

BREEAM In-Use recognizes building sustainability and identifies opportunities to improve performance

Three Ballston Plaza – the first office tower to certify with BREEAM USA.

Case study



Scope

Built in 1990, this 342,280 square foot Class A multi-tenanted office building is located in just 5 miles from the heart of Washington, D.C in Arlington, Virginia. Three Ballston Plaza has been owned by AEW Capital Management since 2010 and is managed by Cushman & Wakefield.

Anne Peck, as part of the sustainability team for AEW's asset management, worked with the Cushman Wakefield property management team to identify an efficiently-run building to pilot BREEAM In-Use as a certification standard for sustainability.

Efficient operations, a unique and connected location, great building design, use of outdoor space, and access to amenities all highlight the strengths of Three Ballston Plaza, in addition to great building management.

“ The BREEAM rating system helped to highlight the high-performance aspects of this building that hadn't been in direct focus before... things such as health and wellbeing, water, energy management, and ongoing maintenance. The onsite verification aspect of BREEAM reinforced the robustness of the certification for property management and the building engineer. ”

Bharati Bhosale, Healthy Buildings

Challenges

“Our job is to find innovative solutions that offer added value to our real estate investors and using the BREEAM In-Use standard delivered that to Three Ballston Plaza,” says Anne Peck, Vice President at AEW Capital Management. “We are continually looking to raise the bar on the sustainability of our portfolio...”

AEW wanted to increase the number of assets in their portfolio that can be submitted to GRESB. They also needed a solution that would provide recognition for the building team, alignment with the US General Service Administration requirements and other tenant sustainability desires, and reasonable certification costs.

Solution

Initially, the Three Ballston Plaza team thought that BREEAM In-Use might have been too light, but after going through the in-depth questionnaire and in-person assessor walk through, they realized that the standard is more rigorous than initial appearance and requires a great understanding of the building and its operations. Three Ballston Plaza became the first office building with a verified score under BREEAM In-use in the US.

“ The outcome from completing the BREEAM process has been a much more efficient operations team and ultimately, a more efficiently-run building. ”

Anne Peck, Vice President at AEW Capital Management

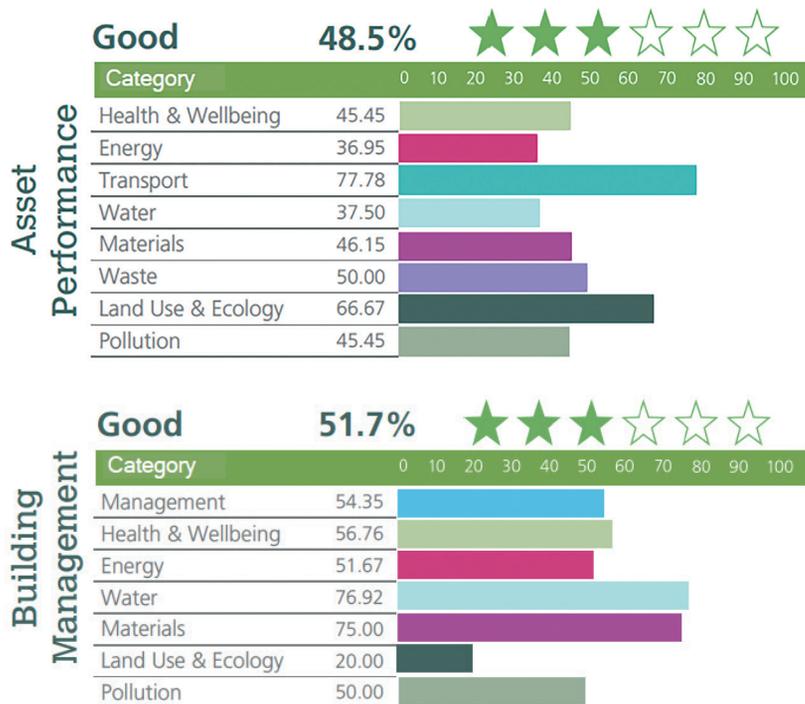
Benefits

Using BREEAM In-Use allowed AEW to address their key challenges; the building management team were able to both formally recognize building efficiency achievements already in place and map out progress opportunities. In addition to this, the verified BREEAM In-Use score achieved by Three Ballston Plaza improves the portfolio's performance within theGRESB rankings.

Other benefits the project experienced as a result of using the BREEAM In-Use scheme included strengthening and formalizing already adopted best practices. For example, an added benefit was a more formalized communication mechanism between management and tenants, updated after going through the questionnaire. Additionally, while Legionella risk management strategies were already in place, extra measures have been added to the operations schedule regarding the fountain which is part of the tenant amenities. Lastly, a few proactive management strategies in place found a way of formal acknowledgement by their inclusion and recognition in a certification standard.

Overall, the team found the standard to be as helpful as it was an approachable process to engage in, seamless to benchmark sustainability performance and found it to translate well into achievable improvement measures to be completed on a regular basis moving forward.

Through the process of benchmarking sustainability in asset value and building operations using BREEAM In-Use, the building's team learned, celebrated, and plotted a course for sustainability and health and wellness at this site.



Project Team

Owner: AEW Capital Management

Management Team:
Cushman & Wakefield

Assessor Organization:
Healthy Buildings

Key Facts

BREEAM Scheme: BREEAM USA In-Use v2016

Rating: **Asset Performance:** Good (48.5%), **Building Management:** Good (51.7%)

Certificate No: BIU00002000

Size: 342,280 ft² (31,798 m²)

Get in touch

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