

New Harlem development features 'smart' laundry rooms

Developers of 1400 on 5th expect to save \$125,000 in energy costs as a result of the many green features of the multifamily project. **By Donna Kimura**

LAUNDRY ROOM GUIDELINES

Laundry facilities should be no more than 250 feet from the apartments they will serve, according to the Multi-Housing Laundry Association.

That may mean a development will have several smaller rooms rather than a single centralized facility.

Laundry rooms should also be along main traffic patterns, be well lit and have good visibility to ensure security, said the association.

It may sound obvious, but it's also important that a facility is clean and that machines are in good working order.

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New York City – When Full Spectrum of NY, LLC, built one of the first affordable multifamily green buildings in the city, the energy-efficient concept was carried through all the way to the laundry facilities.

Located at 1400 Fifth Ave. in Harlem, the new \$40 million eight-story building features 128 units. The project has market-rate condos as well as those aimed at middle-income families. (See page 28 for a project profile.)

Overall, the building uses about 37% less energy than city requirements and significantly less energy than comparable multifamily buildings in the city, said Jude Alibey, senior project manager.

He estimates that the annual savings in energy costs will amount to \$125,000 because of various green measures at the site.

The developers began thinking early on about ways to save water and energy.

"We recognized that the consumption of hot water in a building or a unit constitutes one of the largest contributors to energy demand," Alibey said.

Instead of placing washers and dryers in each condominium unit, the developers built a laundry facility on each floor. "When you pool laundry facilities together, you are able to optimize the consumption of water and heat required to wash and dry clothes,"

Alibey said.

One study found that apartment residents with in-unit washers used 3.3 times more water for laundry than those with a common laundry facility. The energy usage of residents with in-unit machines is five times higher.

From there, developers took a decidedly high-tech approach to doing the wash.

"Smart" washers on every floor are connected to an internal local area network so residents can check on the availability of the machines from their home computers through Speed Queen's Wash Alert System.

This is the first time that the Wash Alert System has been placed in a condominium building, according to Dick Casey, director of multi-housing for Alliance Laundry Systems. Wash Alert has been used more at colleges.

The developers wired the building so each unit has Internet access. The building also has a business center with computer stations. As a result, residents can check on the washers from either place.

Instead of being coin-operated, the laundry machines use a card system, added Denise Savino-Erichsen, vice president of Automatic Industries, the route operator. This means users don't always need to have quarters.

Creating a green building must be conceptualized in the initial stages of design, cautioned Alibey.

More than 70% of the 1400 on 5th building was constructed from recycled or renewable resources. ■