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Three Chicago Architectural Leaders Join Forces

Thomas Kerwin, David Brininstool and Brad Lynch establish a new Chicago-based architecture firm with global initiatives

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Chicago, Ill., Jan. 27, 2010 – This week, Thomas Kerwin, David Brininstool and Brad Lynch announce the opening of their new architecture firm, Brininstool, Kerwin and Lynch. By combining Kerwin's international expertise and Brininstool and Lynch's esteemed reputation for quality design, these three leaders in architecture create an impressive partnership poised to expand beyond the Chicago market.

On December 31, 2009, Kerwin left his position as a Managing Partner at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Chicago, one of the largest and most respected architecture practices in the world, to team up with Brininstool and Lynch of Chicago firm Brininstool + Lynch. Kerwin will serve as Managing Principal of the new firm, while Brininstool and Lynch will serve as Principals. "I'm delighted to start something new with David and Brad," says Kerwin. "They've been one of the top design firms in the city for years, and I believe we can leverage that into new markets."

"We've always worked to marry excellent clients with excellent design," says Brininstool. "Tom's international experience will enable us to deliver the same kind of service to a much larger audience."

Kerwin's extensive international experience will help the new firm pursue work not only in Chicago and the US but overseas as well. In the 23 years Kerwin was at SOM, he rose from Studio Architect to a Managing Partner. He has spent the majority of his career doing international work, and, as a Managing Partner at SOM, he was responsible for the Greenland Financial Center in Nanjing, China, a mixed-use complex containing a 450m tower and three million square feet of office, residential, hotel and retail space. Another major project of Kerwin's was Rockwell Center in Manila, Philippines, a massive urban project with 10.8 million square feet in eight towers of residential, office, hotel and retail space.

As a result, Brininstool, Kerwin and Lynch is already working with Dutch developer INNO PLAN BV to design a large Chicago housing project. "We are also pursuing projects internationally with Korea-based Hanwha ENC through our new and innovative strategic alliance with Magellan Development," says Kerwin. "We look forward to working with other off-shore developers and taking Chicago-based design to the international arena as well."

Brininstool + Lynch is known for its work in housing, cultural institutions and corporate interiors. The firm's projects include the Racine Art Museum, United Airlines Red Carpet Clubs, private homes, and high-rise residential projects for CMK, Mesirov Financial, Related Companies, and other major developers. Nearly every project completed by the office has appeared in national and international publications.

In its 20+ years, Brininstool + Lynch has won more than 40 design awards, including 22 Design Excellence awards from the American Institute of Architects, two American Architecture Awards, and recognition as an "Emerging Voice in Architecture" in 2003 by the Architectural League of New York.

“We believe the business world has been defined too much in terms of its competitive structures,” says Kerwin. “We’re looking for a new approach, one where we identify opportunities to build strong teams from players who bring different talents to the table. For example, we’re excited about the strategic alliance we’ve formed with Chicago’s Magellan Development. Their expertise in the capital and construction markets vastly strengthens our ability to secure complex projects here and abroad.”

Magellan Co-Chairman James Loewenberg agrees and suggests that the developer sees the alliance as an important aspect of the company’s new strategic direction. “Our successful experience with Aqua—a project that has thrived in a difficult market—reinforces our belief that, moving forward, high-quality design must remain a critical factor in our business plan. We’ve worked with some great architects in Chicago, but our relationship with Brininstool, Kerwin and Lynch promises to be even more rewarding.”

Local experts and professionals see this new firm as a positive, innovative addition to the architecture community.

“I’m not surprised to see these guys—whom I have known for years and do such quality work—making a powerful move,” said Stanley Tigerman, dean of the Chicago architectural community. “Look, it’s not an easy time to be in this profession, but this makes me optimistic. They could really revolutionize the whole process.”

Civic leader, founder and retired chairman and CEO of Aon Corporation, Pat Ryan added, “I worked with them on the Olympic bid, and they were terrific. Very bright, and great designers. I also know the folks at Magellan and have great respect for them. Where the two firms can work together, I see huge potential.”

Finally, Chicago Architecture Foundation President Lynn Osmond says, “All three of these men are leaders in our architectural community. Their coming together in this way promises to be a very positive development for Chicago and for architecture in general.”

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