

# FXFOWLE

by Marc Conner

Long before “green” and LEED became buzzwords and regular practice in the architectural industry, FXFOWLE ARCHITECTS, PC was designing environmentally responsible benchmark projects, breaking new ground, and advancing the principles of architecture and planning. Sustainable design entered FXFOWLE’s practice around 1980 with intuitive analysis of energy conservation measures such as passive solar heating and natural ventilation. Over the years these concerns increasingly emerged to become a core value of the firm’s design philosophy and a differentiator of its process. In the mid-1990s, FXFOWLE designed a series of projects that began to define a new generation of high performance architecture – architecture for the environment.

# LEADING



*From commercial and residential high-rises and business interiors, to transportation hubs, schools and museums, FXFOWLE ARCHITECTS, PC advances the principles of architecture and planning, both in the firm's projects and design process. Working from headquarters in New York City and a representative office in Dubai, the award-winning firm is currently adding to its portfolio several significant sustainable projects of different typologies and scales from across the globe: Shams Dubai in United Arab Emirates is a 40 hectare site that calls for a new environmentally-responsible low-rise office park totaling 600,000 square meters surrounded by water on two sides.*

# THE CURVE





*(top, bottom and opposite page) The Helena, the first voluntarily sustainable high-rise residential building in New York, is a 37-story, LEED Gold-rated building that brings the benefits of sustainable living to both affordable housing and market-rate rental units. The building's exemplary design helps reduce energy costs by 35% — thanks in part by the 13.1 kW array of building integrated photovoltaics — and improve site imperviousness by 75% due to a 12,000 square foot green roof.*



FXFOWLE's advancement of sustainable design has spanned a wide variety of project typologies – in keeping with the range of practice areas in the firm. This includes many criterions for project types considered difficult to design for sustainability. The firm's most widely recognized environmental leadership project and heralded as the first green skyscraper in the United States, the Condé Nast Building at 4 Times Square, a speculative commercial project, set high standards for indoor environmental quality and was the first commercial project to integrate photovoltaic panels and fuel cells when it was designed in 1995. 4 Times Square opened in 1999 to international acclaim and was used as a demonstration project by the Environmental Protection Agency, the Alliance to Save Energy, and Earth Day New York. Most importantly, 4 Times Square became a catalyst for the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED rating program and set a new national standard for environmentally responsible commercial projects.

FXFOWLE has incessantly looked beyond simply greening its own projects by sharing knowledge to the architectural and business industries through presentations and seminars, white papers, research, teaching and activism. The firm has actively worked with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and New York State to develop

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the first Green Building Tax Credits adopted by a state government, requiring that buildings meet strict energy usage requirements and high standards for IEQ. Additionally, FXFOWLE led the effort to write the sustainable design guidelines for residential, commercial, and institutional development in Battery Park City, a 92-acre mixed-use development in New York City. The firm was a key member of the team creating green guidelines for the New Jersey Transit System, and worked with the Transit Authority to create new standards for the system through the design of a pilot project in the TA's “Design for the Environment” program, the Roosevelt Avenue – 74th Street Station rehabilitation and the new Second Avenue Subway, soon to be the world's first sustainable subway system. Currently, FXFOWLE is working as advocates for the Bird-Safe Glass Working Group, a cross-disciplinary, nation-wide effort to call attention to and devise solutions for the major issue of bird mortality resulting from large-scale buildings in the migration path.





*The Center for Global Conservation at the Bronx Zoo will provide the Wildlife Conservation Society with a public face. The building's integration with the landscape exemplifies an environmentally innovative approach to design that combines the needs of humans, wildlife and wild lands, and serves as a powerful statement for conservation through architecture.*

Even though working towards a more socially, environmentally and economically sustainable condition has been central to FXFOWLE since its inception, what did it take to build such a successful and well-respected architectural firm seriously committed to sustainable design in an industry that has yet to fully embrace these ideals? The firm has positioned itself to respond to a future in which few things are certain, other than change, by building a sustainable practice with distinct shared values and business practices that contribute positively and responsibly to the built environment.

FXFOWLE is structured around five design studios: Commercial/Residential, Cultural/Educational, Interiors, Planning and Urban Design, and Transportation, each bringing sustainable design to every client and project. Engrained in the firm's cohesive approach, environmental responsibility is a cornerstone of its practice, and a key element in its framework for design excellence. To strengthen its core values, FXFOWLE has established an in-house "Team Green" that functions as a conduit for information across the studios and one of many sources of quality assurance for the practice. The group also provides LEED training for the firm's staff and research on new technologies and grant opportunities. Team Green meets periodically with each proj-



*The Roosevelt Avenue Intermodal Station in Queens, New York is the busiest station in New York City's subway system outside of Manhattan, and features energy efficient systems, natural ventilation, conservation of materials and resources, and improved site management; transforming a utilitarian transit upgrade into a benchmark project for environmentally responsive design.*

ect team so that team members have the most current information needed to apply the principles of sustainability within the context of their daily work, and so that each and every project, regardless of scale, achieves a basic level of environmental responsibility and seeks out additional opportunities, as is appropriate to the initiative.

FXFOWLE's designs incorporate not only environmental responsibility, but also distinctive aesthetics and rigorous functionality. As a result of this integrated philosophy, the



*The 1,600,000 square foot Condé Nast Building at 4 Times Square is heralded as the first green skyscraper in the United States.*

firm holistically considers each project, their programs and how they fit in the environment. The firm's standard has always been to incorporate rational technology to advance architectural and environmental goals, in both its projects and design process, and to continuously explore architecture that meaningfully expresses its sustainability. FXFOWLE's role today as a leader in the "green" movement continues as opportunities in the international architecture market are escalating in locations such as Dubai, China and India. As FXFOWLE approaches these new exciting and challenging global efforts, it is introducing and defining a new generation of high-performance planning and design within these developing countries by focusing on the creation of healthy built environments that advance the quality of life, and contribute to raising the environmental consciousness of the building industry on a global scale. ■