



Genster recreates a campus tree in a student housing project through Moz Design aluminum wall sheets.

Student housing has changed significantly in the past few decades. Gone are the days of sharing a tiny space with one or more people and walking down the hall to a shared bathroom.

Now it's all about individuality, with everyone having his or her own bedroom and bathroom, sharing common spaces with a few people.

That theme of individuality often continues throughout an entire student housing space. When creating Aspire College Station Luxury Student Housing for Texas A&M students, the Genster design team wanted to make a statement.

"This is not your dad's dorm," states Benjamin Nanson, project architect in the Houston office of Genster. "In new student housing projects, students are signing up for a lifestyle. It's like a mini resort with pools, fitness facilities and dog parks." This is a new model overall and for College Station, where Texas A&M is located.

UNIQUE TOUCHES THROUGHOUT

Taking the individuality of the space and the student, Genster looked at its design objectives of a specific, authentic design and space to make this student housing project unique and identifiable. "We knew from the outset that we wanted to bring school spirit and iconography into the space" through the use of graphics, Nanson explains.

One way they did that was through the spirit and look of the Century Tree, an oak tree beloved by Texas A&M students and alumni. Located on campus near the Academic Building, the tree's over 100 years old and has many unique branches, some of which touch the ground.

The Genster team brought their interpretation of the feeling, look and scale of the tree into the lobby space using Móz Designs Digital Perforated Aluminum Wall Sheets. The design was created using 21 flat panels of aluminum about 18 feet high – about 480 square feet of custom perforated metal.

It's a noticeable piece right when people walk into Aspire College Station. "It's a huge statement," Nanson notes. "Everyone who walks in sees that first. We talked with people working in the lobby, and they were impressed they were working in such a cool space."

WALL SHEETS A UNIQUE PRODUCT

Nanson says that the Digital Perforated Aluminum Wall Sheets were chosen because it is unique and could offer the look and feeling they were going for with the project.

The custom design features aluminum wall sheets in a powder coat nickel colorway. Different hole sizes throughout the 1/8-inch aluminum panels were used to create the image of the tree. A benefit of the Móz wall sheets in a student housing setting is the material's durability, notes Linda Gutierrez, director of marketing at Móz Designs.

For other projects, perforated metal sheets are available in various sizes holes and sheets, along with different colors, grains and finishes. The sheets can be bent, curved and molded as needed to fit a look or space. On top of that, imagery (including pattern, gradient color or typography) can be printed or embedded into the metal. Together, this creates a one-of-a-kind look for an interior or exterior space.

Gutierrez has seen the product used to create visual interest and texture on ceilings, as column covers or – in the case of Aspire College Station – as a piece of art. However, it's often used as a way to divide space without closing it in. Because the sheets have holes in them, they can provide separation while still letting air and light through.

"The look changes from day to night," Gutierrez notes. "In the day you can appreciate the metal, and at night you would see the backlit glow, which would take on a different look, and appreciate it in a different way."

PUSHING DESIGN FORWARD

Making what Gutierrez describes as a "common perforated metal into something designer" is what Móz does. Most of its new products come from the inquiries and demand of the design community.

"We're always inspired by the design community. They are always pushing the limits. Along the way, people have wanted to put something on a wall, so we will think of three or four different ways to do that," Gutierrez says. "The designers are always thinking outside the box and we are trying to be there."

Móz works with people looking to incorporate its wall sheets and other products into a space in a unique, individual way. Because it's a different look, Gutierrez says people often do a double take when seeing the designs. That's why the Aspire Student Housing project, which needed to have the same impact, was a fit for the design.

"We're very happy with how it turned out," Nanson says. "It's just a completely different type of project, and a new wave in student housing."



ABOVE When the Genster team was designing Aspire College Station Luxury Student Housing, they wanted to bring in the spirit and look of the Century Tree, an oak tree beloved by Texas A&M students and alumni. They brought it into the lobby space using Móz Designs Digital Perforated Aluminum Wall Sheets. LEFT Perforated metal sheets are available in various sizes holes and sheets, along with different colors, grains and finishes. The sheets can be bent, curved and molded. They can be used to divide a space without closing it in, as seen here.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MÓZ DESIGNS

ABOVE The reinterpreted Century Tree is seen up close. The look was achieved by using different hole sizes in the custom perforated metal.