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## **Durkee to leave Durkee, Brown, Viveiros & Werenfels Architects**

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Steve Durkee, co-founder of the architectural firm Durkee, Brown, Viveiros & Werenfels (DBVW), will be leaving the firm to pursue a new career opportunity. Durkee will join the real estate development company Cornish Associates, LP as a principal, with the goal of helping to manage and direct Cornish's real estate development projects in downtown Providence. DBVW and Cornish will continue to work closely together on future urban redevelopment projects, as they have for nearly 15 years.

Durkee said, "This is an incredible opportunity to join an outstanding group with a shared vision on the development side of urban revitalization, an aspect of my work about which I'm passionate. But it is a decision that comes with great emotion as well. We started Durkee Brown sixteen years ago in a 300 s/f office. The company grew to become one of Rhode Island's most successful architectural firms, and in the process I worked with amazing clients and talented co-workers to make a significant impact on the city's urban fabric. I will continue to focus on revitalizing downtown Providence, but working as a different member of the team."

DBVW Architects will maintain their existing client list, staff size and areas of specialization under the leadership of principals Doug Brown, Michael Viveiros and Martha Werenfels. Doug Brown, DBVW's co-founder, said "This is a personal loss to our DBVW family because we will all miss Steve's dynamic spirit in our office very much. We have been through a lot together. In fact, we used to sit across the desk from each other as classmates at RISD, and we've sat next to each other in DBVW's studio for 16 years." Brown said "But we are confident that the transition will be smooth and we look forward to working with Steve in his new role as a developer. Since over half of the firm's 25 employees have been with DBVW for more than five years, we are confident of our ability to continue to deliver the high quality projects for which we are known. We have strong project managers whose teams will remain in place on Steve's ongoing projects. Thankfully, we have maintained our staff size throughout the recession, so we are still operating at our fullest, most skilled capacity."

At this time no changes in ownership, senior management, or the name of the firm have been announced. Durkee will phase out of his current DBVW projects by early June, with an understanding that he will maintain involvement in some projects as required.

Durkee & Brown Architects was founded in 1994, when Steve Durkee and his former RISD classmate, Doug Brown, were awarded a large scattered-site, adaptive re-use affordable housing project for the Woonsocket Neighborhood Development Corp. By 1997, the firm had grown to 10 employees, including Michael Viveiros (another former RISD classmate) and Martha Werenfels, who was formerly the Historical Architect with the State Historic Preservation Office and who was brought on to the team as a historic preservation specialist. In 2000, Viveiros and Werenfels became

partners in the firm, at which time the name changed from Durkee & Brown Architects to Durkee, Brown, Viveiros & Werenfels Architects. The firm is located in a historic building in the Jewelry District which was purchased in 2007 and which DBVW rehabilitated using State and Federal Historic Tax Credits.

"I'm very excited about this next chapter but I'll miss a lot about the firm culture at Durkee Brown. The humor, passion, creativity and dedication in our studio make it a unique and fun place. It always has been." Durkee said. "I look forward to working with Durkee Brown as our architects for future Cornish projects."

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