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LEED | Even without certificate, more tenants are learning to recognize green components

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free green?" he said.

Having the right tenant lined up before construction can tip the scales. That's one reason Jackson Properties went with LEED on its larger building on University Avenue.

'There are tenants in the market ... they know if you have gone through the accreditation process. It gives them an extra layer of comfort.'

Mike Heller Jr.
partner, LoftWorks

are being built green to some degree regardless of certification.

"We don't take an approach where LEED is a grab bag of separate items. We go for sustainability in our projects. LEED came along as a way to measure that. Of course it's a balance between what's best for the project, based on the budget, and protection of the environment," Silva said. "Usually that will come down to a decision, to say we

"It's a dance. Do you build it first and wait for them to come, or do you wait for them to knock and then build it for them?" asked Jason Silva, a project director at architectural firm Dreyfuss & Blackford in Sacramento.

LEED is rare for a speculative private-sector building. Still, more and more, projects



The 147-year-old Fausel House, Placerville's oldest residence, was preserved and restored in Anova Architects' new office complex. The entire project received LEED gold certification.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ANOVA ARCHITECTS INC.

think you can reach a certain level, and if you are going to reach that level, we would encourage them to do the LEED certification."

ALTERNATIVE PATHS

Developers have a couple of additional options. One is a relatively new LEED certificate for existing buildings. DPR is going through the process to certify its six-year-old building, as is Dreyfuss & Blackford with its 1965 headquarters.

In theory, a developer also could get the "EB" certificate for an almost new project if he wants to wait until the economy improves before investing the time and effort to document it, and perhaps making a few upgrades that didn't pencil out originally.

And LEED isn't the only game in town.

The smaller of Jackson Properties' buildings on University Avenue is shooting for certification under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star program.

"Energy Star is not as stringent, but it is a good step in the right direction," said Silva, who is working with Jackson on the project. "It also has maybe a little more traction with the public because you see it on your TV. Now, buildings will have an Energy Star sticker on them."

Even without a certificate to look at, more tenants are learning to recognize green components when they see them. They can see the white reflective roof coatings, the showers and changing rooms for bike riders, the lower utility bills. It's amazing, Jackson said, to stand in front of a window that faces right into

the afternoon sun, and feel little or no heat coming through the special glazing.

The LoftWorks partnership built a spec office building on the corner of 26th Street and Capitol Avenue.

"I think the additional cost was 1.5 percent, and that actually got us to a gold certification," said partner Mike Heller Jr., who took the lead on the project. It was a good selling point.

"There are tenants in the market, and I've encountered this, they know if you have gone through the accreditation process. It gives them an extra layer of comfort," Heller said. But he's also built projects that did not pursue LEED certification and were still green in nature.

"At the end of the day it's less about the paperwork, the diploma, and more about doing the right thing," he said.