

Studio One Eleven Focuses On Urban Context And Sustainability For Its Diversity Of Projects



Studio One Eleven employees discuss a project at the firm's office at the Landmark Square building in Downtown Long Beach. Pictured left to right are: Eric Gomez, senior designer; Christian Arndt, project architect; Derek Ryder, job captain; Alan Pullman, principal; and Lameese Elqura, urban designer. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Thomas McConville)

■ By **TIFFANY RIDER**
Staff Writer

■ t's clear when reading Studio One Eleven's 10 design principles that the architecture and design firm considers environmental sustainability central to its work, not just an add-on to satisfy industry trends. It is even more evident when examining the details of its projects, which include mixed-use, dwelling, urban retail, campus, community and adaptive re-use.

According to Alan Pullman, Studio One Eleven's founding principal, sustainability has become an underlying thread in contemporary architecture and made "a fundamental shift in how architects think about the profession." Most of the firm's 26 designers are Leadership in Environmental Efficiency (LEED) accredited.

The firm provides not only architectural but also urban and landscape design services to clients in Long Beach, the U.S. and beyond. Located in Downtown Long Beach, Studio One Eleven is

a division of Perkowitz + Ruth Architects, which was founded in Long Beach in 1979.

Pullman has worked on urban design, mixed-use and community architectural projects for more than 20 years in New York and Los Angeles. At the Studio, Pullman is in charge of the overall management and strategy of projects as well as design leadership with certain projects.

According to Pullman, Studio One Eleven decides which projects to get involved with by looking for clients whose goals align with those of the studio. "We just want to make sure that there's the right fit between our philosophy and the type of work that we want to do and the projects that they want to accomplish," Pullman says. "If there is a good fit then we definitely move forward."

The Studio's 10 design principles offer guidance and inspiration for each project. They are:

- Respect location within the existing geography
- Enhance the open space network

- Promote a balanced mobility network
- Contribute to an active pedestrian environment
- Design an authentic expression of architecture
- Improve local environmental conditions
- Use industry efficiencies without being normative
- Maximize energy efficiency
- Reduce construction impact on the environment
- Communicate project goals, process and practices

These principles are incorporated in every project, however Pullman says they aren't rigid. "We use them to really inform our clients and ourselves about what we're trying to do," he says. "The goal is that we have set the objectives for each of our projects. That's our process and we find it to be fairly effective in really coming to an understanding with our clients and ourselves with what we're trying to achieve with each project."

Pullman says the Studio One Eleven designs are first and foremost inspired by the creation of a vibrant and livable city through looking at each site's broader context. This includes making sure the projects address the street with active corners, making the areas pedestrian friendly, trying to be contextual and reflecting the spirit of the location in one way or another. The Studio carefully considers the history, culture, context and climate of its projects before embarking on client designs, he says.

This includes sustainability. Before the contemporary green building trend, architects and clients just focused on building form and meeting commercial interests, he says. Nowadays, architects are putting more thought into how the buildings affect cities at multiple levels, including issues like energy usage, stormwater runoff and the urban heat island effect, which is when a metropolitan area is much warmer than its surrounding rural areas. "This is all part of creating a more sustainable landscape."

As for the actual building designs, Studio designers take inspiration from the firm's fifth principle: Design an authentic expression of architecture. "[This means] expressing the building materials and components in an honest way," Pullman says, or that the construction of the building and its uses are expressed in a



Alan Pullman is founding principal of Studio One Eleven. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Thomas McConville)

straightforward manner rather than trying to put historic architecture over a modern building. "It's not that necessarily every building is an icon or landmark in the urban streetscape. Not every building should be. Some buildings should be background buildings. But I think every building should represent itself in an authentic way as to how it's built and how it functions. . . . We try to be complementary but we don't want to mimic older buildings. We believe in the architecture of today and something that represents the 21st century that we think is totally compatible with historic buildings and historic districts as well."

Second + PCH

Studio One Eleven designed Second + PCH, a mixed-use project that includes about 210,000 square feet of restaurants and retail along with a 100-room hotel, 325 housing units, a California State University, Long Beach-sponsored Coastal Science Center with a 99-seat theater, a bicycle facility and a single-level subterranean parking structure.

"We looked at the boats and the infrastructure of the piers and looked at the shapes you would find in nautical architecture," Pullman says of the Second + PCH design process. "We tried to pull those influences into our project to create something unique but really rooted into that specific place." The project is currently in entitlement phase with no set date of completion.

Long Beach Boulevard + Anaheim Street

The \$65 million mixed-use project for Meta Housing Corporation is a fairly large complex of buildings broken down into retail and several market-rate, multi-generational housing facilities. The Senior Arts Colony will include 147 mixed-income rental apartment complexes for



Construction on this \$65 million mixed-use project on Long Beach Boulevard and Anaheim Street should begin sometime this year with completion expected for the latter part of 2012. The project, designed by Studio One Eleven, includes multi-generational housing to be leased by Meta Housing Corporation of Los Angeles. (Rendering provided by Studio One Eleven)



(From Left) This commercial adaptive reuse project designed by Studio One Eleven at 4th Street and Linden Avenue was completed in March. Lyon Art Supply relocated to the building as did a Web hosting company that from El Segundo. (Rendering provided by Studio One Eleven) New City School's Urban Farm was designed by Studio One Eleven, as was the school's landscape. The project includes a flower and vegetable garden. (Photo provided by Studio One Eleven)

seniors with adjacent art studios, a community room, library, fitness center, a movie theater and projection room and a roof deck that overlooks the city. The facilities will be adjacent to several transit options, including the Metro Blue Line, which will help activate the street with amenities for residents and the community. Construction should begin sometime this year, and the project is expected to be completed by late 2012.

Environmental Education Center

The Long Beach Conservation Corps hired Studio One Eleven to design a larger space to conduct its recycling programs. Using state grant funding, the Corps bought a property in Signal Hill for the 8,000-square-foot project. Since the budget was tight, the Studio used a pre-engineered metal warehouse kit for the facility structure and added cedar slabs on the façade to “warm it up to the street and create a presence for its office functions,” Pullman says. In addition to most of the metal being high in recycled content, the structure has built-in skylights and most of the building doesn't need air conditioning, which will translate into lower energy bills. Pullman says the facility should be completed in October.

New City School Urban Farm

As part of its goal of reconnecting people to the land through smart landscape architecture in urban settings, the Studio has designed an urban farm into the New City School, an elementary charter school in Downtown Long Beach. The project includes a flower and vegetable garden, orchard and even a chicken coop. The outdoor classroom, now under construction, may include

reusing port containers for a farm stand and an office powered by solar panels. Students will be able to cook outdoors and eat lunch with their friends. The project is a clear example of the social side of sustainability, given that many of the school's students don't have easy access to healthy food. The school is leasing the site from the City of Long Beach through the work of Councilmember Robert Garcia. The lease is for five years at a cost to the school of \$1.

4th + Linden

To Studio One Eleven, Pullman says adaptive reuse is important on several fronts and brings character and a sense of history that is difficult to create in new construction. It can also be more affordable. “Older buildings can be a lot cheaper than new construction,” Pullman says. “With that lower cost you can charge rents that are more acceptable.” And that's what Pullman and Michael Bohn, the lead architect and director of design at Studio One Eleven, are doing to the three buildings at 4th Street and Linden in Downtown Long Beach. The practice turned the buildings into three commercial condos through an extensive remodel process paid for in part through a City of Long Beach façade improvement grant. The \$1.4 million redevelopment project, completed in March, has already attracted Lyons art store, a Long Beach-based business, as well as a Web hosting company that relocated from El Segundo because, according to Pullman, “they loved the vibe.” ■