

# WinterGREEN

Volume 13, Issue 4

May 2012

A monthly update on Steven Winter Associates, Inc.'s work in the realm of Energy Efficient, Sustainable, and High-Performance Buildings

## Green Hotels: Opportunities for Energy and Ventilation Upgrades in the Hospitality Industry

SWA recently moderated the symposium "Energy and Ventilation Upgrade Opportunities in the Hotel/Hospitality Sector," hosted by the Mohawk Group at its NYC showroom.

SWA brought together five panelists with expertise in existing commercial buildings to address energy and ventilation issues specifically geared toward New York City hotels – a critical and high profile sector that often exhibits very high energy use profiles. In addition to SWA's Mike Flatley, whose expertise is in building operations and retro-commissioning, the interdisciplinary panel was comprised of product manufacturers (AEROSEAL and American ALDEES), mechanical engineering (Southport and PJM). A variety of hotel case studies was presented demonstrating proven and practical strategies for reducing energy/operating costs and improving comfort and indoor air quality.

One focus of the discussion was the impact of NYC's Greener, Greater Building Laws and the benefits of early compliance with LL 87 (by end of 2013). Early compliers are eligible for NYSEDA's FlexTech 50-50 incentive, which covers 50% of the cost of performing an energy audit and retro-commissioning. An additional benefit of early compliance is that the building's next round of energy audits will be postponed for 10 years.

Hotels are unique in that their occupants stay only briefly and may not be thinking about energy use reduction and sustainability while they are here. In addition, hotels must have occupant comfort at the top of their operations priority list. In the past, this translated into virtually unrestrained controls – windows flung open while heat was pouring out of individual registers, AC set to 65 degrees. One of the additional financial benefits of early compliance and the energy audit process is that the hotel management receives a list of recommended energy conservation measures to implement, and incentives to help offset the costs. For In older hotels, for example, where there is limited control over thermostats and temperature, one energy efficiency upgrade may be to install occupancy sensor controls to ensure that heating and cooling is turned off when the room is not occupied. The sooner such strategies are implemented, the sooner a building can start saving both energy and money.

Periodic retro commissioning, also required by Local Law 87, can further improve Operations and Maintenance aspects of a multi-occupant building. Mr. Flatley, bringing his considerable retro-commissioning experience to play, likes to paraphrase the real estate mantra "location, location, location" into "education, education, education." In many cases, says Flatley, operating engineers in hotels are not aware of the fine points of the existing conditions, let alone upgrades based on recommendations to correct existing problems. For Flatley, providing education through training is the only way to achieve optimal operation in place of less effective "standard operating procedures."

The attendees included owners, operators, developers and service operators.

For more information on this subject, contact Michael Flatley at [mflatley@swinter.com](mailto:mflatley@swinter.com).

12/2009	4 bills signed into law
5/2010	BENCHMARKING City-owned bldgs due
7/2010	NYC ENERGY CODE— LL85  Effective date for all construction
5/2011	BENCHMARKING—LL84  Private bldgs due
1/2013	AUDITS & RETRO-CXG— LL87  Early compliance reports due  Commence staggered report deadlines
1/2025	LIGHTING & SUBMETERING—LL88  Compliance reports due

## When Green Means Luxury: Major Hotel Chain Capitalizes on Sustainable Model

About a year ago, the Andaz 5th Avenue became the first hotel in New York City operated by Hyatt Hotels and Resorts to achieve LEED Silver Certification. Located directly across Fifth Avenue from the New York Public Library, the project follows the Andaz model of boutique hotels that are "designed to reflect the unique cultural scene and spirit of the surrounding neighborhood" as well as to provide guests with a relaxing and uncomplicated luxury experience. Beyond offering high-toned amenities, however, the Andaz hotels are also remarkably sustainable and exemplify the direction in which the hospitality industry is headed.

One of the advantages of the Andaz model is that Hyatt Hotels articulated a clear sustainability plan for the brand even before the design phase, so that green features could be built into both design and operation. In New York City, this proactive approach can help a large commercial building save millions, as its facilities are already ahead of the curve in terms of compliance with New York City's Greater, Greener Buildings requirements for buildings over 50,000 sf. The Andaz 5th Avenue can take advantage of early compliance incentives, exempting it from having to perform an energy audit to satisfy municipal requirements for another 10 years.

The hotel is housed in a building originally constructed in 1916 for Rogers, Peet & Co. as a department store and now extensively renovated, with the addition of four new stories to total 11 floors and 209,000 sf. An impressive 100% of the existing building's structural and exterior elements were retained, a model both of building reuse and of historical preservation.

The Andaz 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue boasts several fundamental energy efficiency features. 85% of public spaces are illuminated with natural daylight, significantly decreasing the need for artificial lighting and cooling. HVAC and lighting in guestrooms is managed by an INNCOM Integrated Room Automation System, which can be controlled by guests to maintain their optimum comfort, or by the automated system when a room is not occupied. Excellent indoor air quality is also essential in any high-occupancy space; in the Andaz, all paints, adhesives, sealants and coatings contain low VOC levels. Water use is reduced by a rainwater collection cistern that is used to flush toilets, and there are food-recycling and compost facilities to minimize food waste.

Other sustainable lifestyle features draw both guests and those just stopping in for an evening out. Hotel bars and restaurants offer seasonal menus with organic, local products. Another major draw, the Andaz is in easy walking distance to some of NYC's most famous attractions, including Broadway shows and the shops on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. For those who really must use a car, the hotel offers a 20% parking discount to guests driving fuel efficient and low-emitting vehicles.

SWA provided LEED Program Management services for the project, including green material specifications, water-use calculations, daylight calculations, and LEED documentation. SWA also developed a Green Operations and Maintenance Plan for Andaz.

For more information on this subject, contact Andy Zumwalt-Hathaway at [ahathaway@swinter.com](mailto:ahathaway@swinter.com).



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