

The S/L/A/M Collaborative

Customer Success Story

AutoCAD® Architecture
Autodesk® Buzzsaw® Professional



Rendered by Andrey Kamenskiy

“Inserting doors and windows in the walls is also really fast, There’s no more trimming and all that other time-consuming stuff. It just goes away. That adds time to do other things—and to produce a better product.”

Stephen Keller
Designer
The S/L/A/M Collaborative

Better buildings, faster.

The S/L/A/M Collaborative designs a better product with AutoCAD® Architecture software and the Autodesk® Buzzsaw® Professional on-demand collaborative project management solution.

Project Summary

The S/L/A/M Collaborative is an industry-leading collection of architects, engineers, and planners committed to design excellence and exceptional service. “We’re a multidisciplinary architectural and engineering firm,” says James McManus, FAIA, CEO. “A good deal of our work is with higher education and health-care facilities. But we also do a lot of work with state and municipal governments, as well as pharmaceutical companies.” In fact, one of the firm’s most recent awards was the 2005 Award of Merit by New York Construction for the Pfizer Pharmaceutical Clinical Research Unit in New Haven, Connecticut. To better serve its clientele and add new areas of expertise, S/L/A/M has pursued several valuable strategic mergers in the last 15 years. Following one of those in 1995, the firm standardized on AutoCAD Architecture, an AutoCAD® software-based design and documentation tool engineered specifically for architects. Since that time, S/L/A/M has seen considerable improvements in productivity—as well as project quality—and has completed 50–75 projects a year in AutoCAD Architecture.

The Challenge

The 1995 merger brought many new opportunities. But it also brought some complications, says S/L/A/M designer Stephen Keller “We used AutoCAD. They used another CAD program. So, for a period of time we ran both platforms.”

A House Divided

“Finally, in 2000, we standardized on AutoCAD,” says Keller. “One important factor was that many of our consultants were using it. And a few years later, we decided to adopt AutoCAD Architecture.”

Moving to AutoCAD Architecture was a logical step that enabled the firm to build on their AutoCAD expertise—and add powerful productivity tools for architects. In making the transition, the firm was able to continue using tried-and-true work methods and work with a familiar user interface, smoothing the process.

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The S/L/A/M Collaborative architects and designers rely on AutoCAD Architecture design and documentation software and Autodesk Buzzsaw Professional to

- *Increase speed and productivity in creating documentation, drawings, and schedules from the object-based model*
- *Create high-quality, well-coordinated documents*
- *Minimize delivery costs with instant, teamwide access to project documents and designs*
- *Make better decisions faster using executive and project-level dashboards that provide at-a-glance project status*

The Solution

“That change really helped bring everyone together,” says Stephen Jedrey, CAD Manager at the firm. “And after that first year, things became a thousand times better than before. Now, sixty of us use AutoCAD Architecture every day.”

Work Smarter

“AutoCAD Architecture has changed the way we think about work,” says Jedrey. “Using AutoCAD, we drew lines, circles, and arcs. But with AutoCAD Architecture, we changed our processes and began using common architectural building objects, such as walls, doors, and windows. It really helped us.”

Produce Construction Documents Faster

“For example, we can automatically grab schedules directly from the drawings,” says Keller. “That saves us a lot of time. And when we have to make a change, we don’t have to edit anything. We just move a wall or a door and with a click of a button everything comes along with it. Using conventional drafting lines and arcs, that was a very cumbersome process.”

Make Winning Presentations

AutoCAD Architecture also makes it easy to produce compelling presentations straight from the construction documents. “Sometimes, we need to poche all of the walls for a client presentation,” says Jedrey. “That can take thousands of hours by hand. With AutoCAD Architecture, we press one button and we’re done. And if anyone wants to make a change, you know that everything else can be updated too. It’s great.”

Spend More Time on Design

“Inserting doors and windows in the walls is also really fast,” says Keller. “There’s no more trimming and all that other time-consuming stuff. It just goes away. That adds time to do other things—and to produce a better product.”

Work Better with Consultants

“Using AutoCAD Architecture helps our structural consultants be much more effective,” says

Jedrey. “For example, when entering column sizes they used to pick an approximate size for use throughout the entire building. Now, they can isolate particular columns and properly detail them out. We can save space, make room for drains, you name it. It’s been a big help.”

Keep Everyone Up to Date

The S/L/A/M Collaborative also uses the Autodesk Buzzsaw Professional online project collaboration service on many projects, including the 62,000-square-foot, three-story Pfizer Clinical Research Unit in New Haven, Connecticut. “It was a very fast-track project,” says Jedrey. “We needed an easy way for everyone to have access to all project information on a daily basis. Using Buzzsaw, we uploaded the information, got feedback, and moved the project along quickly. We were able to beat every single deadline.”

The Result

Using AutoCAD Architecture, The S/L/A/M Collaborative has been able to finish even the most complex facilities on time. “For example, we’re just finishing a large science building at the University of Notre Dame,” says McManus. “That was a 205,000 square foot, \$50-million building all done in AutoCAD Architecture—on time and on budget.”

A Better Building

“A lot of the time savings goes into building a better product,” says Jedrey. “In the end, the owner probably gets the most out of our improved productivity. We spend just as much time on the project, with just as much effort as ever, but the owners get more out of the final product.”

To learn more about AutoCAD Architecture, visit www.autodesk.com/autocadarchitecture. Or, find out about The S/L/A/M Collaborative at www.slamcoll.com.