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Developer's interest in green is growing, thanks to new roof

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Workers at Olive 8 in Seattle installed the second part of a green roof yesterday. Olive 8 is the first R.C. Hedreen project targeting LEED certification and has made the company's president, David Thyer, a green convert.

"I became far more interested in it, I think from an overall company standpoint, as well as looking ahead to the future," he said. "Frankly, I think that's just good architecture and good business... so we will continue to go down that road, even if oil goes back down to \$20 a barrel."



Photo by Katie Zemtseff [enlarge](#)

Olive 8 actually has two green roofs. One is on top of the building's chillers and is sod-based. The other is made up of trays that hold plants. R.C. Hedreen is testing which system works better.

Olive 8 is a \$162 million condo/hotel project between Eighth Avenue and Olive Way. The Hyatt at Olive 8 will occupy the first 17 floors, while the top 22 floors will house 229 condos. The company says it is the first hotel/condo project in Seattle to seek LEED certification. Derek Janke, senior manager on the project, said Olive 8 was not originally shooting for LEED but the city's incentives for higher density convinced the company it was worthwhile. In exchange for an extra three stories, the developer is targeting LEED silver and may meet LEED gold.

Green is also going to be part of future projects. R.C. Hedreen is targeting LEED platinum for its new Stewart Street project, and is pursuing certification under LEED for existing buildings on its three hotels: Grand Hyatt, Hilton Seattle and Madison Renaissance, though it is in different stages with each.

Olive 8's green roof will be one of the largest in Seattle at 8,355 square feet. Sited on the fourth floor of the Hyatt at Olive 8, it will be visible to hotel guests, condo owners and those in nearby buildings.

Janke said the visibility is important. "People won't notice water efficiency," he said. "(But) when you look out and see a green roof, it's like it's something I can see and feel."

Thyer said a green roof is not the same as developing a public park but it adds to the city's greenscape, and offers habitat and stormwater benefits, as well as helping to mitigate the heat island effect. "From a surrounding building perspective, it's certainly a lot nicer to look at than it is to just look at a bare tile roof and mechanical equipment."

Olive 8 actually has two green roofs. The smaller one, at about 2,500 square feet, is on top of the chillers and is sod-based. The larger roof, at about 5,800 square feet, is made up of trays that hold smaller sections of the green roof.

Janke said the company wanted to test which system worked better. "This is our first system and we wanted to see them both," he said.

R.C. Hedreen is considering a green roof for its Stewart Street project. It is also considering one on Olive 8's 39th floor. To do another green roof on Olive 8, Janke said R.C. Hedreen would need some sort of incentive from the city for stormwater diversion, such as a tax credit or rebate. R.C. Hedreen is meeting with the city to discuss some possibilities this week. A second green roof would likely push the project to LEED gold.

Thyer said local utilities should switch from offering incentives on "no-brainers" such as fluorescent lights to encouraging things that are a little harder, like green roofs. "I don't think (developers) necessarily need to be subsidized for things that automatically save us money," he said. "I think it's these choices that are a little bit more difficult that the city ought to be focused on providing some assistance and incentives with."

Olive 8 should open in late March and another green roof would not impact the schedule. Depending on economic conditions, R.C. Hedreen is also considering vertical green walls around the mechanical equipment, or using climbing vines like hops to cover it.

Jeff Griffin, general foreman at the site, said it was not difficult to learn to install a green roof but it took a little more time and thought.

Janke said public projects have pursued green building, but private developers need more education "to bridge the gap." R.C. Hedreen owns and operates its projects so green saves the company money in the long run. But Janke said he's not sure that developers of speculative projects will ever fully embrace green building because there's not enough return on investment.

For ideas on increasing green roofs in Seattle, experts often look to Portland where they are called "ecoroofs." Under Portland's Ecoroof Incentive Program, projects can receive grants of up to \$5 per square foot for ecoroofs. Projects can also use ecoroofs to increase density.

Tom Liptan, sustainable design specialist with Portland's Bureau of Environmental Services, said 14 major projects have used ecoroofs to increase density. In total, he said they had earned almost 600,000 square feet of additional space.

Other green features at Olive 8 include energy-efficient and water-efficient fixtures, extensive daylighting, a system that captures steam condensation and uses it to water landscaping, and automatic light controls in hotel guest rooms. R.C. Hedreen also paid almost \$1 million to preserve rural land at Sugar Loaf Mountain County Park, in exchange for building higher.

Thyer said the economy has affected sales at Olive 8: about 45 units are still on the market.

Team members on Olive 8 include Mulvanny G2 Architecture, project architect; Richard Gluckman of Gluckman Mayner Architects, exterior designer; JTM Construction, general contractor; The Berger Partnership, landscape architect; KPFF, structural engineer; McKinstry, mechanical and plumbing engineer; Sparling, electrical engineer; Bush Roed & Hitchings, land

surveying; Rushing, energy analysis; Blackbird Consulting, LEED Consulting; and BRC Acoustics, acoustics consultant.

For more information, visit www.olive8.com.

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