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New office buildings aim for green advantage

WALTHAM — By going green, Hobbs Brook Management's new office buildings at 175 and 185 Wyman St. are hoping to earn gold.

Hobbs Brook celebrated the completion of the new buildings last Friday. The 335,000 square-foot site offers many amenities such as on-site dining and pleasant views, but most important to Hobbs Brook are the environmentally sensitive design features.

The building at 175 Wyman is 224,000 square feet, while the one at 185 Wyman is 110,000 square feet.

Thomas Dusel, president and CEO of Hobbs Brook, said he expects the buildings to receive a LEED Gold Certification.

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design provides a rating system for sustainable design, construction and operation of buildings.

"Potential tenants are looking for sustainable buildings," said principal architect Marc Margulies of Margulies Perruzzi Architects in Boston, responsible for the design of the building.

The company has yet to sign leases with any tenants, although there are interested parties, said Dusel yesterday.

A glance from the so-called "prow" of the V-shaped building at 175 Wyman St. reveals a tranquil pond on the grounds. The pond doubles as a retention pool that collects rainwater from the roof. A 200,000-gallon concrete bunker transfers the water from the roof, into the pond, and then into another pond that flows into the Cambridge Reservoir, said Dusel.

The harvested rainwater will be used to irrigate the landscaping as well, he said. A 40 percent reduction in water-use is expected.

"We took great pains to retain as much of the existing mature landscaping on site," said Dusel, "So you will see a lot of trees that typical developers would have knocked down because they would have been in the way."



Lisa Casidy/Daily News

Hobbs Brook Vice President Donald Oldmixon gives a tour of 175 Wyman St. in Waltham on Monday. Construction of its buildings at 175 and 185 Wyman Street has just been completed.



Lisa Casidy/Daily News

This is the view from an upper floor suite of the new office building at 175 Wyman St. in Waltham on Monday.

The environment was kept in mind even during the construction phase. The land, which was purchased for around \$38 million in October 2007, housed an old Hewlett Packard manufacturing plant.

When the original building was demolished in the summer of 2008, 62,000 tons of concrete and masonry debris was recycled on-site and used for structural fill. The steel was transported off site and recycled.

Around 95 percent of the old building was recycled or reused, said Dusel.

Even the 200,000-gallon bunker, originally a fire protection vault from the old building was re-used as an irrigation system, said Donald Oldmixon, Hobbs Brook's first vice president of leasing and construction.

Most of the products used to construct the buildings came from within 600 miles, said Dusel. Glare from lights will be so minimal that, "an amateur astronomer in the back of the property will be able to see the stars," said Oldmixon because no light will shine upward.

Permanent sunshades, in the form of 6 horizontal beams along the tops of all windows will help increase the energy efficiency in the building, he said.

The roof is white to prevent that surface from getting too hot, said Dusel.

"We put the 'park' in office park," said Oldmixon. "When tenants move in, they aren't going to look at the building, they are going to be looking out, so you want them to look out on a very attractive park-like setting."

The landscaping will consist of native, drought-resistant fir and birch trees, grasses and even some wildflowers, said Oldmixon.

After tenants move in, more green-friendly practices will be instituted including offering closer parking spaces to those who drive a hybrid car or car pool; healthy, fresh, dining-hall food

prepared in a state-of-the-art kitchen; and cleaning products will be environmentally-safe.

Hobbs Brook and Margulies Perruzzi have "a strong commitment to sustainability," said Margulies. "We knew we were going to be pursuing it as well as we could."

In designing the buildings, Margulies said he had a very creative team working together on the project.

Margulies said the buildings turned out to be, "incredibly dramatic because of the natural evolution of building on site."

Even the front curve of 175 Wyman was designed to follow the natural curve of the street, he said.

"The level of sophistication in the construction was more like building an automobile," said Margulies.

The \$81 million buildings are enveloped in terra cotta panels and aluminum rain screen providing insulation and reducing energy costs and is an example of the architect's design inspiration.

Margulies said the theme for the buildings were "esoteric but artistic," through the appearance of "slipping and sliding" materials, seeming to move forward and backward from each other.

Hobbs Brook is hoping to be the first green office park in the Boston suburbs, and the company is working on "going green" with its existing properties as well, Oldmixon said.