



PROJECT SOLVED.

# Custom Importer and Installer Upgrades Build Long-Term Value for The Preiss Company

**“Was the project on or under budget, and was it completed on time? With Direct Import Services, both answers were yes.”**

– Kyle Barger, Director of Construction Management; The Preiss Company

## Situation

The Preiss Company is an industry leader in the sales and development of investment properties. With over \$350 Million in acquisitions, they are the largest off-campus housing provider for North Carolina State University, Clemson University, Auburn University and the University of Texas-Austin.

In late 2007, an older rental complex adjoining their University Village property in Austin came on the market. And with 50,000 students at University of Texas, the Preiss Company saw a growth opportunity.

**“We could bridge the gap between higher priced housing closer to campus and the lower end further out—plus, corner the student housing market in that location, install upgrades and up charge rent.”**

After the sale, the company planned to give 254 of 490 units in the the Class-C location Class-A amenities: new kitchen appliances, cabinets, countertops, flooring, lighting and bath fixtures. But there were challenges.

Among them were the logistics of students living in the units and moving during construction; working with a variety of tradesman; and the tight turnaround, finishing before August classes began.

**“It would be a difficult project to pull off, but we set a clear timeline for completion. We didn’t want the headache of students moving in as late as September.”**

In 2007, Direct Import Services had performed upgrades at University Village. During the bidding process for University Estates, the company presented a series of cabinet samples, laminate and granite countertop pieces, plus price quotes.

**“Because we had hired them before, we knew the quality of their work and their products—durable, long lasting and good looking—would give a fresh facelift to the units.”**

The Preiss Company, again, chose Direct Import Services and placed their order.

**“Direct Import Services got pricing to me fast—quicker than most vendors we’ve worked with—and they were under budget.”**

## Solution

Direct Import Services’ professional teams began by carefully dismantling and removing old kitchen cabinets and countertops, then installing new products and cleaning up. Depending on students and necessary repairs, crews completed five to seven units per day, six days a week.

**“Our goal for them was ambitious—start on units in the morning and finish by evening. Though the turnaround was tight, they met our schedule every day.”**

As work progressed, the company’s teams coordinated their efforts with local subcontractors, such as plumbers, electricians and drywall repairmen. >>



## QUICK FACTS

### Project

University Estates at Austin

### Locations

Austin, TX

### Capabilities Category

Large-Scale, Student Condominiums

### Scale

39 buildings, 254 units, 1500 bedrooms

### Web site

universityestatesataustin.com

### Dates

May-August 2008

### Developer & General Contractor

The Preiss Company

### Director of Construction Management

Kyle Barger



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### Direct Import Services provided and custom installed all:

- Kitchen cabinets.
- Granite countertops.
- Bath fixtures.



“Working from one building to the next, they were fast, efficient and thorough—no tools or trash left behind. They worked well with our contractors and stayed on pace.”

Management notified tenants in advance, specifying the days they would be affected. But once inside, they found most had not emptied their cabinets.

“We provided boxes, but their teams helped move the items. Sure, it slowed things down, yet they worked around this and still got the work done that day.”

With a project this size, problems can arise anywhere. In hot humid Texas, mold is an issue. In this case, many sinks had leaked under the cabinetry. Mold was growing on the walls and drywall repairs were necessary.

“Often, we had to change the schedule, make drywall repairs and move on. But their teams adapted very well. Bottom line—it didn’t affect their ability to finish the job on time.”

By the deadline in late August 2008, demolition, installation and clean up were complete. The Preiss Company’s construction manager signed-off on the work, and all 254 units were move-in ready.

“Materials arrived on time. Construction began on time, and the project finished on time. Those were our biggest goals—and they met them.”

### Business Benefits Realized

#### • Achieving Maximum Profitability

Our efficient, flexible work and affordable, high-quality products helped them realize more ways to decrease expenses quickly and increase revenue.

“By consolidating both properties’ resources, such as maintenance and management, we’ve been able to lower our overall expenses—plus, by up charging the rent, we’ve increased our cash flow significantly.”

#### • Building Long-Term Value

Given the company’s vision for the property, our industry knowledge, experience and advice helped them extend and increase the lifetime value of each unit and the entire complex.

“The upgrades enabled us to increase their worth immediately and long-term. In property value and rent revenue, I can’t put a dollar value on it. The impact was tremendous.”

#### • Managing On-Time Logistics

Our proven logistical expertise and flexibility enabled us to meet the pace of their construction precisely. By scheduling deliveries in waves, we kept only the products we needed onsite for each phase. This provided the advantages of product safety and timeliness without inconveniencing tenants, using onsite storage or incurring offsite storage fees.

“Their lag time on orders was just right—we didn’t want the hassle and expense of storing materials. They had our products arriving onsite in several phases. It worked out very well.”

#### • Installing High Quality. Creating More Value.

To meet their budget and high standards for the upgrades, we worked with our worldwide resources. We advised the use of thinner, high quality granite, but with a molding that provided a thicker appearance, appropriate for high-end residential housing.

“Budget was a factor, but their granite countertop was the best product for the project and the price. It looked great. In the end, we made a wise choice.”

#### • Providing Clear Access and Constant Support

We kept in contact daily with project and property managers onsite. Our teams addressed any issues immediately and followed up afterward—standing behind our products and our work.

“I feel good about working with them on any large-scale renovation. We’re looking at similar upgrades for our properties in Raleigh—and we’d hire Direct Import Services again without question.” ♦