

2012 Green Dot Awards – **Build** Category

Project Name:

West Village Square, UC Davis, California

Submitter info:

Studio E Architects

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Project description:

Site/Climate

The site is former agriculture fields that are immediately adjacent to the central UC Davis campus. The land is thus flat but enjoys good views to the mountains to the west and the campus to the east. UC Davis is situated in the upper Central Valley of California and has moderate winters but warm summers where temperatures can routinely top 100 degrees. A consistent prevailing wind does bring cooling breezes from the southwest during these hot months. Rainfall is moderate.

Program

The project required the following spaces and uses:

- 80 units of student apartments in one, two and three-bedroom configurations.
- 42,500 square feet of ground level commercial space.
- A 15,000 square foot recreation center that included meeting rooms, lounges, gaming areas, a fitness center, a multi-purpose movie theater, a pool and management offices.

In addition to these program space needs, the project was to be a zero-net-energy development using no more energy than could be generated on site. Finally, these buildings are to be the heart of the entire West Village and were to emulate the central park space in downtown Davis as a local and well-loved example of urbanism.

Solution

The scheme follows two critical form giving conditions: make an appropriate and authentic response to the climate and make an urban place suitable to graciously support the life of West Village. The response was to organize the buildings first to form a figural space suitable for small or large gatherings and then to tailor the resulting buildings to accommodate the climate and energy opportunities. This latter effort involved setting all roofs to a southern orientation to support photovoltaic panels and tuning the openings and shading elements to the requirements of that specific condition. The southern and western facades are ventilated with vertical corrugated metal to create a thermal shield for the building and protect the insides from the harsh afternoon sun. Sunshades are calculated to stop summer

exposure but allow for some winter penetration of sunlight. Roofs were deeply overhung on southern exposures. All of these moves were simple, buildable and cost effective. The notion was to demonstrate easily achievable sustainable design.

The urbanism also works with well understood models. Buildings enfront a rectangular square that has both park and plaza spaces. Inspired by Davis' downtown plaza, the village square builds upon a local tradition of pedestrian accessible and scaled spaces. Surrounded by retail lease space, the square will one day become a vibrant heart to the entire West Village community.