

Commonwealth Architects + Boynton Rothschild Rowland

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In local architecture news, Shockoe Slip-based Commonwealth Architects recently added to its ranks with its acquisition of its neighbor a couple of blocks over, Boynton Rothschild Rowland Architects PC.

The deal, which Commonwealth announced in late July, closed Aug. 1, Commonwealth principal Lee Shadbolt said. Terms were not disclosed. The acquisition brings on BRRA principal J. Mitchell (“Mitch”) Rowland, who joins Commonwealth full-time as director of higher education, bringing its staff count to 26. BRRA’s Robert “Bob” Boynton will serve part-time as a consultant.

“Technically, it’s an acquisition. But we’d like to say it’s a merger,” Shadbolt said. “They’re coming in and bringing their client base and their billing and marketing capabilities with them. That was one of the reasons we really liked the deal.”

He added, “They’ve got several clients in the higher ed and governmental marketplace that we have not been able to get with, despite the fact that we’ve tried. We think we’ll get more work, especially if they can say, ‘Hey, we have a little bit bigger engine’ rather than a real small firm. That allows us to do some really large projects.”

The combination brings an end to a nearly 30-year run for BRRA, which started in 1991 as a successor of five other firms dating back to 1904 with Charles Robinson, a noted architect whose imprint on the area includes the former Highland Park School, Fox Elementary, the First English Lutheran Church on Stuart Circle, and the old Hotel Petersburg that’s undergoing redevelopment.

The 20-year-old Commonwealth’s workload includes the currently on-hold expansion of Virginia Housing Development Authority’s headquarters, as well as a new parking garage downtown and the multi-building Williams Square development in Fredericksburg. Shadbolt said the VHDA expansion and smaller projects have helped sustain the firm through the pandemic, with no layoffs or pay reductions.

Commonwealth has a track record of absorbing smaller firms. In 2017, it likewise took on Henrico-based firm Architects Dayton Thompson & Associates.

Link to original press release:

<https://comarchs.com/news/local-architecture-news-commonwealth-architects-boynton-rothschild-rowland/>