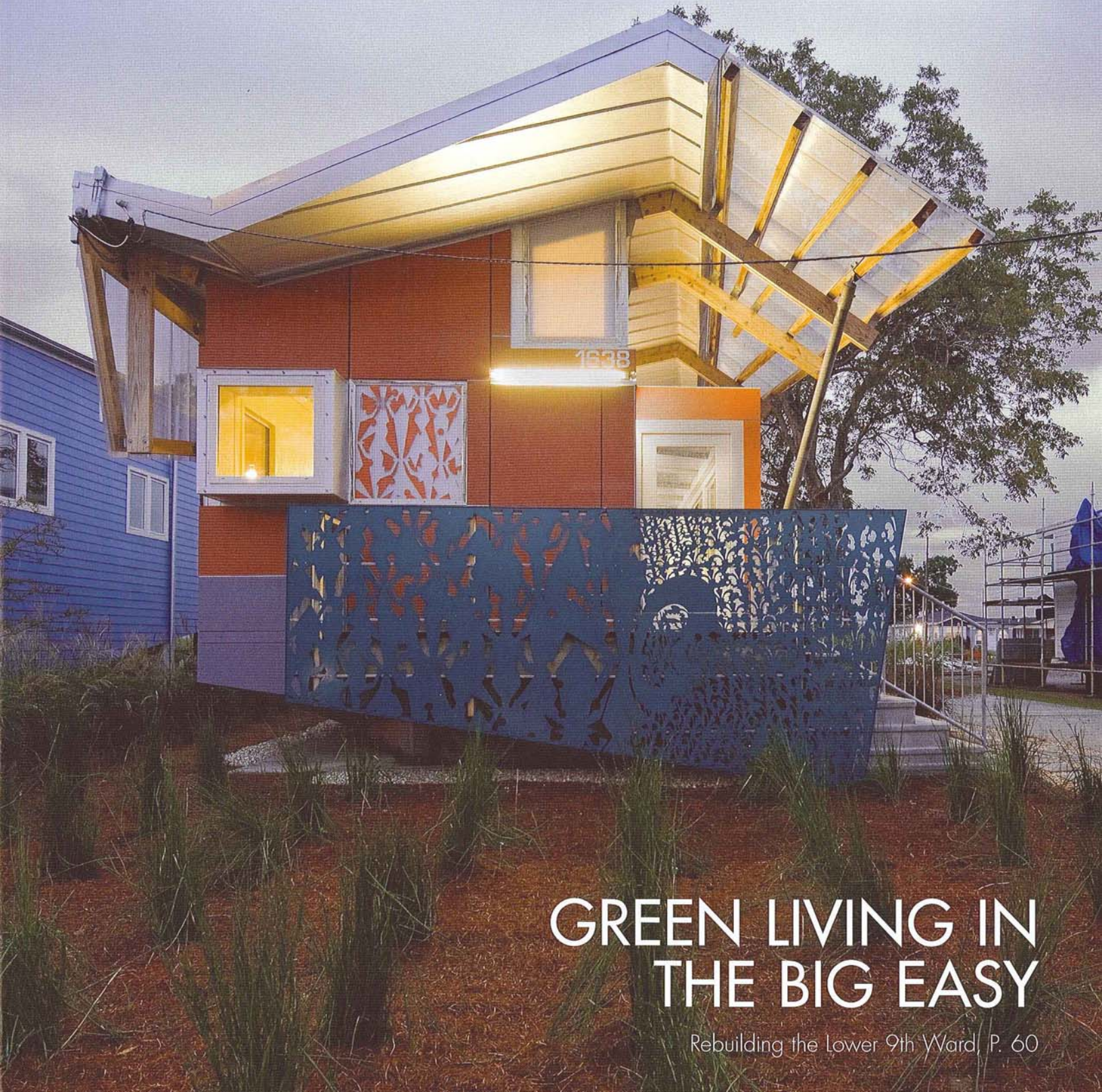
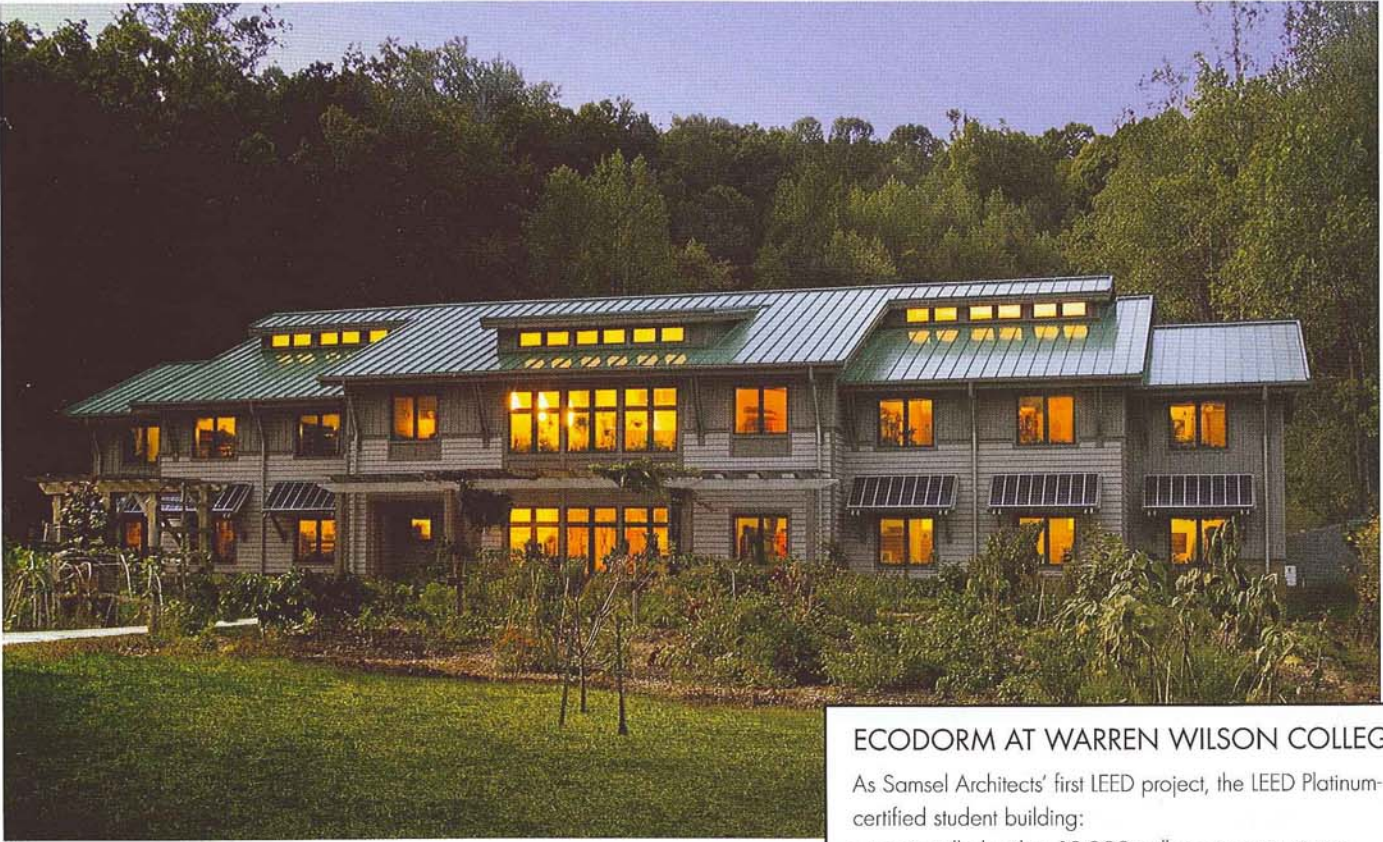

P. 48 **SILVERLINING INTERIORS**
Refashioning 1920s apartments for
the sustainable 21st century

P. 56 **SPaN**
Embodying nature with re-imagined
forms and unique solutions



GREEN LIVING IN THE BIG EASY

Rebuilding the Lower 9th Ward, P. 60



ECODORM AT WARREN WILSON COLLEGE

As Samsel Architects' first LEED project, the LEED Platinum-certified student building:

- was installed with a 10,000-gallon rainwater cistern
- uses 74% less portable water when compared to general building codes
- requires 63% less electricity than a typical dorm
- uses 73% less fossil fuels
- reduces 66% of total energy cost
- prevents 69 tons of carbon emissions from being released into the air

classroom dorm

Samsel Architects' EcoDorm broke records for the firm as well as Warren Wilson College, but its true innovation is its constant educational application to the students living within it

by Julie Schaeffer,

WHEN JIM SAMSEL BEGAN HIS CAREER IN ARCHITECTURE, conservation was hot—but by the time he founded his own firm 10 years later, federal policy had shifted. That didn't deter Samsel, however. "Our interest in historical preservation and energy conservation projects was still there, and we were able to cultivate some early clients with similar interests," he says.

From the beginning, Samsel Architects has seen the merging of architectural tradition with modern interpretation as a natural design evolution. "Western North Carolina's historic influences produced a wealth of early 20th century design, which we continue to find inspiring—but we're careful to avoid mimicking history," Samsel says. "Our designs become a new language of aesthetic, form, and detail."

Part of this new language is the firm's commitment to sustainability—a concept that is once again popular. "Today, we're at a point in the evolution of the green-building movement where energy efficiency is something we incorporate in every project; it's not something we have to convince our clients to do, largely because, economically, it makes sense," says Duncan McPherson, the firm's sustainability coordinator. "Beyond that, we're able to layer in different types of green-building techniques, such as passive and active solar design, high-performance envelopes, rain-water collection, green roofs, and daylighting."

The firm's first LEED project was the EcoDorm at Warren Wilson College, completed in 2005; it was the first LEED Platinum building in the region. "Warren Wilson College



LEFT: The EcoDorm at Warren Wilson College (far center) is the fourth in the series of Ballfield Dorms. The EcoDorm is certified LEED-EB Platinum, the first such designation for a dormitory in the United States. All photos: John Warner, courtesy of Samsel Architects

them front and center; showing students how the building works from a conservation standpoint helps them see how their daily lifestyle affects the building's performance."

Samsel is now hoping to implement the lessons learned from the EcoDorm in other projects. To that end, it has two LEED-accredited professionals on staff, and it has adopted the 2030 Challenge: an initiative by architect/activist Edward Mazria and environmental-advocacy group Architecture 2030 asking the global architecture and construction community to adopt a series of greenhouse-gas reduction targets for new and renovated buildings.

Samsel also hopes to see LEED evolve. "The one frustration we've had with LEED as a process is that a lot of clients don't have the stamina for it," he says. "We think it's a good program, and we try to use the LEED checklist to educate clients about sustainability principles and what they could include in their projects. But we also think we need to move forward with a lot of things that have been proven by LEED and get them into the energy codes and utility policies."

gb&d

"We think we need to move forward with a lot of things that have been proven by LEED and get them into the energy codes and utility policies."

—Jim Samsel, Owner

was a great client because they were interested in making this project a demonstration facility that highlighted as many green building techniques as possible," McPherson says. "So we got to incorporate technologies we've known about for years and also try out some new things."

The dorm also provided Samsel Architects with the opportunity to monitor the performance of the green-building techniques it used—important given that one of the firm's goals is to keep up on current green-building research and technology. The end result: "The building's actual performance was ultimately more efficient from a water and energy conservation standpoint than we had anticipated," McPherson says.

Perhaps most importantly, however, the EcoDorm presented an opportunity to educate. "Beyond its amazing performance, the most powerful aspect of the EcoDorm is the education it is providing to the college as a whole, particular the students living in it," McPherson says. "A lot of green building techniques are hidden inside buildings, but we put



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