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Avesta Housing's Pearl Place II awarded USGBC's LEED Platinum for Homes

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The team behind Pearl Place II has established a reputation for green building. Avesta Housing's 54-apartment community in Portland's Bayside neighborhood joined ranks with the organization's numerous other sustainable developments when USGBC's LEED for Homes confirmed its approval of Pearl Place II's LEED Platinum Certification in September 2013.

Avesta Housing, New England's largest nonprofit developer of affordable housing, first defined its green design standards nearly 10 years ago. Since then, the developer has gone on to receive national recognition for their commitment to sustainability. Oak Street Lofts, a previous New England Real Estate Journal Project of the Month (<http://nerej.com/56590>) and another Avesta collaboration with Pearl Place II construction manager Wright-Ryan Construction, was the first affordable multi-family building in Maine to be certified LEED Platinum by the U.S. Green Building Council. In 2008, Avesta received the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED For Homes Award in the Multifamily Category for its first phase of development on Pearl Street.

Pearl Place II continues Avesta's vision for the area. The community's ideal location places residents within a half mile of Portland's public transportation terminal which offers more than 250 transit rides per weekday, as well as easy access to city parks, trails, and Portland's Back Cove. Energy models estimate that Pearl Place II is 25% more efficient than standard buildings with similar characteristics. Efficiency works from the outside-in with a tight, highly-insulated building envelope to contain the community's advanced systems. The building's boilers achieve 92% efficiency, compared with standard boilers that are roughly 80% efficient, and fresh air is supplied by an energy recovery ventilation system. In addition, a series of solar panels on the roof heat approximately 65% of the domestic hot water used in the building.

For Pearl Place II, being well built means more than high-efficiency systems. The design, executed by Wright-Ryan Const., maximized production efficiency by implementing a panelized construction system. Avesta and the builders were also careful to use as many local and green-certified materials as possible such as local framing and masonry and locally extracted lumber and concrete. Low or no-VOC paints and adhesives were used and high-efficiency fixtures and appliances were installed. Wright-Ryan also diverted 85% of construction waste from landfills through on-site sorting and distribution to appropriate local recycling facilities.

In addition to Avesta Housing and PDT Architects, the project development team included Thornton Tomasetti (LEED and sustainability consultant) and Wright-Ryan Construction (construction manager). Consultants included Becker Structural Engineers (structural), Bennett Engineering (mechanical, electrical, and plumbing), Woodard & Curran (civil engineering), Carroll Associates (landscape architects), Lowell Specifications (specifications), Conestco (cost estimating), and S.W. Cole Engineering (geotechnical). Primary financing was provided by Low Income Housing Tax

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