

## construction

# Thoughtful Project

## Mary's Woods meets site goals, spiritual mission

By Cliff Collins  
for the DJC Magazine

Northwest contractors, architects and engineers have turned a former convent into a showcase for modern retirement living.

Mary's Woods at Marylhurst opened last year on the scenic hillside above the Willamette River where an educational-ordered order of nuns situated a convent 92 years ago. During the past decade, the Sisters of the Holy Names planned and carried out their goal to transform their residence into a nondenominational continuing care retirement community, partially to help fund their own retirement.

Occupying 28 acres of a 76-acre site, Mary's Woods was a \$56 million undertaking, with construction started and completed in less than two years.

"It was a mammoth project," said Brian Price, project manager with Andersen Construction Co. Inc. in Portland, the general contractor, which worked in a joint venture with Weitz Construction of Des Moines, Iowa. At peak construction, contractors had 350 to 400 employees working on the project.

Mary's Woods' buildings contain nearly a half million square feet, consisting of 233 independent living apartments, 33 villas, and a 95-bed health center that includes



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The biggest challenge, in Price's view, was that "multiple buildings were going on at the same time – six separate projects all at once." Most of the subcontractors worked on all of the buildings simultaneously, a feat that took considerable coordination. Not to mention that the structures were erected on an 8 percent grade, and built continuously

over a span that included two winters.

"It was a big project for everybody," he said.

For Price, as well as for the design team, led by Mithun Architects of Seattle, "what made this one really unique (was that it was) a thoughtfully conceived project" that incorporated the sisters' spiritual mission and goals for the site, said Leslie Moldow, principal with Mithun. The nuns wanted to





Susan Magnuson, director of marketing for Mary's Woods, described the finished product, the retirement community itself, as "elegant. People (who see it) come away from this saying there's nothing else like this in Portland." Photo courtesy of Andersen Construction.



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preserve the serene setting and natural beauty.

"To address these needs in a sensitive way made this project special and very difficult," she said. "The property had a very strong historic meaning: They described the land as very holy grounds to them." Accordingly, planners designed with "respect for preserving trees and open space, valuing their values."

Price explained, "They had a real strong interest, a vision, about how they wanted it to come together, incorporating a lot of their philosophy of their order into the project, and that was neat to see."

For one thing, the heavily wooded parcel held what over the years had become an arboretum of trees and plants from all over the world, and the nuns wanted as many trees preserved as possible, especially the most significant ones, according to Moldow. Builders saved what was once a Christmas tree farm, restored a former apple orchard and preserved historic trees including a 100-foot-tall sequoia. In fact, the buildings were "nestled" among the stands, she said.

"The whole setting is so ideal," added Price. But the maintenance of existing trees proved "a challenge," Price acknowledged. With the aid of arborists, a lot of trees were uprooted and relocated as the project was completed, he said.

The sisters' aged residence, The Provincial House, retains the integrity of the original building, but had to be seismically upgraded and renovated, explained Susan L. Magnuson, director of marketing for Mary's Woods.

"We made that building the heart of our design," said Moldow. The structure houses the sisters' offices and the administration for the complex. The three apartment buildings, which feature underground parking lots, and the health center are attached to The Provincial House, and were designed



with a view of the house. The dining room became the only addition to the original building.

But the upgrade of The Provincial House took some doing.

"We literally went in and gutted that thing from the inside out," Price said of the house. "We kept much of the existing woodwork, and others we had to match with today's (available materials)." Builders also had to match 90-year-old plaster on the walls.

The site sits just west of Marylhurst University, which the order established as the Northwest's first women's liberal arts college, according to information provided by Magnuson. When the residence was first built, its entrance faced the river, because most people arrived there by water. But by the 1950s, the entrance changed to face the highway. That now has been reversed.

"We've oriented (the entrance to celebrate the original entry to the river," said Moldow,

# Mary's Woods at Marylhurst Retirement Community

*Lake Oswego*

**COST:** \$56 million

**CONTRACTOR:** Andersen Construction Company in joint venture with Weitz Construction

**PROJECT OWNER:** Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary

**PROJECT MANAGER:** Don Hynes, owner's representative

**ARCHITECT:** Dietrich Mithun Partners, Seattle

**ENGINEERS:** WRG Engineering, Portland; Kramer Gehlen, Portland; MacDonald Miller, Seattle; Travis, Fitzmaurice & Associates, Seattle

**OTHER ASSOCIATES:** Dick Porn and Ken Zinsli, Project Consultants, Portland; Berger Landscape Architects, Seattle

**SUBCONTRACTORS:** Advanced M and D, Basic Fire Protection, Commercial Westside Drywall, Hunter Davisson, Kurisu International, Marion Construction, Oregon Electric, Peninsula Plumbing, Schiller & Vroman, Teufel, Wood Mechanix

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of Jesus & Mary  
and  
Andersen/Weitz Joint Venture.**

**We are proud to be a part  
of the team that  
worked on Mary's Woods  
at Marylhurst.**



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# Construction briefs

## New college campus, state prison set for construction in Madras

It may not seem like the Utopian vision of community development, but the city of Madras will be home to a new campus of Central Oregon Community College – and a new state prison.

Planned separately on different sites, the college campus and a two-phase state prison will emerge in Jefferson County, where per capita income is among the lowest in the state. Working on designs is WEGroup PC/Architects-Planners-Interiors of Portland.

Construction of the prison won't begin immediately. Plans are to launch that project next January, when work would begin on the 400-bed minimum-security prison. Projected for completion in July 2004, that facility is expected to employ 100. In the second phase, a 1,300 medium-security prison will start in October 2003, with completion targeted for June 2006. That facility would employ 400.

## Goodwill Industries to open 7-acre complex in Hillsboro

Goodwill Industries of the Columbia-Willamette has bought a seven-acre site in Hillsboro with plans to open a thrift store and distribution center this spring.

Represented by Trammell Crow Co.'s Dave Ellis, a vice president, and Dan Bozich, a senior associate, in the transaction, Goodwill paid \$3.9 million for the former Supply One property at 2920 S.W. 234th Ave. Included are the 88,000-square-foot building and surrounding property, mostly devoted to parking and truck staging. The seller was the Steiner-Levi Group, represented by Commercial Realty Advisors' Alex MacLean, an associate broker.

Included in the plans are a drive-through donation area and some 14,000 square feet of retail space. The bulk of the building space will be used for warehousing and processing of donated goods.

The complex is expected to employ 55, focusing on those with disabilities and special circumstances, such as welfare dependency, illiteracy, criminal history and homelessness, in keeping with the non-profit's mission.



*The sisters' aged residence, The Provincial House, retains the integrity of the original building, but had to be seismically upgraded and renovated. Photo courtesy of Andersen Construction.*

with winding Holy Names Drive taking a southwestern dip from state Highway 43 to the main entrance of The Provincial House. "We reopened the old entry, which was underutilized. We revitalized it. The two bell towers are now the main front entryway."

"The (8 percent) grade had a lot to do with the character of the project," Moldow added. "It did significantly affect the final design," which had to connect buildings and bridges that were at different levels. Planners located new roads in a perimeter area that had been largely

Magnuson said Mary's Woods has been marketed since 1997, and new residents were anxious to move in when everything was ready last year. Already, prominent former government and business leaders make their residence there. Mary's Woods won an award at the American Association of Homes & Services for the Aging conference

held in San Diego last fall. It was one of seven citation winners in the American Institute of Architects-AAHSA-sponsored Design for Aging Review. Magnuson described the finished product, the retirement community itself, as "elegant."

People (who see it) come away from this saying there's nothing else like this in Portland."

It is a self-contained community, with a formal dining room, a cafe, chapel, library, computer room, music room, gift shop, vegetable and flower gardens, woodworking shop and numerous walk-

ing trails. The site also includes a wellness center, with indoor pool, spa and exercise areas.

"It was a very challenging project, but obviously one I'm real glad to be associated with, (including) all of the people involved," said Andersen's Price.

*Cliff Collins is a Portland freelance writer.*

*"We've oriented (the entrance to celebrate the original entry to the river," said Moldow.*



than had been anticipated, and completed the project from start to finish in less than three years.

Constructing the extended light rail line offered many challenges including an elevated "flyover" structure over Interstate 205, complex interfacing elements and integrating civil and infrastructure elements into the system.

The restoration of a critical levee around St. Johns Landfill won Cornforth Consultants Inc. a grand award from ACEC.

St. Johns was the primary landfill for the Portland area for nearly 50 years and is located in an environmentally sensitive area adjacent to Smith and Bybee Lakes wildlife area. Years of erosion from currents, flooding and tidal fluctuations had caused the protective levee to falter resulting in loss of vegetation and wildlife, and increasing the threat of a levee failure.

Through a combination of techniques, the slope was stabilized and the levee was reconstructed.

Otak Inc.'s work on the Portland Streetcar won the firm a grand award. Along with other consultants, Otak managed the preliminary and final design for the streetcar.

The project offered many challenges including a limited design budget, designing the track so its construction would minimally disrupt neighboring businesses, factoring in safety in high pedestrian traffic areas, and crossing Tri-Met's light rail tracks while maintaining operation.

The Eastbank Esplanade, which snakes 4,000 feet down the east side of the Willamette River, won KPFF Consulting Engineers a grand award from ACEC.

KPFF was project engineer on all six phases including marine, civil, structural, permitting and surveying for the three years of the project.

The city of Portland required KPFF to create a simple, low maintenance walkway while mitigating environmental impacts on the water and fish habitats.

Project highlights include a 1,000-foot curved floating walkway, an Americans with Disabilities Act compliant ramp structure, mooring space, a public festival plaza and parking area and a design that uses 100 percent natural materials.

Grand award winner Kennedy/Jenks Consultants was recognized for the subsurface wastewater discharge project in Klickitat County, Wash. Located close to the Columbia River in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, the county was in need of improving its utility infrastructure to plan for future growth.

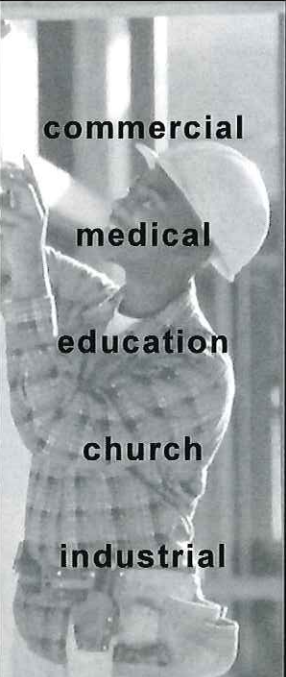
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# HONOR AWARD

## *Boones Ferry Road Corridor Plan*

Lake Oswego

ENGINEER: Kittelson  
& Associates Inc.

OWNER: City of  
Lake Oswego

OTHER

CONSULTANTS:  
Greenworks P.C.



Photo courtesy of Kittelson & Associates Inc.

# HONOR AWARD

## *Canby Skate Park*

Canby

ENGINEER: GRI  
Geotechnical &  
Environmental  
Consultants

OWNER: City of Canby

OTHER CONSULTANTS: KPFF  
Consulting Engineers;  
Walker Macy



Photo courtesy of GRI Geotechnical Environmental Consultants