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## Los Angeles Student Housing Community Captures LEED Platinum

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*By Jeffrey Steele, Contributing Writer*

Los Angeles—A new USC student housing community called West 27<sup>th</sup> Place has just realized a rare achievement among the nation’s student housing. It is one of only a few such housing developments to garner a LEED Platinum rating, the highest level of sustainability awarded by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC).

Developed by Los Angeles-based CityView and Symphony Development, the mixed-use community features 161 units ranging in size from studios to four-bedrooms, and from 425 to 1,364 square feet. Also included in West 27<sup>th</sup> Place is 10,000 square feet of commercial space to accommodate shops and eateries.

The LEED certification was instrumental in a marketing effort that resulted in just one available unit remaining when the community opened for fall semester.

“Students of the present generation are coming more and more to the realization they want to be contributors to environmental solutions, and sensitive to climate change,” CityView executive chairman Henry Cisneros tells *MHN*. “Was that the decisive consideration in leasing up? Probably not. But it certainly gives it a dimension of distinction, and aligns it with students’ societal objectives.”

The primary goals of West 27<sup>th</sup> Place, which spurred a comprehensive analysis of the development in the design stage, were the twin aims of meeting the needs of residents while staying “enviro-friendly,” according to David Hilliard, president of Symphony Development. “We performed this analysis literally on every single component of the building, from windows to insulation to even our elevator, which is a high-speed OTIS unit that actually generates electricity on its down cycle and returns

electricity to the grid,” he says.

West 27<sup>th</sup> Place is now owned by Kayne Anderson Real Estate Advisors, the private equity real estate arm of Kayne Anderson Capital Advisors, an investor in specialized real estate sectors.

A number of features helped ensure West 27<sup>th</sup> Place showcases what might be termed a deeper shade of green. Symphony Development recycled almost 95 percent of its construction waste and has a permanent on-site recycling program.

Low-flow water fixtures are found in every unit, and Energy Star ratings are on all appliances, up to and including the bathroom exhaust fans. In addition, residents do not require vehicles, as West 27<sup>th</sup> Place is adjacent to the Expo light rail line, the university’s tram system and a bus line.

According to Cisneros, the project was blessed to have an outstanding design and development group, and a construction team that delivered the goods on time and on budget. Of the effort that resulted in LEED Platinum, he says, “My own sense is we want to do this every time we possibly can. I’m convinced one of the greatest contributors to climate change is the built environment . . . And if we continue on the present path, we will exceed the calculated amounts allowable to keep climate within bounds. If we fail, literally all hell breaks loose.”

One of the most important results of the community’s development was that it garnered very favorable public reaction. Concludes Cisneros: “It’s particularly suitable for a university environment, because universities are about the future, and about inculcating societal values in young people.”

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