

From the Owners - WaterShed Beginnings



The major desire when undertaking to build the WaterShed was to give back to our town and provide some of the urban fabric we so wonderfully enjoy when traveling. We have been so fortunate to be able to poke around the back streets of some European cities and sit in public squares in Mexico. They have a charm and vibrancy about them that rewards exploration and celebrates community. We wanted to try and replicate that in our little corner of Eugene. We built the WaterShed and then refurbished Rye Restaurant, renovated Judge Potter's old house into a sushi bar, helped Coldfire Brewing get a home and now are turning the old Eugene Moving and Storage building next to the Ferry Street Bridge into a mixed-use space with more residences, offices and Coldfire's new taproom and restaurant. North of Fourth (NoFo) is starting to feel pretty fun.

We wanted our first project, the WaterShed, to reflect our hopes to make a neighborhood with quality buildings. To that end we wanted a building that would last, be as environmentally responsible as possible and be handsome and fun to live and work in. We tried to accomplish this in the following ways:

- + We used aerated, autoclaved concrete in the building's structure. A building material that was developed in Europe, it provides the structure, insulation, sound proofing and thermal mass. It keeps the building naturally cooler in summer and warmer in winter.
- + We asked for the building's components to last 200 years so we weren't building something that would just be torn down in 30 years. That starts with the stainless steel roof.
- + We collect rainwater off the roof into two cisterns to provide water for toilet flushing, laundry and landscaping needs. This saved water lasts for about two thirds of the year before we have to start relying on EWEB during the drier summer months.
- + We installed energy efficient appliances to reduce our power demands.
- + Our landscapers used plants that are either native or are adapted to use less water.
- + Being next to one of the busiest roads in Oregon, we knew sound proofing would be critical so with the AAC we added triple pane windows and doors to help keep things quiet. You still might hear a train now and then but you can often forget you're near a busy street.
- + We used natural finishes and operable windows for interior environmental health. And there is no PVC or natural gas in building.
- + Almost all of the utilities – water pipes, electrical conduit and ventilation is on the wall or ceiling surfaces to make repairs or additions easier and simpler. You'll either love the industrial feel or not so much!
- + We asked our architect to design something that might be mistaken for an older building that has been reconditioned for modern use. We had a lot of meetings at the 5th Street Public Market and loved how they had repurposed a fun old structure into a special place. So, we liked more classic proportions and lines.
- + And finally, we wanted someplace that people might pass and so a double take saying "wait a minute, what's that, it looks sorta interesting, let's get out and poke around a bit".
- + We hope we've been a little successful.