

ULX: More than a Mix-Up

Ideally, mixed-use projects achieve some kind of symbiosis among their elements, creating a whole that is more than the sum of the parts. All completed in the past five years, the following ten projects (listed alphabetically) represent innovative takes on combining product types. Some repurpose and rehabilitate historic structures; some take advantage of density and synergies to attain a high level of sustainable design; some blend public and private partners to pool financing and meet the goals of multiple constituencies; and some represent large-scale interventions that aim to expand open space and enhance the public realm with unusual siting strategies and pedestrian-oriented environments.



1. 8 House Copenhagen, Denmark Photo: Jens Lindhe

The sloping figure-eight of 8 House is designed to give the complex the feel of an urban neighborhood. Shops, offices, a child care facility, and a café at ground level enliven surrounding streets. Above them, 476 residential units are stacked in three layers: rowhouses, apartments, and penthouses. Raising the northeastern corner and lowering the southwestern corner maximized sunlight and views. With its deep floor plate, the 107,600-square-foot (10,000 sq m) commercial base has room on top to support a pedestrian/bicycle promenade that slopes from street level to the tenth floor, linking the residences.

The bow-tie shape creates two internal courtyards, accessible to the public at the "knot" via a 30-foot-wide (9 m) passageway connecting the park and a canal. Communal facilities around the knot include a cinema. BIG—Bjarke Ingels Group designed 8 House for local developer Per Høpfner and real estate investor St. Frederikslund Holding. Close to a Metro station, the project was completed in 2010.



2. Artscape Wychwood Barns Toronto, Canada Photo: Tom Arban

Built between 1913 and 1921, the five brick barns in Toronto's St. Clair neighborhood stored and serviced the city's streetcars for most of the 20th century until falling out of use in the 1980s. In the 1990s, the community rallied to save the historic structures from demolition. The city chose local nonprofit developer Artscape to breathe new life into the buildings.

Artscape and local architecture firm DTAH repurposed the structures to house an art gallery; 26 live/work structures; 15 work-only studios for professional artists; community event and exhibition space; offices, meeting areas, and rehearsal spaces for local not-for-profit arts and environmental organizations; and a sustainable food center with a greenhouse and garden. One of the barns was partially demolished to serve as a porch for the sustainable food center and is integrated into a new city park on the 4.3-acre (2 ha) site. Many historic features were preserved, including exterior walls, metal trusses and cornices, and skylights. The rehabilitation was completed in 2008.



3. Cherokee Lofts Los Angeles, California Photo: John Edward Linden

Located on a busy commercial corridor in Los Angeles's Beverly Grove neighborhood, Cherokee Lofts combines 2,800 square feet (260 sq m) of ground-floor retail space with structured parking below grade and three stories of lofts above. Confronting a tight infill site, local firm Brooks + Scarpa aimed to maximize efficiency. An accessible, vegetated roof deck provides open space and captures stormwater. The city allowed the retail parking spaces to fulfill a portion of the residential parking requirement, freeing square footage for other uses. Heat from the shops is captured and reused to warm residential units.

The exterior incorporates an owner-controlled double-facade system; perforated anodized aluminum panels can be closed for privacy, shade, and noise control while allowing natural light and air to penetrate. Each unit has a private outdoor space. A central courtyard facilitates cross-ventilation for each of the 12 lofts and allows additional daylight penetration. The project was completed in 2010 for REthink Development of Culver City, California.



4. City Creek Salt Lake City, Utah Photo: Dan Bigelow

Two enclosed malls came down to make way for a 23-acre urban village in downtown Salt Lake City, one of the largest private sector development projects in the United States. Five high-rise and mid-rise residential buildings, with 434 condominiums and 111 apartments, as well as a 76,000-square-foot (7,060 sq m) office building, were completed in 2011.

City Creek, a 1.04 million-square-foot (96,600 sq m) retail center designed by Seattle-based Callison, opened this year with 40 stores.

Incorporated into the downtown street grid, the center spans two city blocks with a pedestrian bridge over Main Street and includes a fully retractable glass roof and a 0.6-mile (1 km) reconstructed historic creek. Developed by City Creek Reserve Inc., the real estate arm of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and Taubman Centers of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, it is a pilot project in the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighborhoods program and is targeted to achieve Silver certification. ZGF Architects of Portland, Oregon, was the master architect and designer of the residential components and office building.



5. Elmpark Dublin, Ireland

Photo: © Michael Moran / OTTO

Elmpark brings compact urban living to the southern edge of Dublin's sprawl. The city council allowed the development to be 40 percent denser than typically permitted. The new 1 million-square-foot (93,000 sq m) urban quarter comprises 12 narrow, linear buildings arranged to take advantage of the prevailing Irish Sea breezes for natural ventilation. Three office buildings, two apartment buildings, a seniors' housing complex, a 200-bed hotel, a private hospital, a conference center, and restaurants are linked by a seven-acre (2.8 ha) landscaped public garden. The buildings are lifted up at the ground floor to allow the garden to run continuously through the site.

Within the development, there is no automobile access; pedestrian and bicycle paths connect the buildings. Underground parking receives natural light and air via large wells. A combined heat and power system burns wood chips to supply electricity and heat water for the development. Completed in 2008, Elmpark was designed by Bucholz McEvoy Architects for Radora Developments, both local companies.



6. Gateway Transit Village New Brunswick, New Jersey

Photo: © AVBrown-Photography, Courtesy New Brunswick Development Corporation

What began as the desire for a new university bookstore grew into a 24-story mixed-use building adjacent to the New Brunswick train station. Rutgers University partnered with a joint venture of nonprofit developer New Brunswick Development Corporation and Philadelphia-based multifamily developer Penrose Properties, along with the city's parking authority and the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, to create Gateway Transit Village, located between downtown and the Old Queens Quad part of campus.

Designed by the New York City offices of Meltzer/Mandl Architects and EE&K, a Perkins Eastman company, and completed this year, the 635,000-square-foot (59,000 sq m) structure incorporates space for the Rutgers bookstore and other retail tenants on its first two floors, structured parking for 657 cars, and five stories of office space. The top 15 floors contain 150 rental units and 42 condominiums.

A new landscaped walkway links the Old Queens Quad to the train station. A second building one block away is slated to open at the end of the year with a supermarket and fitness center.



7. Marina Bay Sands
Singapore
Photo: Timothy Hursley

Located across the water from Singapore's central business district, the new Marina Bay Sands resort incorporates a waterfront promenade, 800,000 square feet (74,000 sq m) of retail and restaurant space, an event plaza, the ArtScience Museum, two theaters, and a convention and exhibition center. Publicly accessible landscaped gardens and pedestrian streets weave through the 10 million-square-foot (929,000 sq m) resort, and a grand arcade links the resort to the subway and other public transportation. Seven public artworks by artists such as Sol LeWitt, James Carpenter, and Ned Kahn are placed along an art path.

Created for the Las Vegas Sands Corporation by Boston-based Safdie Architects (design architect) and the local office of Aedas (executive architect), the resort includes three 55-story hotel towers that support a continuous 2.5-acre (1 ha) park; an observatory is open to the public. Portions of the rooftops of other buildings support trees and gardens. The resort was completed in 2010.



8. Oxford Plaza/David Brower Center
Berkeley, California
Photo: © Tim Griffith

San Francisco-based private developer Equity Community Builders (ECB) and Berkeley-based nonprofit housing developer Resources for Community Development (RCD) paired up as master developers to turn a one-acre (0.4 ha) surface parking lot in downtown Berkeley into a complex that combines affordable housing, an office building/conference center for environmental organizations, a restaurant, shops, and below-grade city-owned parking.

Developed by RCD, Oxford Plaza has 97 units earmarked for households earning up to 60 percent of the area median income. Developed by ECB, the David Brower Center provides office space at below-market rents to groups focusing on environmental and social change. The latter building earned a LEED Platinum rating, with stormwater capture and reuse, natural light, solar panels, and a mechanical system that relies on radiant heating and cooling via exposed concrete ceilings. The Brower Center includes a 180-seat theater, an art gallery, conference and event facilities, and a restaurant. Completed in 2009, the project was designed by San Francisco-based Daniel Solomon Design Partners, formerly WRT/Solomon E.T.C.



9. Pearl Brewery
San Antonio, Texas
Photo: Lara Swimmer Photography

For more than a century, the Pearl Brewing Company operated along the San Antonio River, two miles (3 km) north of the city's downtown. After the brewery closed in 2001, local developer Silver Ventures purchased the site and hired local firm Lake | Flato Architects to master plan and design its transformation into a mixed-use village. The 22-acre site includes residences, offices, local and regional shops and restaurants, and event space.

Narrow, curbsless streets planted with new, large shade trees are designed to create a pedestrian-friendly environment. The project's first component adapted a 1939 garage and shed to house a beauty school, culinary school, and a café. The 67,000-square-foot (6,200 sq m) Full Goods Warehouse was renovated in 2009 to contain two floors of office and retail spaces linked by catwalks. The 293-apartment Can Plant Residences opened this fall. New buildings feature red brick to distinguish them from the yellow brick of the renovated historic structures. The development has been credited with catalyzing development along Broadway, the city's main street.



10. Vanke Center
Shenzhen, China
Photo: © Iwan Baan

The designers of the Vanke Center have called the building a "horizontal skyscraper," but although it is as long as the Empire State Building is high, its shape—gently angled with narrow branches extending into the landscape—is not much like a vertical building. The 115-foot-high (35 m) structure contains a hotel, office space, a business center, serviced apartments, and the headquarters for the developer; tucked underground are a conference center, restaurants, and parking.

Eight columns lift the building off the ground, creating a large shaded area in the hot climate, allowing cooling breezes to flow beneath and freeing room for 509,000 square feet (47,000 sq m) of undulating public green space. Paths, gathering places, and a plaza are designed to encourage social interaction. A stormwater capture system supplies water for irrigation. The rooftop incorporates vegetation and photovoltaic panels. The Beijing office of Steven Holl Architects and the local office of CCDI collaborated on the design for Shenzhen Vanke Real Estate Company. The project was completed in 2009.