As architectural statements go, the message from USC Village, a cluster of mixed-use residential buildings along Jefferson Boulevard, is pretty direct: This is a school with ambitions as grand as its endowment. Though USC’s main performance space, Bovard Hall, set the tone for the campus when its Italianate campanile was completed in 1921, the pointed arches and spired clock tower of the new Village are less Veneto and more Mid-Atlantic. “The university’s always had a Collegiate Romanesque style,” says William Marsh, the school’s director of capital construction development. “But we were starting to move in a little more of a Gothic direction with the new administration under Dr. Nikias.” He’s referring to C. L. Max Nikias, for whom this $650 million project is the largest of several that have been carried out since he became USC’s president in 2010. Along with housing for 2,700 undergrads, the architectural firm Harley Ellis Devereux (see: the Americana at Brand) has designed the Village’s five main buildings with shops, study halls, a gym, and other modern-day requisites—all on the same 15 acres formerly occupied by a dowdy shopping center. The villagers themselves will arrive in fall 2017, just three years after the first shovel hit the dirt.

USC Is Revolutionizing the College Campus
The forthcoming flock of residential halls promises to recast the undergraduate experience

Los Angeles Business Journal
Massive USC Project Hits Halfway Mark

The USC Village project, at the southern end of the Figueroa Corridor, hit the halfway point of construction last week. The Downtown News reported Wednesday that officials celebrated the milestone by installing a 12,700-pound rooftop spire on the peak of the future McCarthy Honors College building. The 15-acre development is expected to open in fall 2017, in time for the beginning of the academic year.

The $700 million complex, the biggest development in USC’s history, will create housing for 2,700 students and a Trader Joe’s. It also boasts some other impressive numbers: 3,200 construction workers, 23 million pounds of rebar and 90,000 cubic yards of concrete, which is enough to build a sidewalk from Los Angeles to San Francisco, according to the university.
USC Village marks a milestone

With the placing of the spire, USC Village reaches the halfway point in construction. The $700 million residential-retail project is on track to open in fall 2017, adding 2,700 student beds and making USC a fully residential university.

1. USC Village’s landmark spire, which reaches 145 feet above ground, was raised to its home atop the Leavey Honors Hall.

2. Construction workers have worked tirelessly to keep the project on time and under budget.

3. President Nikias with United States Representative Karen Bass, a two-time alumna of USC. The project lies in the district she represents.

4. USC Trustee Bill McMorrow and Lloyd Silberstein, USC’s vice president for capital construction.

5. President Nikias with Los Angeles City Councilman Curren Price.

6. USC Trustee Kathleen Leavey McCarthy, whose gift named Leavey Honors Hall and the McCarthy Honors College it will house, was among those who signed the beam and spire before they were put in place.

7. More than 200 guests—including university officials and friends, local dignitaries, and construction partners—joined the USC Village crews.

Photo 1 by Russell Houghten; photos 2, 3, 4 by Gus Ruelas; photos 5, 6, 7 by Steve Cohn