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Treehouse Gets Double LEED Certification



The two-story 14,700-square-foot office building has been certified double LEED Platinum by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC).

HOUSTON—Earth Day took on new meaning for an environmentally aware Houston-area development.

The Treehouse Memorial City, a 14,700-square-foot office building, has been certified double LEED Platinum by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). The development received a score of 95 points -- a LEED BD+C: CS (Core and Shell) Platinum Level -- the highest credit point total for a project in Texas and the second-highest in the country. In addition, The Treehouse received LEED ID+C: (Commercial Interiors) Platinum Level with a score of 80 points.

The two-story building, designed by Studio RED Architects, evokes a sophisticated, modern day treehouse. Sustainable design strategies for the project include a geothermal cooling and heating system, daylight harvesting for lighting adjustments, solar panels, rainwater collection for landscaping and a rooftop garden. Energy efficient measures reduce the building energy costs to nearly 50 percent of a baseline office building. The water efficiency features work to reduce irrigation requirements by almost 70 percent, which resulted in an innovative technology credit award by the USGBC.

“The Treehouse Memorial City is an inspiring environment that serves as a creative incubator for our team and our valued partners,” Glenn Fuhrman, vice president of design and construction at MetroNational, told GlobeSt.com. “The double LEED Platinum certification designation is validation of MetroNational’s sustainable building efforts and the company’s continued commitment to the environment.”

(The building houses Houston-based MetroNational's development office, and serves as a meeting space and showroom for current and future Memorial City projects.)

In September, the Institute of Real Estate Management (IREM) and the City of Houston signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining a new collaborative relationship to promote sustainability, with the aim that more buildings in the city meet the bar that The Treehouse has set.

Other design aspects of note: The interior wood flooring was reclaimed from a Galveston warehouse and the exterior wood paneling was harvested from South America and is FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certified. Tables were made from local tree trunk slabs, outdoor furniture was made from recycled plastic bottles and a coffee bar features a recycled-glass countertop and indoor bike hutch, encouraging employees to reduce their carbon footprint.

"The Treehouse Memorial City is a great example of MetroNational's commitment to the environment through both their corporate culture and their actions; this high-profile LEED Platinum designation further validates that," says Micah Simecek, principal of Studio RED Architects.

In addition to The Treehouse at Memorial City, the company has eight buildings that already are or are tracking for Gold or Silver Level LEED designations.

In the company's first-year of its Memorial City-wide office building recycling program, the company diverted more than 150 tons of recyclables from landfills. In addition to MetroNational's extensive corporate sustainability objectives, the company also has five employees on staff that have taken the step to become a LEED Green Associate, a more in-depth designation of LEED Accredited Professional in the areas of design and construction and