

OHSU center secures LEED platinum certification

by Justin Stranzl
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Oregon Health & Science University's first South Waterfront development last week became the second project in Portland to earn the U.S. Green Building Council's highest rating for green buildings, a LEED platinum certification.

The project, OHSU's Center for Health & Healing, is also the second by Portland-based developer Gerding Edlen to earn a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design platinum rating. The Gerding Theater at the Armory was certified platinum in September 2006.

The Center for Health & Healing scored 55 points on a LEED checklist of sustainable features – buildings that garner 52 or more points on the 69-point checklist secure a platinum rating – earning two more LEED points than the armory despite being, in some ways, a more complex project, Renee Worme, Gerding Edlen's sustainability manager, said.

"The historic rehabilitation (of the armory) presented some challenges we didn't encounter on the OHSU building, but on the OHSU building there's such a variety of uses," Worme said. "There's retail, ambulatory units, surgical units, laboratories, and each of those units has certain requirements. Surgical units need to be well-ventilated; patients (need to) feel comfortable in a doctor's office."

At 400,000 square feet, the 16-story Center for Health & Healing is more than seven times larger than the 55,000 square foot armory, which takes up one city block on the edge of Portland's Pearl District, and, according to Gerding Edlen, more energy-efficient. The Center for Health & Healing is 61 percent more energy-efficient than what's required by state code, the developer said, while the armory consumes 30 percent of the energy a normal building of its size would use.

An efficient chilled beam and ventilation system help the Center for Health & Healing reduce carbon emissions by 5.1 million pounds, Gerding Edlen said in a news release. But a 60-kilowatt photovoltaic installation is arguably the building's most visible energy-saving feature, dominating the south wall of the building where most patients and visitors enter.

A \$189,000 incentive from the Energy Trust of Oregon paid for "about one-third" of that installation, Worme said, and was "extremely instrumental in bringing the project to fruition."

Gerding Edlen broke ground on the Center for Health & Healing in April of 2004, four months before it started building the armory, and completed both projects in October of 2006.

A third Gerding Edlen development could attain a LEED platinum rating as well. The Casey, a 16-story, 61-unit condominium tower being built on a quarter-block in the Pearl District, is "on track" for a platinum rating, Worme said.