common design language of materials, hardscaping, landscaping, and lighting will continue from the Campus Green through the residential hall site. Various types of outdoor gathering spaces were important to incorporate, from social to quiet study spaces.

The collegial atmosphere throughout the building is contagious and creates a loyalty among the student body when they recognize the camaraderie and human chemistry that allows each individual their own sense of loyalty to the institution.