SAMSEL ARCHITECTS

# Sustainability Statement

2019

**OUR MISSION**

At Samsel Architects, sustainability is a holistic strategy for long term environmental and social planning. It is an integral part of our studio culture, our office operations, our projects, and our surroundings.

We measure our sustainability in four ways:

- Who We Are
- How We Work
- What We Design
- Where We Live

Bonsai Pavilion, Samsel Architects
Cover: EcoDorm at Warren Wilson College, certified LEED Platinum, Samsel Architects

# Who We Are

**OUR HISTORY**

Since 1985, Samsel Architects has emphasized environmentally responsible and sustainable design principles in and around Asheville, North Carolina. Each of our projects, whether in an urban center or a mountain landscape, reflects the unique character of its setting. Many of us choose to live here because of the natural beauty of the southern Appalachian Mountains, and it is our responsibility to preserve this landscape as we build and rebuild our communities.

**1963**
Design With Climate by Victor Olgyay is published, a key influence on Jim Samsel

**1973**
Oil Crisis

**1979**
Jim Samsel begins designing passive solar and super insulated houses in WNC

**1985**
Founding of Samsel Architects

**1987**
Samsel Architects moves into 60 Biltmore Avenue after extensive renovations

**1993**
Start of US Green Building Council

**2000**
Samsel Architects co-founds WNC Green Building Council

**2005**
Eco Dorm at Warren Wilson College earns LEED Plantinum Certification

**2013**
Fontana Bridge Residence earns LEED Gold Certification

**2014**
Installed PV Panels at 60 Biltmore Avenue

**2015**
Instituted Sustainability Statement

**2018**
Craven Gap Residence certified Net Zero by International Living Future Institute

# How We Work

**OUR STUDIO**

Our culture of environmental stewardship starts within our office walls. We capitalize on the inherent sustainability of our walkable downtown location and continue to establish new programs to foster better sustainable practices in our operations.  We generate 21 kW of clean energy from our photovoltaic array on the roof of our building.

- Our studio, located in a 90-year-old building in downtown Asheville, uses large windows and an open design to maximize natural light and views to the surrounding mountains.
- We provide employees with a monthly update of production and consumption to raise awareness and influence daily energy usage habits.
- Internal office purchases are guided by our preferred purchasing plan, which prioritizes local products with a small environmental footprint.
- Our waste reduction policies include coordinating with neighboring businesses to collect compost and hard-to-recycle items for responsible disposal.

# What We Design

**OUR PROJECTS**

We believe in being good stewards of our mountain region. How and where we build are two of the most important factors that influence our future and the sustainability of our natural environment. It is our responsibility to steer our projects with sustainable principles that protect our unique regional ecosystem.

- We encourage adaptive re-use, urban infill, and transit-oriented projects.
- We collaborate with builders and landscape professionals to ensure our building practices remain at the cutting edge of sustainability and reflect our native mountain materials and flora.
- Materials are chosen for timelessness and durability ensuring our designs remain useful and enjoyable for the lifetime of the building. We design our buildings with 100+ year lifespan in mind.
- Each of our projects is designed to meet EnergyStar standards, and energy performance data is monitored after construction and during building use.

# Where We Live

**OUR REGION**

We believe in being good stewards of our mountain region. How and where we build are two of the most important factors that influence our future and the sustainability of our natural environment. It is our responsibility to steer our projects with sustainable principles that protect our unique regional ecosystem.

- Samsel Architects recognizes that great people do great work. We are living wage certified and provide a flexible office environment, continuing education opportunities, and in-house mentorship.

- We strive for a communal studio where professional, educational, and social events are common. Regular open feedback reviews provide a structure for constructive communication.

- Every year, Samsel Architects donates a minimum of 8% of our net profits to local organizations. In addition, we provide pro bono design work to support the exceptional non-profits that serve the Western North Carolina region.

- We encourage each of our employees to donate their time and energy to causes that they feel strongly about, and provide support for their involvement.