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Withee Malcolm Architects



A Tale of Two Buildings

Withee Malcolm takes on urban infill in Los Angeles, California with two communities and an amenity-rich design approach

By Sergio Flores

Two new market rate apartment buildings designed by Withee Malcolm Architects (WMA), one in Hollywood and one in Pasadena, Calif., are designed to suit very specific markets. While both multi-family communities include some of the same amenities, each building has a distinct contextual concept within their urban infill environments.

Located in the heart of Hollywood, The Highland Residences is a six-story, 30,000-square-foot development comprised of 76 apartments in 22 unit types, 2,500 square feet of ground floor retail, 3,000 square feet of residential lobby, a tech supported co-working space, a fitness facility, a ground floor bicycle shop, parking on two subgrade levels, and a pet park.

“At The Highland Residences, the pool and rooftop lounge are spectacular, see-and-be-seen places with amazing views,” said Dan Withee, Founding Partner of WMA. He added, “The courtyard is the antidote to that—a quiet, well-appointed spot for relaxing.”

With single-family homes at the rear of the site and the busy street in front, the project’s U-shaped form oriented the broad facade of the building toward Highland Avenue and allowed the side arms to step back from the residential neighborhood behind the development. An open courtyard and planting along

the rear of the property provide an amenity for the residents and additional privacy for the near neighbors. Modern details reference the midcentury classic homes in the nearby hills and bold faces of the building stand out from the eclectic context of the wider neighborhood.

Withee stated, “Currently, it is the tallest building on Highland, although there are other, larger buildings on Sunset, which is a half block away.”

Principal of WMA, Dirk Thelen commented, “Inside, the expansive glazing floods the apartments with natural light, while the city views allow residents to feel that they are part of the Hollywood scene without leaving home.”

Working closely with Lennar’s development manager, the collaboration inspired the clear visions for the project. “With a background in hospitality, he wanted to integrate elements of a boutique hotel into the design, and worked closely with the team to realize this concept,” said Withee.

“In Hollywood, there’s always been a showy aspect to development, it’s still the ‘entertainment capital of the world.’ With the resurgence of development, there’s a demand for standout projects, ‘notice me’ buildings that push the architectural envelope,” said Thelen.

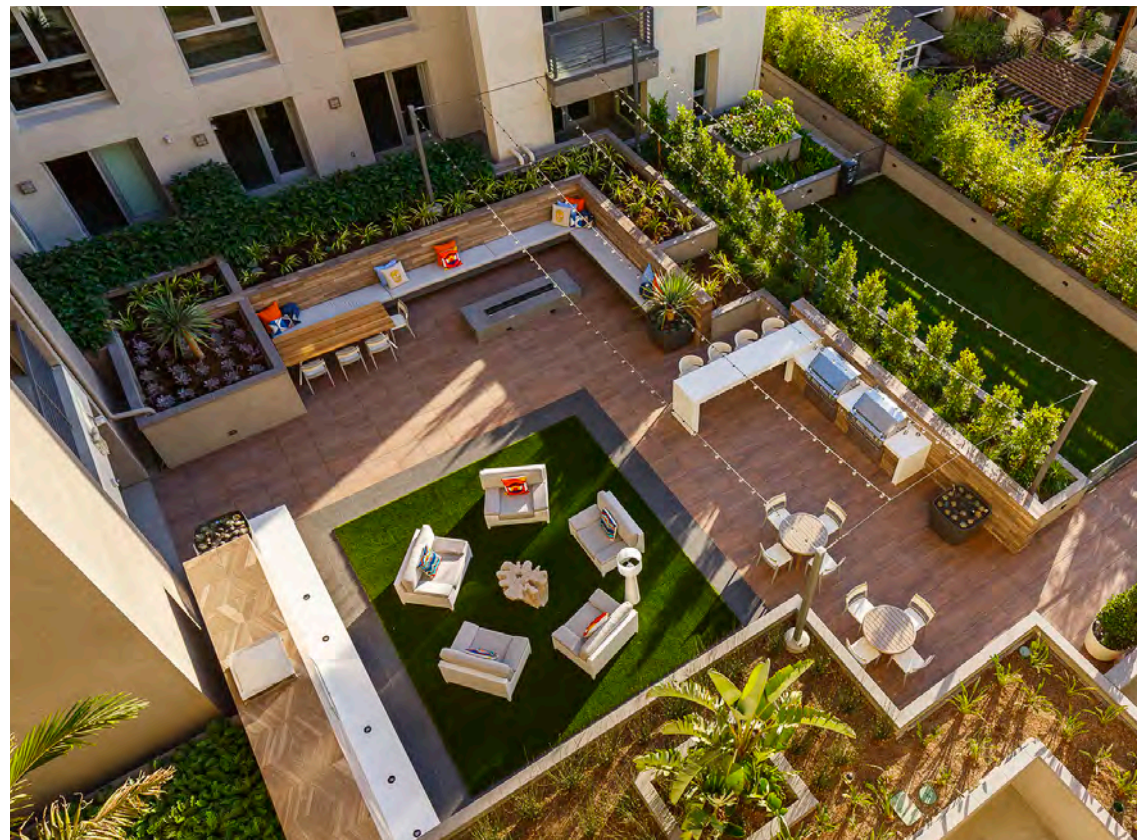
▲ The roof deck offers all the amenities of a boutique hotel—clubroom, fitness center, lounge areas, and pool.

◀ The Highland Residences with its highly-articulated facades is a stand-out architectural statement befitting its Hollywood location.



▲ Floor-to-ceiling windows flood the apartments with natural light. Open, airy living spaces feature hardwood flooring, designer kitchens, and modern cabinetry.

► The lush courtyard is the perfect spot for a quiet escape.



About 45 minutes northeast—depending on the infamous Los Angeles traffic—The Luxe resides in Pasadena. The new multifamily and retail development is an emerging district in the eastern side of the city, walking distance to a light rail line.

Inside the 131 units, plans range from small studios to two-bedroom homes featuring details like modern wood-planked floors and gracious 12-foot ceilings in the first floor and penthouse apartments. A tech-supported community room, a resort-style pool, expansive courtyards, decks with mountain views, a fitness center, and bicycle storage are just some of the many amenities.

With an updated approach to the historic architectural style of the city, The Luxe has strong appeal for residents who value the urban character and quality of life that has long been a hallmark of Pasadena.

Paying homage to the city's characteristics influenced the design of The Luxe. Withee said, "In Pasadena, respect for the city's architectural heritage and strong design review programs mean that new development will contribute to the refined, urban sensibility of the city."

At the landmark corner of Walnut and Allen Streets, the former site of an historic lumber yard is celebrat-

ed with an exuberant wooden crown on the retail component of the complex.

In fact, according to Thelen, the Pasadena Municipal Code requires the review of new construction throughout the city. As this was the first new building in the redeveloping district, the design had to be approved by the city's architectural review committee. This dedicated group is responsible for protecting the architectural integrity of the city and carefully vetted the proposed design to make certain that it set a high standard of architectural quality that would be met by future development in the area.

Both The Highland Residences and The Luxe required a thoughtful design approach to deliver the needs of today's renters while creating an environment that fits within the expression of its location. "Today's renters, no matter where they choose to live, expect a full complement of amenities..." said Withee.

WMA is currently working on several high-density infill projects in smaller suburban downtowns in the Los Angeles area. Withee added, "These are the kind of developments that help to catalyze renewal in cities like Downey and Monrovia."

▲ With a nod to Pasadena's historic architecture, The Luxe updates the Spanish Revival style to give an urbane, residential sensibility to the development, complete with entry stoops, balconies, and deep set windows.

"For us it's important not to just create a modern building that could be anywhere, but to design for the character of the community."

—Dan Withee, Founding Partner, Withee Malcolm Architects

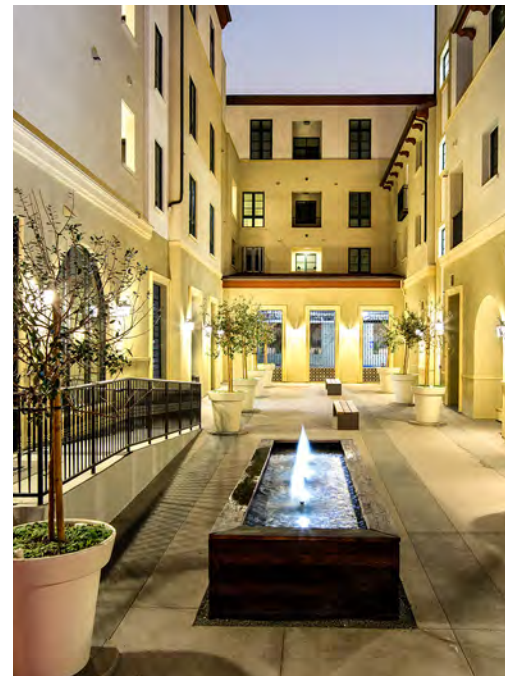


▲ The resort-style pool, furnished deck and grassy courtyard open up the site and provide the attractive gathering space for relaxing or entertaining.

For us it's important not to just create a modern building that could be anywhere, but to design for the character of the community. We expect to see more of this kind of development."

For more information on Withee Malcolm Architects, visit www.witheemalcolm.com. 

Sergio Flores is an Editor for *Builder and Developer* magazine. He may be reached at sergio@penpubinc.com.



▲ The inviting paseo separates the ground level retail from the apartments along Walnut Street and creates a quiet corner to enjoy the fountain.

PROJECT TEAM

THE HIGHLAND RESIDENCES IN HOLLYWOOD, CALIF.

ARCHITECT: Withee Malcolm
Architects

BUILDER/DEVELOPER: Lennar

Interior: Hibner Design Group

Landscape Architect: MJS Landscape
Architect

PHOTOGRAPHY: Cristan Costea

THE LUXE IN PASADENA, CALIF.

ARCHITECT: Withee Malcolm
Architects

BUILDER/DEVELOPER: AMCAL

INTERIOR DESIGNER: Merge

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Korn
Randolph

PHOTOGRAPHY: Cristan Costea