

Stimulating Sustainability

Proximity Hotel

Location_ Green Valley Road, Greensboro, North Carolina, US

Date_ November 2007

Design_ In-house

Website_ www.proximityhotel.com

118

Constructed to use 36% less energy and 30% less water than a comparably sized hotel, the Proximity is working towards becoming the greenest hotel in the US. A series of 100 solar panels has been installed on the roof, heating 60% of water for the hotel and its adjoining restaurant. The guest elevator generates electricity as it descends - the first in the US to do so. The hotel will also act as an 'education centre' for sustainable practices, offering tours for guests and visiting students.





The hotel has adopted the guidelines of the US Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). LEED awards certificates at different levels, and Proximity aims to become the first US hotel to hold a Platinum certificate. So far it has implemented over 70 sustainable practices.

Natural daylight and fresh air are used to light and cool the building through oversized windows that also connect guests to the outdoors. In the kitchens, sensors alter the power usage according to the kitchen's needs and control the fan speed according to the level of heat and smoke. Improved plumbing and geothermal refrigeration systems reduce water use; overall 30% less water will be used. A green, vegetated rooftop is planned to insulate the building and reduce rain run-off, keeping the building cooler.

Sustainable measures were especially important during construction, with 75% of the waste produced recycled. Many of the materials used were sourced locally and were salvaged or contained recycled content. For example, the shelving in guestrooms was made from post-industrial recycled wood pulp, while table-tops in the restaurant were made from salvaged walnut tree trunks.

Outside, a stretch of a local stream was restored to prevent erosion and improve the environment. Guests are encouraged to join in the eco-endeavours by using the bicycles provided for local journeys.