

The Shepherd's Center looks to future needs

Building a brand new facility can be an overwhelming experience. Funding, planning, complying with regulations, dealing with vendors and finding contractors and subcontractors who can do the job are part of the process. For the owners and staff of The Shepherd's Center in Cimarron, Kan., those factors were made easier to manage when they selected a design-build team that fit their needs.

"The building process has been wonderful. There have been very few problems. I don't think we would be doing this project without Fuqua Construction and Landmark Architects," Janet Huelskamp, The Shepherd's Center Director of Development, said.

The Shepherd's Center is replacing an aging 1960s-era traditional facility with a 28-bed, all-new neighborhood concept building. Planning for the project began in 2010 as the board worked to put funding in place so it could proceed. The Shepherd's Center is owned by a non-profit group that has community support, but is not affiliated with any churches or other organizations. In addition to fundraising within the community, the owners are using a USDA Rural Development Loan to finance the project.

"Rural Development loans have lots of hoops and lots of paperwork," Huelskamp said. "It meant a lot more work for Max (Fuqua), but he had worked with this type of loan before and knew what needed to be done. He has been extraordinarily patient with



Fireplace in common area.



Project Scope: New Nursing Home Facility
Project Type: New Construction
Square footage: 20,370 Sq. Ft.
Design Build Team: Fuqua Construction Inc. & Landmark Architects, Sarah Sipe

PROJECT PROFILE

The Shepherd's Center

Owner: The Shepherd's Center
Location: Cimarron, Kansas
Completed: 2016

Construction has.

The board hired consultant John Grace to help them with initial planning and defining their goals for a new facility with community appeal. Like many aging nursing homes, The Shepherd's Center had continuing upkeep issues and was losing potential residents to updated facilities in neighboring communities.

"Marketing was a nightmare," Huelskamp said. "Today, who wants to share a bath -- or a room? That was our option. (Our current building) is a dinosaur.

No one wants to go here. We needed something that was nice enough that aging baby boomers would want to place their parents here or come here themselves."

The board toured several facilities, including several built or remodeled by Fuqua Construction and designed by Landmark Architects. They liked what they saw and hired Landmark for architecture services and soon after, Fuqua Construction joined the team as the general contractor.

"We met with other contractors, and they would bring in goodie baskets and Powerpoint presentations," Huelskamp said. "Max



The kitchen is a welcoming spot for residents and guests.

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came in with a notepad, and we talked about what we wanted to accomplish. It was



The community room, left, is available for community groups to use. The bathing facility, right, is an efficient use of space and provides a safe assisted environment.



comfortable, he listened to us, and it was a good fit.”

Pulling ideas from other facilities and mindful of budget constraints and regulatory requirements, the design-build team and owners have designed a 28-bed facility that features two neighborhood wings on either side of a central core area, which will be used for administration and community functions. A key feature in the core area is a community room, which can be used by residents’ families for get-togethers, but has also been planned so that it can be used for community functions, providing additional meeting space in Cimarron. To that end, it has access to a kitchenette and is wired for roasters and large coffee pots.

Each neighborhood area features 13 private rooms (one with two beds), clustered around a common living/dining area and its own kitchen for food preparation. Each wing has a fenced patio with access from the common living area with a large bank of windows providing a view of the patio. Staff will all be CNAs and cross-trained to provide for the needs of the residents. Each wing also has a shower/spa room, which doubles as a safe room during inclement weather. Residents shelter in the hallway with pillows over their heads in the present facility and, after five tornado warnings last May, Huelskamp is already looking forward to the ease with which they will be able to move residents to a safe place.

Each resident room has its own bathroom with stool and sink. There are also roll-in showers in several of the rooms.

“The individual showers became a design issue in the middle of the process when the regulations changed,” Huelskamp said. “Our intention was to have all residents use the shower room. That’s what we wanted, as most of our residents don’t take unassisted showers, and we had safety concerns about individual showers. But we needed to comply with the rules.”

Sarah Sipe, architect on the project, said that it’s inevitable on a design-build (or any project) that problems will come up that have to be solved. “We have to figure out how to make it work. Max is great at problem solving. There is never a call from him about a problem without a possible solution. They are always proactive, thinking ahead, and they are open to suggestions as well. Fuqua Construction’s on-site project managers are also right on top of things. Bob (Griffin) is great at spotting potential issues.”

A solution was found that included the showers while maximizing the available room space, Huelskamp said. Part of that solution was using barn-door style sliding doors on the bathrooms.

Technology use also posed some questions that had to be solved. In this day of cell phones and wifi, how important is it to wire all the rooms for landline phones and television cable?

“Wiring the whole building (for phone and TV) was going to be quite expensive, and we didn’t know how important a landline was going to be to future residents, who might already have a cell phone,” Huelskamp said.

In their monthly construction meetings, Max helped them consider options, brought in vendors knowledgeable about the latest technology and a decision was reached. Boxes for phone and cable were installed in all the rooms, but the wire will be pulled on an as-needed basis, a considerable savings for the owners, while still providing the option if needed. On Fuqua’s recommendation fiber optics was installed through the whole building.

Huelskamp said Fuqua Construction’s expertise and experience with rules, regulations, available options and positive working relationships with the architect and KDAD had been invaluable throughout the building process when decisions, such as these, had to be made. She appreciated the fact that Max was always mindful of their budget, without sacrificing quality and function.

“We had seen cute little seating alcoves and other amenities in facilities we toured, but it was clear that decisions had to be made with our budget. Max would say, those things are nice, but they are rarely used by residents. Wouldn’t you rather put your money into the parts of the facility the residents will use?” Huelskamp valued Fuqua’s access to resources, both subcontractors and vendors.

“As soon as it was out we were building, I started getting calls from vendors for everything you can imagine,” Huelskamp said. “Max knew our budget, and he did all the ordering for us with a guaranteed maximum price. He gave us choices and got us the best quality for our dollars. The resident room doors are a great example, heavy, solid and well-crafted. Through this whole process, Max could offer suggestions that would work for us. Just by seeing his previous work, we knew he knew what he was talking about.”

Sipes has personally worked with Fuqua Construction on three projects and observed others the company has done with Landmark.

“You know when Fuqua Construction is part of the team that you can expect good problem solving, honesty with the owners and they don’t make promises they can’t keep. Owners will have good communication about what is happening -- everyone understands and is on board,” She said.

Huelskamp would agree with that assessment. “I don’t think we could give (Fuqua Construction) a higher rating. They have been patient, morally on the same page with us, do very good work and we have fun at meetings. Bob (Griffin) and Luke (Ropp) have been great onsite. I would tell anyone considering a project that you will not be disappointed in Fuqua Construction.”

written by Cindy Baldwin, Baldwin Creative Services