LIVING ON GROUNDS
A Brief Sojourn Through Time and Space

8. MCCORMICK ROAD RESIDENCES
1946-1951, Eggers and Higgins
Built in response to the housing crisis of the 1950s, housing the greatest number of student beds had priority over common spaces. Students used their bedrooms as social spaces.

9. MARY MUMFORD HALL
1952, Eggers and Higgins
Built as the first university housing for women, the hall is currently used as an International Residential College. The public spaces were professionally decorated and the program was designed to mold the women to be educated and "ladylike."

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AN INTRODUCTION TO
On Grounds Dormitories

Jefferson’s “Academical Village” has long been celebrated for its powerful architectural expression of university community. The original plan creatively organized and intertwined the academic and residential domains of students and faculty. The power of the Lawn and its iconic status as a symbol of University community was based in large part on the clarity of its image, with student rooms, the dining spaces in the Range hotels, faculty residences and classrooms in the Lawn pavilions, and the Rotunda’s library providing the essential spaces.

There have been halting efforts to complement the housing of the Lawn and Ranges, which embody a variety of visions of the proper architecture and location for student residents who sleep, learn, and socialize in a central, shared space. Their efforts range from the ordered quadrangles of Monroe Hill Dormitories and McCormick Road Dormitories to the informal organization of the Alderman Road Dormitories where buildings and residents are more carefully related to the landscape than to each other. Only 104 of the 13,200 undergraduates live on the Lawn.

The other housing options, which provide fewer beds than the number of enrolled students, stylistically range from the historic McCormick Road Dorms to the modern expressions of Alderman Road Dorms and Hereford College. They all capture the contrasts of the visions of community from the common corridors and lounges to the entryway circulation system which diffuses the density of the dorm. Communal spaces vary from lounges shared by all residents, as in Mary Mumford Hall, to small suites where two to ten residents share a living room, as in Monroe Hill, Alderman Road, and Gooch-Dillard Residences.

1. LAWN AND RANGE
(The Academical Village)
1817-1826

Originally designed as single-room dormitories between parallel rows of eight pavilions, nine years of construction yielded ten pavilions for faculty residences and classrooms, six hotels for dining, 108 double-occupancy rooms for 216 students and the Rotunda as the library, which was built last. Currently the rooms are used as single rooms for upperclassmen and graduate students.

2. MONROE HILL DORMITORIES
(Brown Residential College)
1928, Architectural Commission

This is the first mass student housing built at U.Va. for about 300 students. They were built in response to the rapidly increasing student population and as a solution to the poor academic culture of the University during the 1920s. Each incoming class graduated as few as 1/6 of its students, so the University designed mass housing to bring the students together physically and culturally. They were designed for “educational purposes” and to provide “organic connection” between the students and the larger community, not only for the purpose of putting a roof over students’ heads. There was a living room, a bedroom for two, and shared bathrooms and entryways.

3. FRENCH HOUSE
1890, Dr. Paul Barringer
Renovated in 1984

from a residence to student housing that also serves as a center for French cultural life on grounds, the French House is the first U.Va. language house. Prior to its renovation the house had been used for ten apartments mostly occupied by professors and nurses since the 1940s, and was threatened by demolition. By the preservation of the original fabric, the free-form floorplan, seminar rooms, varying bedroom sizes and shapes, and the front porch creates formal and informal environments for students to socialize.

4. SHEA LANGUAGE HOUSE
(Monroe Lane Language House)
2002

An attempt to preserve some of the visions that created Jefferson’s Academical Village, this is a model of the University trying to integrate sleeping, learning, and socializing by using a theme to create community. Language houses are intended to both encourage interaction between international residents and to allow students interested in a particular ethnicity to learn more about that specific culture and language.

5. GOOCH-DILLARD RESIDENCES
1980-1984, Edward Larrabee Barnes Associates

Built due to an increasing need for beds, this upperclass housing of 650 beds follows the suite style model of multiple bedrooms sharing a communal living area. Original plans, based on the idea of a residential college where students would live in small groups and create a cohesive community through programming and use of communal space, were abandoned due to time and monetary constraints.

6. HEREFORD COLLEGE
1990-1992, Todd Williams, Bullie Taxin and Associates with VMDO

Another attempt of the University to recreate Jefferson’s visions, Hereford is designed to be a residential college of 500 students where a principal lives near the students. The fact that it is more visible from the distant suburbs of Albemarle County than anywhere on UVa. grounds reflects its inaccessibility from the rest of grounds.

7. ALDERMAN ROAD RESIDENCES
1962-1967, Johnson Craven and Gibson

These were designed to limit social interaction within the walls of the suites and to discourage rowdiness by noise and crowd control. The design approach to create a relationship to nature produced buildings fitting into the site’s slopes, but not relating to each other. Each building has four suites, living room and bathroom equipped, of ten students on three floors in a linear arrangement opening to a single-loaded, open air corridor.