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PROJECTS SAVE SOME GREEN

City buildings aim to LEED

By LOIS WEISS

L EED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is on a roll as hundreds of city projects are now in the process of going green.

A list generated by the city chapter of the US Green Building Council found at least 83 projects already certified as meeting LEED standards, with about 400 others having started the process.

Projects going for LEED certification include office buildings, single company offices, residential buildings, retail stores, supermarkets and educational facilities.

"It's proof of the pudding that green building has become mainstream," said Russell Unger, executive director of the Urban Green Council, which is the US Green Building Council of New York. "In the past, it was a lot harder to find people to design or even build it out. This is a result of a maturing and a scaling of the industry."

Owners like Tony Malkin, president of both Malkin Properties and W&M Properties which owns the Empire State Building, are forging ahead with energy efficient retrofits, whether or not they go for LEED certification, since current LEED checklists do not include "proven" energy efficiency requirements, Malkin said. "You can become a LEED standardized building and not materially reduce your energy," Malkin added. That's why he has focused their retrofits on reducing energy in a way that is measurable and reproducible in all buildings.

"As people recognize the value proposition of energy efficient retrofits and in fulfilling carbon footprint reduction mandates, the realization they can find it in a fully upgraded but none-the-less pre-war building is putting us on a lot of tours we wouldn't have ever seen

ONLINE INFO

- **New York State Energy Research and Development Authority:** nyserdera.org
- **LEED and the USGBC:** usgbc.org
- **Materials and resources:** cdrecycling.org; crbt.org
- **Materials for indoor environmental quality:** greenseal.org; daylighting.org
- **Green building tips:** dec.ny.gov/energy/1538.html
- **Green materials referenced in the NYS green building tax credit:** dec.ny.gov/energy/1540.html
- **Summary of the tax credit legislation:** dec.state.ny.us/website/ppu/grnblgd/legis.html

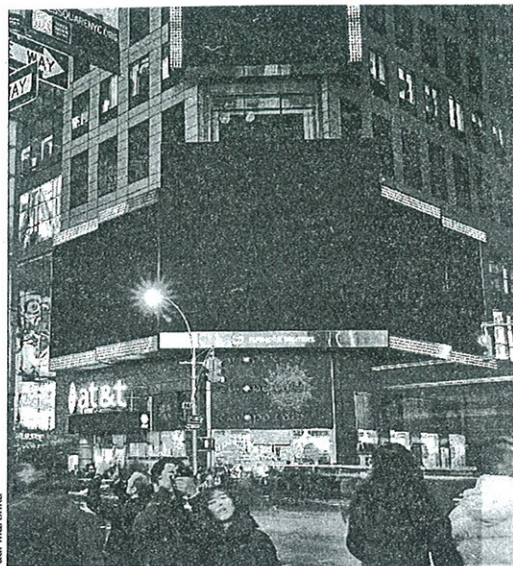
before," Malkin said of the benefit to building owners. "The costs were way below that of new construction."

The Empire State Building retrofits honed in on energy consumption. "Salary, rent and utilities are the biggest costs of occupancy," Malkin explained. "Over a 10- to 15-year lease, we present a major savings for tenants."

Future retrofits and upgrades of the other buildings in their portfolio will be modeled after those made at the Empire State Building.

Richard Bernstein, vice chairman, Cassidy Turley, says the LEED process at the Empire State Building was very important to their tenant client, Coty, in its space decision to lease 90,000 square feet. "The repositioning of the asset including the green initiative was the attraction to Coty," Bernstein said.

In this softer market, Bernstein said they are also



On March 28, many establishments in Times Square switched off their lights to commemorate Earth Hour.

working with their property-owning clients to position their buildings in the most competitive way. "The clients need to step up and take responsibility," he said. On the tenant side, Bernstein noted, it is hard to find a tech company with a younger workforce that does not require a green workplace.

Cassidy Turley also manages the office space at 1745 Broadway for Random House, which was one of the first buildings in the city to become LEED certified. Another client, 250 Park Avenue, is in the midst of the certification process.

Because there are few new buildings, most interior work and upgrades of existing buildings are also focusing on green, whether or not they choose to pay the extra costs for LEED certification.

"Buildings now are pursuing both Energy Star and LEED EB for 'existing buildings,' said David Bonifacic, co-founder and managing principal of WB Engineering.

Edward V. Piccinich, Executive Vice President, of SL Green Realty Corp. oversaw the LEED process for 100 Park Avenue and 1515 Broadway and is implementing retrofits at several other buildings in their portfolio. But the company is also educating tenants on green practices. Tenants in a half dozen buildings will be getting Earth Week handouts and education materials. They also turned off the lights on the crown of 1515 Broadway in Times Square as part of Earth Hour where lights around the world switched off for one hour.

The company recycles all construction debris, uses

e-mail for notices and, among other programs, is encouraging tenants to recycle and use double sided paper.

"LEDs are the latest trend," Piccinich said of the tiny, long lasting light sources. "We introduced them three years ago into our holiday decorations and saved a tremendous amount of money."

Paul Wolf, a partner with Denham Wolf which is part owner of the Bank Note Building in The Bronx, says they are not applying for LEED certification for the project but have nevertheless focused its \$25 million upgrade on sustainable building retrofits. They replaced the windows, elevators and the heating and cooling system. "We think it's important to do a sustainable development but there are additional costs to getting the LEED certification," Wolf explained.

Those costs have come down over the years as LEED certification begins earlier in the design process.

"It's the little nuances that have to be taken care of," said Tom Gallin of John Gallin & Son which did the interiors and worked on the LEED platinum rating for the Action Center to End World Hunger in Battery Park City. "It's have to be dotted and T's have to be crossed. Right now it's worth doing but 15 years from now it might be a different question."

A few years ago, LEED did not have requirements to exceed energy codes, but the new LEED ratings system changed all that. "Now every building has to exceed local energy codes," said Unger. "It's kind of a 'choose your own green energy adventure.'"