



Citadel, FXFowle and Flack + Kurtz create National Audubon Society HQs: To receive Platinum LEED

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The 27,000 s/f newly designed and built headquarters of the National Audubon Society not only fulfills the organization's stated mission "to conserve and restore natural ecosystems...for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity," it creates a standard of excellence in green construction that others will strive to emulate. Occupying the entire seventh floor of 225 Varick St., the renovated space is expected to exceed the criteria for a Platinum LEED Commercial Interior (CI) set forth by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). The team for the design and construction project consisted of Citadel Construction Corp., FXFowle Architects, PC, and WSP Flack + Kurtz.

The National Audubon Society wanted a green space that would work in harmony with its urban environment by reducing energy consumption and the emission of greenhouse gases and improving indoor air quality and employees' workplace wellbeing.

Since the space once housed a high-ceilinged printing company, it retained an airy, loft-like feel. To accentuate this, the Citadel team created an HVAC system that eliminated overhead duct work. A raised floor facilitates the distribution of hot and cool air through over 200 individual air outlets located in the floor that allow employees to easily adjust the temperature of their immediate environment. The gas-powered heating and cooling systems use no chlorofluorocarbons and operate independently of the other floors in the 12-story, 1926 building. The project team also installed a new cooling tower which was hoisted to the roof, new supply and return risers for the HVAC, and an upgrade of the existing service to the floor.

Citadel used only low VOC substances in construction and sustainable, recyclable or reclaimed materials to build and furnish the offices. Floors are bare concrete treated with a sealant or natural cork; countertops are made from compressed paper products or recycled glass. Most project wood was either salvaged or certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). Construction waste and debris were carefully handled and sent to a specialized recycling plant. To reduce transportation costs and minimize pollution, products came from within a 500-mile radius of the Hudson Sq. address.

Maximizing the use of natural light was also a priority. FXFowle designed the rectangular space around a central core, with abundant light flowing freely through full-height windows, skylights and an open office layout. A five-ft.-wide corridor offers access to the windows and views of the cityscape and sky. Partitions between offices are glass panels with aluminum trim that can be removed and reconfigured; polypropylene panels between workstations slide easily to capture more light.

Artificial lighting, used at a minimum, consists largely of fluorescent pendants that use a daylight harvesting system which automatically adjusts illumination levels according to the amount of natural light available. Energy efficiency is also achieved through indirect lighting fixtures and low wattage

bulbs.

To ensure indoor air quality, Citadel had the walls insulated at a level three times the energy code. Double-paned windows act as "heat mirror" sheets, and high-speed air flow guarantees a plentiful supply of purified air.

By reaching previously untried heights in greening, the National Audubon Society, in concert with the Citadel team, has reinvigorated the city's greenscape. â€

Citadel project executive Ronald Welsh, LEED AP, said, "The project team was all of one mind. Clearly, what we build now has a direct impact on the environment; to that end we approach each and every project with the utmost sensitivity and foresight."

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