The oldest LEED-certified building in the world

Published on **25 Jun 2013** | Written by **Rick Fedrizzi** | Posted in **LEED**

Sede Centrale, LEED-EBOM. Photo by: Università Ca' Foscari Venezia (http://www.unive.it/)

Earning LEED certification is a major achievement. Earning LEED certification for a Venetian Gothic palazzo built in 1453 and overlooking the Grand Canal is… wow.

Cities like Venice are a window to the past. You know this if you've ever cracked a history textbook or travel guide, caught Rick Steves or Anthony Bourdain gallivanting the canals on cable, or been lucky enough to visit and see its magnificence for yourself.

Sede Centrale, headquarters for Ca' Foscari University of Venice, is now the oldest LEED-certified building on the planet (556 years old, exceeding the previous record holder, Fay House at Harvard University, by more than 350 years) — evidence that the past really is prologue.

It's evidence that bulldozing our existing buildings to replace them with ultra green structures isn't necessary. It's bonafide proof that we can work to green AND preserve the utmost integrity of the historical structures we've got - in every corner of the world - with a little ingenuity, effort, and out-of-the-box thinking. It reassures us that just because something hasn't been done before doesn't mean we can't do it - and do a bang-up job of it.

Our built environment is full of meaningful, historic buildings desperately in need of upgrades. Accessing that opportunity would save countless tons of carbon emissions each year. If a building more than a half millennium old can achieve LEED, it looks like our work is cut out for us. That 50-year-old high-rise down the block certainly seems a lot less daunting to retrofit, that's for sure.

We salute Habitech, GBC Italia, and the number of team members who had the vision and bravery to make this project a reality and set an absolutely unparalleled global example that LEED works — no matter the size, shape, and certainly not the age of a project.

And that's something we can all take a lesson from. Congratulazioni!

Rick Fedrizzi
CEO & Founding Chairman
U.S. Green Building Council

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aiman alsheikh — 1 year 42 weeks ago
Member - Urban planner, SAUDI GREEN BUILDING FORUM

I have a dream ... taking a certificate LEED for one of heritage buildings in Saudi Arabia

massimiliano magri — 1 year 44 weeks ago
Coster TE SPA

the only bad thing is that i wished to meet you, Rick, in venice during the press presentation of the project. I appreciated very much your speech. We have inserted a piece of it in our promo video. I give you the link, so you can take a look even if it is in italian by now. We are going on working in ca foscari HVAC plant to make the energy performance of the building even better than now. I

hope to have some other opportunities to meet you in the near future, here in italy especially in venice. bye! the video http://youtu.be/mMTO57asU9I your beautiful speech http://youtu.be/TdUMGIza2WQ M.Magri www.coster.eu tech partner in LEED Cert. of Ca Foscari, Venice IT.

Christopher Davis 2 years 21 weeks ago
Manager, Special Projects, U.S. Green Building Council

Hi Laura, the project achieved the Certified level under LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations & Maintenance. Its scorecard can be found in the LEED project directory here: http://www.usgbc.org/projects/sede-centrale-ca-foscari.

Thomas J McGeachen 2 years 21 weeks ago
LEED AP Consultant, Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory

Totally agree & older buildings in the United States should follow this lead in LEED! Before any building that is still structurally safe is demolished there should be an analysis to consider reuse of the building as the primary option with the goal of updating all the energy systems & reuse of the basic structure.
TJ, PE, CEM, LEED AP O&M, AEE Fellow

Laura Heagler 2 years 22 weeks ago

What certification level did it achieve? Can you share the credit checklist so we can see what credits it earned?

Renee Azerbegi 2 years 22 weeks ago
President, Ambient Energy

I agree on the point of not demolishing buildings to build green high tech buildings on top, and Ambient Energy has worked on many of these buildings. The USGBC could go a long way in this effort by making this a prerequisite or at least making the total carbon impact in doing this required to be made up for with other improvements to offset it. People just treat the building reuse credit as something that is a free credit if a project is a renovation but its not enough to push people to consider renovation or at least reusing the materials on site. If improving total environmental impact is the USGBC's bottom line, then this should be part of the calculations and determination of a green designation.

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