

Preservation and Sustainability: Powerful Allies

by Charles Belson, AIA

Historic and environmental stewardship were powerful allies in the process used by EwingCole's Cleveland office to help Hamilton College make Skenandoa House a model for environmentally responsive residence hall renewal on campus. Strong student interest in integrating green design into their 200 year-old campus led to new ways in which to incorporate sustainability and LEED protocol while using the Standards and Guidelines for historic structures established by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. During the spring of 2001, administrators from Hamilton College visited the newly opened Adam Lewis Environmental Studies Center at Oberlin College to learn more about innovative approaches to sustainable design. Hamilton embraced the concept of green design, and approved the LEED approach for the revitalization of Hamilton's Skenandoa House. In February, 2006, Skenandoa House was awarded a Silver Certification by the U.S. Green Building Council. Skenandoa House has become the first historic structure in New York State to be LEED certified.

Located in Clinton, NY, the 20,000 square foot former Psi Upsilon fraternity house now accommodates 55 students in a high performance, sustainable building. Improvements include repair and replacement of original but damaged exterior building materials, an 18-well geo-thermal ground water source heating and cooling system, day lighting of all major space, energy-efficient lighting systems, extensive building materials reuse, construction waste management, certified green power as well as commissioning services to improve building performance. The Standards and Guidelines were followed in order to help preserve the historic fabric of this unique, early twentieth century structure.



Skenandoa House, Hamilton College

Sustainability and preservation are powerful allies. Skenandoa House, as an example of the trend that links sustainability and preservation, will be the subject of one of the concurrent sessions at the annual conference of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Pittsburgh this November.

In Ohio, LEED Certification for both historic structures and new structures is evenly mixed, although Certification remains relatively rare. Ohio's five LEED Certified projects do not include any College and University work, which is surprising considering the pioneering work on this subject done here on Ohio campuses. But the future for linking sustainability and preservation in Ohio does look promising. Based upon the many projects that have been LEED Registered on the USGBC website, we can expect to see many more LEED Certified projects in Ohio very soon.