

VWMP has maintained its integrated approach while working in a variety of communities from small towns grappling with pressures of sprawl, to major urban centers requiring infill and redevelopment. Contracts can range from \$10 to \$50 million, and projects can last from several weeks to several years.

One notable project for VWMP was the Dominican Sisters House of Formation. The client wanted a sustainable communal home for the sisters that would represent Dominican stewardship by incorporating green and sustainable practices while creating private and communal living spaces. The structure, which achieved a LEED Gold rating, incorporates a dry creek bed to collect and retain roof stormwater.

The House of Formation's additional green features include:

- photovoltaic panels;
- drip irrigation of drought-tolerant plantings;
- compact massing;
- solar hot water;
- 90 percent efficient central boiler;
- recycled and reclaimed materials throughout.

Another project, The RailYard Lofts, represent a fine example of the firm's infill housing abilities. For the Denver project, VWMP removed the infill framing of the existing structure to reveal an open, central courtyard. "Strategic building removal" created raw interior spaces, improved and defined urban living conditions, and provided urban-loft housing as an adaptive reuse of the 1.3-acre property. The completed project won both an AIA Architects' Choice Award, and a Multi-Housing News Design Award.

In fact, Van Meter Williams Pollack has received several accolades throughout its history. Other significant projects include the Valencia Gardens, a 300,000-square-foot mixed income housing project that won an AIA HUD Award, and Belmar, a large-scale neighborhood

redevelopment job that won several awards including a CNU Charter Award, a ULI Award of Excellence, and an EPA Smart Growth Award.

Although much of the company's work is completed near its offices in California and Colorado, the firm's urban design work, such as the EPA Smart Growth Charrettes, takes VMWP national. Pollack describes serving as the EPA's urban design and architectural consultant as another way to help neighborhoods thrive. "We go around the country and analyze communities to provide ways to develop a downtown, or grow an impacted area," he says.

Pollack and his associates are also involved in several other environmental organizations like Global Green, The

Urban Land Institute, Build It Green, the USGBC, and The Green Affordable Housing Coalition. Organizations that the company supports include Housing California, Congress for the New Urbanism, Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center, and Non-Profit Housing Coalition.

Each year, the San Francisco office participates in PARK(ing) Day, a one-day global event, centered in San Francisco, when artists and activists temporarily transform the city's metered parking spots into public parks. "They're some fun and important things we take part in because we're committed to creating better places to live," Pollack says. For Van Meter Williams Pollack LLP, creating a better place to live means taking care of the earth, and taking care of its people. GBQ

Rendering of Kukui Gardens, Honolulu, HI, a 21-acre TOD site that will replace 800 public housing units with 3,375 dwelling units, including 857 low-income units.

