

Primary LEED Project Team Members Quotes

- “Achieving LEED certification for the first State of New Mexico building and the first Gold in New Mexico required overcoming obstacles including a late decision to pursue LEED, the learning curve of a first-time LEED team, and political and schedule pressures to get the NM Attorney General moved into the building quickly. Our dedicated and solution-oriented team rose to the occasion and produced a healthy, high performance building from an historic building once slated for demolition while preserving its original character.” - Valerie Walsh, LEED Consultant and Project Manager, LEED Management Services
- “I think the most immediate and most truthful comment I can make is that this is undeniably the most important project I have ever worked on.” - Hugh MacRae, General Contractor (Project Manager), Cameron Construction, Inc.
- “The Villagra Project began with limited expectations, but with the efforts and dedication of a few key talented individuals, specifically, the LEED Professional, Valerie Walsh, Construction Manager - Hue McCrae and the Mechanical Engineer - John Baumgartel possibilities became realities, instead of problems. Individuals working together towards a single goal, made this project a success. Across the board, people left their ego's at the door and brought in respect for the team and a willingness to contribute.

In regards to cost, there was always plenty of pressure to drop LEED, if it was going to "cost more". Obviously, there were some fixed costs for design and documentation efforts. However, the vast majority of building improvements attributed to LEED, pay dividends every day in utility savings and occupant performance. In the final analysis, costs for LEED were almost entirely absorbed into the contextual fabric of the project. Could some of these costs have been "value engineered" out? Yes, and you can make a pig's ear out of a silk purse.

It was a great experience and one of those projects that you come away from a better individual, than when you arrived.” – Michael Bodelson, (former) NM State Architect, NM Property Control Division of GSD

- “From the Historic Preservation Division’s perspective, the Villagra building rehabilitation is one of the most successful stories, and I’ve always seen it as “The Little Engine that Could”, for despite its almost imminent demolition by a former PCD director, the building instead was saved under the protection placed by listing it as a historic resource on the State Register of Historic Properties, an emergency action taken by our office two days before the wrecking ball would have been put to use. After that, our office worked with several PCD staff, its new Director and Valerie to implement the successful rehabilitation that earned it the Gold LEED certification and made it “the poster boy” for successful partnerships between historic preservation principles and

LEED criteria implementation.” - Pilar M. Cannizzaro, Architectural Project Reviewer, Dept. Cultural Affairs, NM Historic Preservation Division

- “The Villagra Building was a demonstration of how achieving LEED certification is a team endeavor. I know Cameron Construction worked very hard on making sure all the materials from demolition was properly sorted and accounted for. They had one of their office personal keep track of all the proper paperwork. They were also heavily involved in the selection and procurement of materials to meet LEED criteria. For instance, we were receiving special doors from sustainable forests and no bad stuff gluing them together. Hugh MacRae at Cameron was tracking the shipment when the truck literally disappeared. He was on the phone for a couple of days trying to find the doors so they could be delivered in time to complete the project. It turned out the trailer was found at the side of a highway in CA. The driver had ditched it and took off. But I digress. Valarie roped everyone together and made the team work: Pilar at Historic Preservation, Hope at Accessible Office, the contractor, the designers, the engineers, and the end user...all of whom had a lot to consider and be responsible for. Now that I’m writing this, you can include the governor because he originally had the “vision” to demand all state buildings be green and Villagra was the first one to come down the pike. Anyway, I’m guess I’m saying it proved there isn’t just a single person who sits down and makes a building LEED Certified. Even when lots of people need to be satisfied with the outcome of the project, those people can work together and make it happen.” – David Martin, Project Architect, final phase, Conron & Woods Architects
- “When a building like the Villagra Building can achieve LEED Gold it is a reminder for all of us of how wide the horizons of LEED really are. Driving through other American cities, it is easy to recognize the architecture of modern green building. While we can be proud of the adoption of these new values, those buildings are more of an era than of their place. Here at home it is wonderful to see this building that is so clearly part of our historic fabric, and to know that in its present incarnation it embodies those same values. When we can reuse a building such as this, there are tremendous and obvious benefits in terms of resources already used, siting, and the sense of continuity. But more importantly, it inspires hope for what else we may accomplish.” – Laura Chancellor, Conron & Woods Architects