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Adroit Development's LEED Platinum Senior Living Community



Sustainable Urbanism for Senior Living

The affordable, age-restricted community of Heritage Oaks in Oakdale, Calif., is LEED Platinum-certified in an urban infill space.

By Carina Calhoun Photography by John Bare Photography





Completed in May 2012, Heritage Oaks is a sustainable senior community designed by KTG Group, Inc. and developed by Central Valley Coalition for Affordable Housing in Merced, Calif., and Adroit Development, Inc. of Westlake Village, Calif. It is a 50-unit apartment community for low-income seniors age 55 and older.

The \$10-million urban-infill community features both one- and two-bedroom floor plans in two- and three-story buildings. These rentals range from \$483 to \$787 per month, depending upon income. Manny Gonzalez, AIA, LEED AP and principal of KTG, the design lead on the project, explained, “The architecture and interiors were designed to reflect the regional vernacular of the Sierra Nevadas that can be found throughout the forests, streams and mountains — from the Craftsman style exteriors to the artwork.” This vacation-style, eco-friendly living for seniors is affordable to working seniors that earn 30 percent to 60 percent of area median income (AMI). According to Randy Goss, LEED AP-BD+C, vice president of

▲ A TAX CREDIT AND CALGREEN CODE REQUIREMENTS FOR MINIMUM REQUIRED SPECIFICATIONS SUCH AS: ENERGY STAR APPLIANCES, HIGH-EFFICIENCY LIGHTING AND WATER CONSERVING PLUMBING FIXTURES.

▶ THE COMMUNITY WAS 100 PERCENT LEASED WITHIN THREE MONTHS OF COMPLETION AND ENCOURAGES HEALTHY LIVING FOR THE RESIDENTS.

◀ COMPLETED IN MAY 2012, HERITAGE OAKS IS A 50-UNIT APARTMENT COMMUNITY FOR LOW-INCOME SENIORS AGE 55 AND OLDER WITH LEED PLATINUM STANDARDS.

Adroit Development, Inc., initial specifications were set to achieve a LEED Gold rating. Goss explained, “Construction costs came in well under budget which allowed for durability upgrades, high-efficiency HVAC equipment and addition of solar panels that

helped garner enough additional points to get to the Platinum threshold.” Gonzalez added, “Building in California with its green building code standards, you are well on your way to being LEED certified. The biggest challenge was providing local product but the development team did a great job of seeking out sources and ultimately that added to the mountain ambiance of the community.”

Construction of Heritage Oaks was completed in 10 months, ahead of schedule and under budget.

“It was just thoughtful and careful coordination of common construction practices and using green rated materials that have become more mainstream and cost-effective.”

Randy Goss, LEED, AP-BD+C, vice president, Adroit Development, Inc.



▲ THE PROJECT RECEIVED CONFIRMATION OF LEED-PLATINUM CERTIFICATION — A MAJOR MILESTONE FOR THIS COMMUNITY.

► THE RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY PROVIDES ACTIVE ADULT STYLE AMENITIES, INCLUDING A COMMUNITY CENTER WITH A GREAT ROOM, HOBBY AND CRAFT STUDIOS, THEATER, AND MORE.

Tax credit and CALGreen code requirements for minimum required specifications such as: Energy Star appliances, high-efficiency lighting, water conserving plumbing fixtures and landscape practices, design and installation of high-efficiency HVAC systems, proximity to community resources, all contributed to the LEED certification process. “Based on experience, it is Adroit’s opinion that most multifamily projects built in the State of California should be able to meet LEED Silver certification with very little additional cost with correct attention to design and specifications,” stated Goss.

“I think what really makes the building stand out from a green perspective is that we didn’t really have to do anything extraordinary in order to accomplish the rating,” said Goss. He continued, “It was just thoughtful and careful coordination of common construction practices and using green rated materials that have become more mainstream and cost-effective.”

“The site is close to community services, which maxed out the points in Site Sustainability category for LEED. But, it could arguably be said that what put us over the top was the solar as it gained us 2.5 points that I otherwise would have had to come up with some other way. So I don’t think it was so much a challenge as it was just being careful in coordinating all of the requirements in a way that they would also be eligible for LEED,” said Goss.

The project recently received confirmation that it is LEED Platinum certified, according to Goss. The residential community provides Active Adult style amenities, including a community center with a great room, hobby and craft studios, theater, game room, gourmet kitchen, fitness center, technology center and learning center. Outdoor amenities include a patio area with a BBQ center, relaxing fountain and outdoor lounging areas. Gonzalez explained, “The generous community space pays homage to rustic mountain stone fireplaces. The fireplace mantle, book shelves and extensive wood trim were made from reclaimed wood from a local 1920s barn, milled in the old school fashion by a local craftsman located in the Sierra Mountains.”



The community was 100 percent leased within three months of completion and encourages healthy living for the residents with its indoor and outdoor lifestyle. From the ability to grow your own herbs and vegetables in the raised planter beds in the “backyard” that eliminate the need to bend-down during gardening, to demonstration kitchens indoors and out to teach healthy cooking. Gonzalez stated, “Heritage Oaks embodies the best practices of new urbanism and smart growth transforming an urban infill site into a high quality, environmentally-sensitive LEED Platinum designed, amenity-rich senior housing community achieved through valued public/private partnerships, that is affordable to its low-income residents.”

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