

Valley Hope - Cushing project transforms historic mansion into modern facility

Valley Hope treatment facility in Cushing, Oklahoma, was faced with a challenge.

How to convert the elegant, but aging, mansion the center was housed in into a modern, efficient facility – without losing the charm of the original 1920s building.

For the personnel at Valley Hope, a residential chemical dependency treatment program based in Norton, Kansas, with multiple sites located throughout the south central United States; there were several issues with the original building that needed improvement.

“The existing facility (which the program took over) had been a private residence that had very distinctive architecture. However, it was not designed as a treatment facility. The lounge and recreation areas were in the basement; offices and treatment rooms were on upper floors. The building was not ADA compliant – an elevator was needed. The dining hall and resident rooms were in unconnected buildings. We wanted to get the patients into the light of day, and we wanted to convey a warm, welcoming approach to the building for new patients” Ken Gregoire, Valley Hope CEO said.

The solution was to construct a new structure that would connect the mansion to other campus buildings. The challenge was to maintain a similar architectural feel between the new and old construction, keep the project within budget – and do it all while the facility was treating patients.

Gregoire had hoped to work with a local general contractor in Cushing, but there wasn’t one in the area with the expertise to do the job. So, the decision was made to hire Fuqua Construction, which had previously built a new facility for Valley Hope in Moundridge.

“We choose Fuqua because of our past experience. We were very satisfied with the company’s work on our Moundridge project. We were never surprised by his crew doing less than he said he would. They were always doing more,” Gregoire said. “We were pleased that Max (Fuqua) worked with local subcontractors on the (Cushing) project as we wanted to be supportive of the local economy.”

The year-long project involved construction of a recreational



PROJECT PROFILE

Valley Hope Cushing

Owner: Valley Hope Association

Location: Cushing, Oklahoma

Project Scope: Remodel, new construction

Project Type: Drug & alcohol treatment center

Square footage: 3,800 sq ft

Architect: Rees Architectural Group, OKC

area connecting the dining hall to the main building, improvements to the main floor nursing stations, addition of an elevator and reconfiguring the public entrance. There were also upgrades made to existing services including all new plumbing and electrical and a new driveway.

While this project was not a text book design-build model – the plans had been drawn up before Fuqua Construction was hired as general contractor, Fuqua and his on-site team brought the same design-build problem solving techniques to the project as construction challenges and facility needs were addressed.



The snack room in the new addition provides a bright, spacious gathering center for patients and includes a kitchen area.

Every effort was made, according to Gregoire, to achieve the project’s desired outcomes within the designated budget and without lowering construction quality.

Mike Miller, facility director, said that in his observation the whole team, Fuqua Construction employees and Valley Hope personnel, worked together very well on the project.

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“I can’t say enough about the crew,” he said. “Whenever there was a question, they came to us and asked. They were great about explaining our options and the costs involved. When we made design requests, they never said ‘no you can’t,’ but always tried to find a way to accommodate us.”

Randall Lea, Valley Hope maintenance supervisor, said that Fuqua and the construction crew had a good handle on the needs of the facility and were diligent in ensuring that the staff was happy, not only with the finished project but throughout the process, and were sensitive to the fact that the facility was treating patients throughout the construction phase.

“They had to jack hammer on the building and we asked them to not do it during certain times of the day because the noise interfered with small groups,” Lea said as an example of



The activity room provides space for recreation and larger gatherings. The set up in this picture is for the grand opening activities. The arched windows mimic the architecture of the original building.

“We went over everything when the building was finished. I knew what I would need to do for upkeep on a monthly basis from the elevator maintenance to filter changes. I was made aware of everything. They even made a catwalk in the attic (which wasn’t called for in the original plans) so I would be safe when I was up there -- not accidentally falling through the ceiling or stepping on something,” Lea said. “When you hire Fuqua, you know you’re hiring people who will be part of your team. If a problem arose now or later, I wouldn’t hesitate to call. We developed a relationship that wasn’t just during the job, but one that continues.”

This was Miller’s first experience with a construction project of this scope and any concerns he had going into it were soon laid to rest.

“The Fuqua crew was here over a year,” Miller said. “Every day was a new day. We developed a very good relationship. If they didn’t have a ready answer for a problem, they found one. Everything was done timely and professionally. Right from A to Z, it was very well done.” He added that that professionalism extended beyond the construction process to the whole crew understanding appropriate interactions with Valley Hope staff and residents -- about which Fuqua was diligent.

The rapport between the Fuqua crew and Valley Hope staff was evident when the last two supervisors -- who had been there throughout the project -- left.

“We had a cake for them to let them know how much we appreciated them,” Miller said. “We felt they had become part of us. It was heartfelt.”

Miller said that the project not only came in very close to budget, but that the staff was very pleased with the final result. It not only met the goals the staff had for providing more efficient and attractive treatment and recreational space for patients, it also preserved the character of the historic mansion.

“It’s wonderful, absolutely everything we hoped it would be,” Miller said. “Our original program director and business manager (now retired) was very watchful to keep the mansion (historically) true. It looks like the new part has been here forever.”



The new entry provides a welcoming feel for new patients -- one of the primary goals of the remodel -- and ties in with the original mansion.

the crew’s sensitivity to the day-to-day workings of the facility. “The crew didn’t stop working, but shifted to other work until groups were finished. They went above what you would expect from a normal contractor. Anything that came up, they were quick to address it. And, if they could help with something we were doing, they would. The crew was very, very helpful.”

Lea noted that the worksite was always picked up and cleaned before the weekend when many of the residents had visitors, which was appreciated by the staff.

Sensitivity to detail extended beyond noise and clutter control – it included design elements in the new structure.

“(Fuqua) did a wonderful job of tying the old into the new,” Lea said. “There are archways in the original building and woodwork that are typical of 1920s architecture.” He noted that even though the architect’s plans didn’t include that type of detail in the new construction, Fuqua’s crew noticed it and included similar elements in the new structure.

Lea said good communication had been key to the success of the project.

“We were very forthright in stating our needs. The more you communicate needs, the more (Fuqua) will work to accommodate those needs. We developed a good relationship and they understood what our needs were, and we knew what they were doing. There was no second guessing,” Lea said.

Perhaps most importantly for Lea was the support he received from Fuqua Construction for his ongoing responsibilities after the crew left.

written by Cindy Baldwin, Baldwin Creative Services