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BOUTIQUE FIRM WINS BIG AT DESIGN AWARDS

AIA Rochester honors PLAN Architectural Studio with 3 wins

Winners credit proactivity, design aesthetic & blue-collar approach

Rochester, NY – **PLAN Architectural Studio, PC** (PLAN Studio, 250 South Avenue) will receive three awards from the Rochester chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) at the organization's annual Design Excellence Awards on Saturday, June 27, 2009 at the George Eastman House. It will be the most awards won by a competing company this year, and an outstanding achievement for a "boutique" firm such as PLAN Studio.

A jury of seven members from the Columbus, OH chapter of the AIA chose PLAN Studio for two of the three top Design Awards: one for 250south, a mixed-use project in downtown Rochester, and the other for Lakeview Special Needs Residence in Ithaca, NY. PLAN Studio's third award is a Citation for Quartet, a mixed-use project in Rochester's East End District.

The jury applauded **250south's** "bold, urban attitude," and called it "an excellent example of a straightforward and sensitive adaptation and reuse of an existing building in an urban context; a remarkably clear, sustainable solution."

The jury praised **Lakeview Special Needs Residence** for "the use of sensitive site planning by the architect," and stated that it "believes that the building will stand the aesthetic test of time."

Quartet: An Urban Mixed-Use Building with Four Unique Residences is an un-built project designed for 230 East Avenue in which "the architect handles the aesthetic of the building in a fresh, raw and consistent manner," according to the jury. The design was created by PLAN Studio as part of its ongoing commitment to something it calls "ArcheNova."

"'ArcheNova' is a term that we developed to describe our more inspiration-driven projects," explains **Christopher Lopez**, PLAN Studio's design director. "These are usually labors of love, rather than client-driven projects, but they're just as fully researched, developed and presented as any 'real' project. We proactively seek out potential opportunities that we feel should happen, instead of waiting for the 'right client' with the 'right project' to come along."

PLAN Studio partner and business director, **Mark Pandolf**, points out that, among other obvious interpretations, 'PLAN' loosely stands for **P**andolf **L**opez **A**rche**N**ova, and that both 250south and Quartet started out as ArcheNova initiatives.

"The 250south conceptual design led ultimately to its physical realization and construction, whereas Quartet has influenced a recent sprouting of roof-top residential additions along East Avenue," he adds. "So, they not only inspire us, but can also help others to visualize possibilities."

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(PLAN Studio, continued)

As for their strong design aesthetic, the partners say it's the result of artfully combining Pandolf's respect and sensitivity to the historic with Lopez's more contemporary ideas.

"We feel that this combination creates dynamic designs that tie the past and present together," says Pandolf. "Our goal is to make buildings that are contextually appropriate as well as progressive."

The two Rochester natives founded their architectural firm in 2003 after recognizing the strong synergy between their design approaches. They realized that their collaborative efforts, and yin/yang relationship, made for productive business as well as design decisions.

The partners also credit their success to PLAN Studio's "blue-collar," hand-crafted approach.

"Our office culture is really more of a studio atmosphere than a 'corporate' firm, and we turn that to our advantage," explains Lopez. "We all roll up our sleeves to create something customized to our client's specific needs and situation. There's nothing 'off the rack' about our designs."

Media, please note: High-resolution photos of all projects, as well as partner headshots, are available. Please visit www.planpc.com for more information.

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