



CASE STUDY



# Vanderbilt University

Location: Nashville, Tennessee | New Construction

## Four Residential Colleges

The Oliver C. Carmichael Building, completed in spring 2024, is the last in a series of four residential colleges built on the Vanderbilt University campus over the past decade as part of the university's FutureVU initiative. Designed in a Collegiate Gothic style with traditional exteriors of brick, Indiana limestone, and Tennessee Crab Orchard stone, each of the four buildings features a distinct façade. All four new residential colleges are adorned with Ludowici's LudoSlate Premier roofing tile, designed to replicate the appearance of quarried slate.

In the early 2000s, Vanderbilt commissioned David M. Schwarz Architects (DMSAS) to reimagine the student life experience on campus by replacing time-worn dormitory housing from the 1960s. The architects studied historic college campuses, including the residential college traditions of Oxford and Cambridge, for inspiration and developed a master plan that includes four new residential colleges. All are respectful of nearby existing campus buildings, including the iconic Kirkland Hall, originally built in 1875.

In order of completion, the four new buildings are: E. Bronson Ingram College (2018), Nicholas S. Zeppos College (2020), Rothschild College (2022), and finally the 160,000-square-foot Oliver C. Carmichael Residential College, which serves as a prominent gateway to the public promenade linking the new colleges with the heart of the original campus. Steve Knight, principal at DMSAS, explained, "The new campus buildings are highly visible. The entire project was an opportunity for Vanderbilt to create a new outward-facing image."

"All told, the four new buildings total approximately 827,000 square feet," DMSAS project architect Mark Elliott said. "We wanted these colleges to look as if they had always been there. Most people who are new to the campus can't tell the difference between the existing historic buildings and the new ones."

Construction had to accommodate a brick veneer façade featuring exacting details such as stone carvings, pointed arches, narrowly proportioned casement windows, gables, arcades, and colonnades. To support the lightweight roofing assembly, Ludowici LudoSlate Premier was installed over a high-temperature underlayment and vented polyiso system. The insulation maximized the roof's R-value, while the CDX plywood substrate beneath provided the stable nailing surface required by the roofing tiles.

The four new residential colleges include dorm rooms, dining facilities, great rooms, classrooms, a 100-seat studio theater, study rooms, and lounges. "Each of the four colleges is subtly different from the others, each with its own unique expression," Steve Knight explained. "But we wanted to create a unified

### ARCHITECT(S):

David M Schwarz Architects  
(Design)  
Hastings Architecture (AOR)

### ROOFING

#### CONTRACTOR(S):

RSS Roofing Contractors

### BUILDINGS:

E. Bronson Ingram College  
Nicholas S. Zeppos College  
Rothschild College  
Oliver C. Carmichael College

### PRODUCT(S):

LudoSlate Premier

### COLOR(S):

Montpelier Green & Slate Gray  
Blend

Brunswick Black, Vermont Gray  
Black & Plumstone Blend





Photography by Weston Richey Photography



whole.” The use of Ludowici’s LudoSlate Premier on all four buildings also helped tie the buildings together visually.

The E. Bronson Ingram building, the first of the four to be completed, is set apart from the other three colleges, which are adjacent to one another along West End Avenue, a major thoroughfare connecting the western part of the city with downtown Nashville. Carmichael College features a distinct tower at the building’s eastern entry, marking the terminus of a promenade. A grand staircase on the western elevation breaks up the façade and provides additional visual interest. The building rises to five stories, except on the east side where the scale steps down to 1-1/2 stories to better complement a row of late-1800s brick cottages nearby.

“Where we needed five stories, it had to be well scaled,” Mark Elliott explained. “To accomplish this, we used Ludowici’s LudoSlate as an extended dormer and wall element, which modulates the perceived height of the building and adds visual interest.”

Roofing contractor RSS Nashville installed a color blend of Ludowici’s Slate Gray and Montpelier Green on two of the four buildings, and Plumstone Brunswick Black and Vermont Gray Black on the other two. In addition to achieving the historic appearance specified by the architects, this met the university’s budget requirements. Each roofing square includes 119 pieces: 100 full pieces, 10 half pieces, and 9 two-thirds pieces. The architects selected LudoSlate rather than natural slate, which would have been both heavier and more expensive.

Overall, the residential colleges at Vanderbilt represent a complex architectural expression with a rich palette of materials and intricate detailing. David M. Schwarz Architects credited collaborating architect-of-record Hastings Architecture for helping achieve the appearance of monolithic masonry both inside and out while meeting modern building standards. Steve Knight remarked, “We had the freedom to develop the right aesthetic expression with a beautiful material. We had a very competent team of professionals on the project.”

This team, of course, included RSS Nashville and Ludowici, their LudoSlate supplier partner. E. Bronson Ingram College received a Palladio Award from Traditional Building magazine in 2019, while the Rothschild College project earned a Palladio Award in 2024.



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– **Steve Knight**, Principal at David M. Schwarz Architects

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