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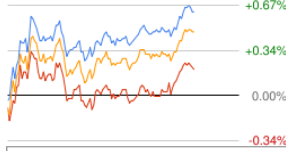
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# A LEED-ing Rental Community

Residential real estate company, Lincoln Property Company, created one of Orange County, Calif.'s, first green apartments complexes.

By Kristen Eichenmuller

Photography By Vincent Ivcevic

Not only are homebuyers looking for efficient ways to save money, but renters are too. MSV Irvine Property LLC developed Main Street Village in Irvine, Calif., which provides an "urban oasis" for its residents and is one of Orange County's first green apartment complexes, with a LEED Silver certification.

Construction for the multifamily project began in April 2007, and the first phase was released on March 1, 2009. With 481 green units -- with three floor plan options -- for the community completed in November 2009, 94 percent are currently leased. Rick Holcomb, regional property manager for Lincoln Property Company, property and construction manager for the project, reported that the community targets a combination of young, urban professionals who desire a semiurban lifestyle, in addition to some families and empty-nesters.

According to Al Zelaya, LEED AP BD+C, senior project manager for Lincoln Property Company, the "premium" for building green consisted of 1 percent of the total construction costs. With the environment in mind, the four-story project reduced water and electrical consumption and recycled over 50 percent of its demolition and construction waste. Additionally, total building materials from the

However, satisfying the requirements of Environmental Quality (EQ) Prerequisite 2: Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) Control presented unusual property constraints. "This residential project was Type V construction, which meant it was far more challenging for the design team to create an air-tight building envelope while managing the risks of moisture accumulation," said Zelaya. "We researched the Certification Interpretation Requests (CIR) filed with USGBC and found that we were eligible to use the tracer gas test method." The senior project manager said this test was more accurate than the blower door test, and as an extra precaution, they applied additional caulk to all wall penetrations in the units. "Our results were impressive as we scored well below the minimum allowable threshold for the test," he continued.

RC Alley, the architect for Main Street Village, created a "Contemporary California" architectural style by utilizing pitched roofs, tower elements and varying heights of rock veneer at the building's base. To create additional visual interest, the architect included stone, stucco, trellises and awnings for the apartment project, which is planned in a "wrap-style configuration" with units concealing the centrally-located parking structure. As green building increases, Holcomb believes that recycled materials, managing construction

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building comprised of 11.8 percent of recycled materials, while more than 52 percent of materials used were manufactured within 500 miles of the site.

Main Street Village also provides reserved parking for residents with low-emission vehicles, and the community also includes 38 "garden patches," where residents can plant, grow, cultivate and harvest their own vegetables, flowers and other plants, according to Holcomb. "In turn it's given us the ability to focus resident events and functions with gardening topics instead of the run of the mill cooking classes, wine tasting events, and other events we always see offered."

Other sustainable measures for this development -- with existing infrastructure surrounding -- include a high-reflective, energy-efficient roof, an automated irrigation system that uses 100 percent recycled water and drought-tolerant native plants and minimal turf grass. And the LEED project's energy performance exceeded California's Title 24-2005 Energy Code by more than 17.5 percent.

waste and non-harmful methods and materials to the environment or occupants should become standard.

With advice for others building third-party certified homes, Zelaya said, "It's important to decide early on registering your project. You must also select the level of certification desired and guide the designer, general contractor and property manager to achieve the credits necessary to reach the stated goal." He continued, "Be prepared to make tough choices based not just on initial cost but on the entire life of the system. You may find that in some cases it makes better sense to spend a little more now to capture long-term savings."

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