

to Destination

It's ironic that one of Central Indiana's most desirable senior living communities began its life isolating sick people from a terrified population. In 1914, when some of Westminster Village North's current residents were infants, Marion County opened the Sunnyside Sanatorium to treat tuberculosis patients. It served that role until its closing in 1965.

Six years later, Presbyterian Housing Program acquired the site, renovated the buildings, and opened Westminster Village North as a retirement housing community. They converted the main building into a kitchen and erected Plexiglas-covered walkways between the buildings. A 38-bed health center was added in 1975.

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

"Thirty years later, we're dealing with 70-year-old buildings," says Bruce Spear, InterDesign project manager. "The community had a lot of small studio apartments. To remain competitive in the marketplace, they needed to build something bigger." Spear had worked for Presbyterian Housing Program during the 1970s and had overseen much of its development. "After I left, I stayed in touch with the management and watched the community gradually become obsolete."

Ownership shifted to a company called Westminster Village North, Inc., and Shelley Rauch stepped in as its executive director. "I realized she was someone who could breathe some life into the community," Spear recalls. He arranged a meeting with the investment bankers at Lancaster Pollard, who performed an extensive financial analysis. "Although they were debt-free, the

and select the right contractor for work in the occupied resident area," Rauch recalls. "We were very satisfied." She asked the firm to develop a master plan for the future of the community.

CLEARING THE SLATE

As Spear and the InterDesign team studied the site, they realized that demolishing five of the older buildings

While the Board was eager to keep the fairly low rooftop profile of the community, InterDesign showed them what they could accomplish with a new three-story independent living building.

analysis showed that the ratios and cash position would be better if they had some debt," says Spear.

Westminster turned to InterDesign for a health center renovation four years ago, and that working relationship left the facility's Board of Directors with an appreciation of the firm's style. "They helped us make good design choices

and using the space in other ways dramatically enhanced the opportunities for improvement. "We wanted to eliminate the Plexiglas connectors but maintain an indoor route to the health center, and some demolition was needed to make that happen," Spear explains. "We added a building for housekeeping and maintenance, and built a connecting walkway that is so bright and open