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Mill Plain remodel could be county's first LEED-certified retail building

BY CHARITY THOMPSON | of the VBJ

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A green renovation has put Cascade Square Retail in the running for certification by the United States Green Building Council, and might be the first to do so in Clark County.

Oregon City-based Redside Development bought the former Maverick's Fitness building at 11803 S.E. Mill Plain Blvd. in December 2006.



"We purchased it with the intent of turning it into a new and reinvigorated multi-tenant building," said Garrin Royer, principal of the development company.

"We're trying to step up the look and feel (of Mill Plain) and hopefully others will follow suit."

In early 2009, Cascade Square is likely to earn silver certification under USGBC's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design rating system.

If certified, it will be the fourth LEED-certified retail building in the Vancouver-Portland metro area, according to Portland-based Green Building Services. The others are REI in Portland, a Starbucks in Hillsboro and a complex that Redside developed in Oregon City – Clackamas County's first privately developed LEED building.

Since July, Cascade Square has been home to Stupid Prices, a Seattle-based reseller with an approach that matches the intent of the building, Royer said.

"They (sell) name-brand products that are one model old and are effectively maintaining their life in the market," he said. "That fits in the with reuse model of the building."

Royer said he makes a point of LEED-certifying most of his projects. But that's rare for a developer to do on a retail project, particularly a remodel.

"Most of the green buildings are either residential, because people will pay for something that feels good to them, or governmental because there are government mandates to build green," Royer said.

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This sculpture was made from materials salvaged during the remodel of Cascade Square Retail.

Commercial LEED-certified projects tend to be large – at least 100,000 square feet, Royer said – because bigger project budgets can better bear costs of certification.

Renovations are less likely to get LEED certification for similar reasons, although remodeling often has less environmental impact than new construction.

To certify the 26,000-square-foot Mill Plain project, Redside spent about \$150,000, or 3 percent of the \$5 million budget.

“It’s not that it’s easy for us to absorb the cost, but we believe it’s the right thing to do,” Royer said. “It gives us a demonstrable marketing advantage.”

Cascade Square was built in the early 1970s, and housed Dick and Steve’s grocery store before Maverick’s Fitness moved in about 15 years ago, Royer said.

Redside began remodeling the space in February to accommodate multiple tenants and increase energy efficiency, working with Portland-based Ankrom Moisan Associated Architects and Gladstone, Ore.-based Bartel Contracting.

During the remodel, 95 percent of the exterior building materials were reused and at least 75 percent of construction waste was recycled, Redside said.



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The building's new roof has R-30 insulation at more than twice the standard for energy efficiency. A high-efficiency heating and cooling system is expected to reduce energy costs by almost 18 percent, along with large skylights.

Low-flow water faucets and dual-flush toilets were installed to reduce water use, and low-toxin paints and floor coverings are expected to improve the building's air quality.

Outside, asphalt at the front of the building was replaced with pavers to reduce stormwater runoff, and landscaping includes native and drought tolerant plants that don't require irrigation. Portland artist Ivan McLean created a sculpture from materials salvaged during remodeling.

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