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COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

Ultra-green Seattle apartment project proves its point, developers say



Solar energy for the new Inspire apartment building in Seattle is provided by 244 rooftop solar panels. They powers more than 105% of all building energy needs and eliminate electricity bills for residents, according to the developers.

LARA SWIMMER PHOTOGRAPHY



By Marc Stiles
Staff Writer, Puget Sound Business Journal
an hour ago

Most of Seattle's first "carbon positive" apartment building has been leased at rents higher than what the developers had aimed for, the project team said this week.

The five-story Inspire project in Fremont opened the week Gov. Jay Inslee issued the stay-home order, which shut down the economy.

That 41 of the 42 units have been rented in this environment proves there's strong demand for ultra-green apartments, said co-developer Brett Phillips of Russell's Fifth Ave. Inc.

This bodes well for another green development, Ellie Passivhaus, which is nearing completion at 320 Queen Anne Ave. N. It's estimated tenants in the six-story building will consume up to 85% less energy than a standard Seattle building, said developer, Arthur "Wes" Larson, CEO of Bremerton-based Sound West Group.

At 66 units, it's the city's largest "passive house" project to date. The six-story project is scheduled to open next quarter.



Ellis Passivhaus is the largest "passive house" development to date in Seattle. The 66-unit project in the Uptown/Lower Queen Anne is nearing completion. completion

NK ARCHITECTS AND BALANCE
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Common in Europe, passive houses have high-performance windows, extra-thick walls and energy recovery ventilation, which exchanges air inside a building and uses it to precondition incoming outdoor ventilation air, cooling it in warmer seasons and warming it when it's colder.

Phillips said before Covid, he and co-developer and project general contractor Mike Yukevich, a principal at Shilshole Development, expected it would take the property management team from Pacific Crest Real Estate three months to lease up the property.

"Pacific Crest kept pushing throughout the early portion of the pandemic. Somehow, somehow we were able to lease 41 units during a period where other buildings were grateful to give one tour per week," Yukevich said in an email.

Inspire (3825 Bridge Way N.) is topped by a 244-panel solar array, which resembles a mortarboard cap. The developers

said this eliminates electricity bills for residents.

The solar panels and other green features like the elevator, which captures heat when it operates and converts it to energy, are intended to generate 105% of the building's needed energy, making it "carbon positive."

Triple-pane windows and extra insulation are among the factors that make Inspire 54% more energy efficient than new residential buildings in Seattle, the developers said.

Project47 Architects designed Inspire. Unico Sustainability also worked on the project, which achieved rents of \$4.25 per square foot, Phillips said. Average unit sizes are 407 square feet.

As the name implies, a goal of Inspire is to show other developers they can do well financially by doing good things for the environment.

At Ellie Passivhaus, the average anticipated rent is \$1,800, with the units averaging 476 square feet, Larson said. Equity for the \$26 million project came from friends and family of the developer, and Dallas-headquartered Orix USA financed the project, which is scheduled for completion next quarter.

Financial details of Inspire were not available.

NK Architects and Balance Architects designed Ellie Passivhaus, which was constructed by Seattle passive house pioneer Cascade Built.

Led by [Sloan Ritchie](#), Cascade Built six years ago developed and built the city's first single-family passive house to test and prove the viability of the method. Constructed during the city's construction boom when the cost of building materials soared, it was done with less than 5% increase on cost, according to the company.

Cascade Built developed and constructed the 32-unit Pax Futura in Columbia City. Designed by NK Architects, it's the

city's first passive house apartment building, certified by the Passive House Institute US.

The company also developed the city's second passive house project at 13th Avenue and East Pike Street on Capitol Hill. Weber Thompson Architects designed the 45-unit, six story building.

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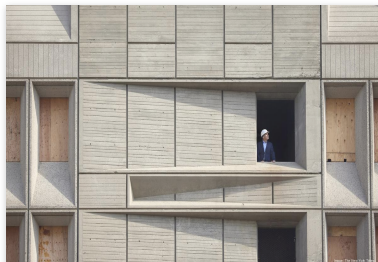
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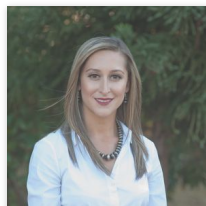
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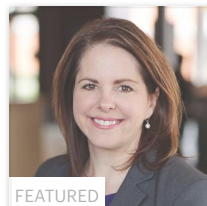
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