

When Green Means Luxury: Major Hotel Chain Capitalizes On Sustainable Model

By Andy Zumwalt-Hathaway, Steven Winter Associates, Inc.



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 square feet. 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 square feet. 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 5th 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 rain-water 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 5th 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.

About the Author

As Director of SWA's Sustainability Consulting Services, Mr. Hathaway has managed several landmark Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design projects including the Solaire and the Hearst World Headquarters—the first two projects to become LEED® Gold certified in New York City under the LEED® for New Construction™ rating system. Mr. Hathaway has over ten years of experience working with green building programs and providing technical assistance related to materials selection, water conservation and energy efficiency.

Mr. Hathaway's expertise is in creating sustainability strategies for a diverse number of national and local clients, and directing all aspects of their technical assistance, documentation development, training, and project management. He has participated in the development of sustainable design guidelines and providing LEED training for entities including the City of New York's Department of Design & Construction, the Federal Aviation Administration, the City of Philadelphia, and the Battery Park City Authority.

About Steven Winter Associates, Inc.

Steven Winter Associates, Inc. provides research, consulting and advisory services to improve commercial, residential and multi-family built environments for private and public sector clients. We specialize in energy, sustainability and accessibility consulting as well as certification, research & development and compliance services. Our engineers and architects have led the way since 1972 in the development of best practices to achieve high performance buildings. As a matter of course, we collaborate with our clients to produce the most cost-effective and innovative solutions. For more information, visit www.swinter.com.

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