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Building with the environment in mind

By Alan Richman
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Recognizing that Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification now is the highest standard for sustainable housing, two New Jersey builders recently announced projects that are based on principles embodied in the internationally recognized green building program.

Hoboken-based Bijou Properties is seeking to surpass the success of its LEED Gold-certified Garden Street Lofts condominium community with Edge Lofts, a 35-unit rental project that is intended to achieve a Platinum LEED rating.

Green Construction

At the same time, MONGroup, located in West New York, is designing its new Jaclyn Heights development “to meet

the rigorous certification requirements of LEED for Homes, Energy Star and NAHB Green, making it one of the very few developments in New Jersey” to have all three designations. Jaclyn Heights is located in West New York between Kennedy Boulevard and Bergenline Avenue.

According to Dean R. Mon, president/chief executive officer of MONGroup, “LEED is redefining the way we think about the places where we live, work and learn. As an internationally recognized mark of excellence, LEED provides building owners and operators with a framework for identi-

fying and implementing practical and measurable green building design, construction, operations and maintenance solutions.

“LEED homes are healthy homes, reducing allergens and triggers for asthma and chemical sensitivity,” he said, adding that because nontoxic materials are specified, there is less exposure to mold and mildew.

LEED homes also are easy on a home owner’s pocketbook, Mon said. Greater efficiency leads to lower electricity and water bills. In addition, insurance costs may be discounted and property values are likely to rise.

Larry Bijou, managing partner of Bijou Properties, said Edge Lofts, located at 1405 Clinton St. in Hoboken, will feature a roof-mounted photovoltaic array to provide renewable energy to offset common area electric use; a living wall on the south façade to provide thermal, acoustical and aesthetic benefits; architectural sunshades to reduce direct sun absorption at the southern corners; antique oak reclaimed hardwood flooring; imported Italian recycled tile in kitchens and baths; zero VOC paint; and more.

The company’s Garden Street Lofts complex is a sold-out, 30-unit high-rise condominium complex that is situated alongside Hoboken’s former Hostess Cupcake Factory. In a

move designed as an adaptive reuse of existing space, Bijou converted the building, which might otherwise have become abandoned, to two stories of retail space.

“As part of the project, we installed the region’s first green roof on the building,” Bijou said. “The extensive roof system laid out more than 20,000 square feet (and) is an actual living roof comprised of low-growing sedum plants that do not require irrigation. The roof is a part of the entire building system as opposed to a landscaped ornamental roof, and it meets LEED certification under the U.S. Green Building Council guidelines.”

Bijou acknowledged that building green may add as much as 10 percent to the cost of a new home, but added, “Residents are conscious of the environment and have shown an increasing eagerness to live in buildings that are environmentally healthy, have low energy costs and complement their natural surroundings. We share their concern and are creating meaningful buildings that feature a progressive urban design and green building practices to considerably minimize their impact on the environment while enhancing the overall neighborhood.”