

Rebrand is a blueprint for continued expansion at city architects

Firm that helped shape Edinburgh looks outward for next phase of growth

An architecture practice that has helped shape modern Edinburgh through several major city-centre developments is rebranding, as it eyes continued expansion throughout the UK.

Founded in 1994, AMA Studio (formerly Allan Murray Architects), has overseen high profile and award-winning projects including the £1 billion St James Quarter, New Waverley and the new Boroughmuir High School.

The firm became employee-owned in April 2020 and has introduced the rebrand to reflect the increased teamwork which has developed since then.

Following a robust financial year given the challenging conditions of the pandemic, the practice is targeting a period of sustained growth, with an expected pipeline of projects spanning the length of the UK, from Aberdeen to Bristol and London.

Conor Pittman, Managing Director, believes the timing is right for the business to evolve, as it increasingly sets its sights further afield from Scotland's capital and the city-centre, mixed-use developments the practice has carved a reputation for.

He said: "The core of the business will always be in Edinburgh, working on the integration of contemporary design within an historic setting, for which we've become renowned.

"That work is now being recognised on a national level, which

is helping us expand outward from our traditional 'urbanist' label and secure more varied work across the UK – in rural and urban areas and across leisure, office, retail and residential.

“Rebranding as AMA Studio reflects not only this change in direction for the company, but our more collaborative way of working since becoming employee owned.

“Our team has positively embraced employee ownership and continues to rise to the challenge, everyone is taking more responsibility than before.”

AMA Studio has secured a major residential commission in Glasgow in addition to a significant rural project in the North of England.

Meanwhile, Director Kenny McNally continues to oversee the next phase of St James Quarter where the cinema, hotel, aparthotel and housing will join the retail offering to provide a truly mixed-use environment.

AMA Studio is also investing more into the practice and the development of its team, with a view to becoming leaders in 3D visualisation and virtual reality, working to improve how designs are shared with clients.

Kenny added: “We’ve been working in 3D since I joined the practice in 1997 and it was great to partner with virtual reality experts on the St James Quarter Masterplan, where the ability to show retailers what the scheme would look like was critical.

“Getting the capacity to deliver VR in-house and as standard on our projects is a major focus and something we’re looking to offer in the not-too-distant future.

“Likewise, our ambition is to become a leading practice in the delivery of net zero, sustainable buildings and spaces with a

long-term view of minimising energy consumption.

“As a practice we are continuing Passivhaus staff training and exploring how our BIM expertise can enable us to continue to deliver high quality projects while reducing carbon emissions.”

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