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2020 Year in Review: David O’Sullivan, O’Sullivan Architects, Inc.

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David O’Sullivan, AIA
President
O’Sullivan Architects, Inc.

What was your greatest professional accomplishment or most notable project, deal, or transaction in 2020? We were approached by a young developer about assisting him in responding to a city RFP. The project was near my house and involved a historic structure, both things that made it more connected to me. My team came up with an imaginative approach to the design and the client trusted us enough to execute it. We found we were one of two finalist and against an established group with lots of experience and great track record. As we went through the process we were able to advocate for our design approach and the client’s program resonated well with the community. We just were recommended to the city as the preferred development team and are excited to move forward on project. It was nice to see innovation and good design get rewarded in this process.

What aspects of working from home have you enjoyed most? I did find the flexibility of time and not spending so much of my life driving between meetings as a good aspect.

Also with online meetings it seems that people are more focused and things are dealt with in a more timely manner.

What was the most difficult part of working during the pandemic of 2020? When the pandemic came upon us we already had the tools in place for employees to work remotely so aside from some issues with equipment at people’s home we were able to transition. The loss of interaction and collaboration of in person design meetings was the biggest hurdle with continuing work. We found ways to replace the in person with online programs but still felt it was not as successful. I think the halting of public meetings and construction on our urban projects was the most disruptive. We pride ourselves on working with neighbors and city officials to make successful project for our clients and suddenly everything stopped. When things resumed we had lost some of that close connections we had developed.

What are your predictions for commercial real estate in 2021? We operate in many segments of the commercial real estate market. I see the demand for urban residential coming back as people will want the excitement and vitality of the urban environment when they feel safe again. The retail and automotive aspects of our work will be forever changed by this pandemic and will need to adapt to new norms and be slower to see a comeback.

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