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The Architectural Team's Bob Verrier Elected to AIA College of Fellows

Based on his achievements in the preservation of hundreds of historic structures and in the creation of thousands of units of affordable housing, the American Institute of Architects has elevated architect Robert J. Verrier to its College of Fellows.

Chelsea, MA, February 15, 2012 – The award-winning Boston-based architecture, historic restoration, preservation and master-planning firm The Architectural Team has announced that managing principal, Robert J. Verrier has been elected to the American Institute of Architects (AIA) prestigious College of Fellows.

The Fellowship program, one of the highest professional honors for American architects, was developed by the Washington, D.C.-based AIA to elevate those architects who have made a significant contribution to architecture and society and who have achieved a standard of excellence in the profession. "It's a tremendous honor to be recognized as an AIA Fellow, and one that reminds us that our mission goes beyond designing buildings," says Verrier, "It is a life-work commitment to making the world a better place in which to work, to live, to learn and to grow."

In 2012, architects from around the country were awarded the Fellow designation – including six others from the Boston Society of Architects. With 105 architects added to the College of Fellows in 2012, only about 2 percent of the 80,000 registered architects in the United States have been elevated to AIA's College of Fellows. Verrier and other recipients have demonstrated through their work that they meet such criteria as "advancing the living standards of people through an improved environment" and "making the profession of ever-increasing service to society."

Verrier is well known nationally among architects in general and especially among those involved in historic landmarks, affordable housing and multifamily housing. His projects are noteworthy for their impact on revitalizing communities and neighborhoods, especially waterfront sites, historic mills and hospitals, as well as disadvantaged zones of his native greater Boston.

Verrier's love of old buildings, and his passion for the preservation of historic fabric, has overlapped with his devotion to the mission of creating quality, safe, and attractive housing for those who would not have been able to afford it otherwise. The restorations of historic structures such as The Franklin Square House in Boston's South End or Kenmore Abbey in Boston's Kenmore Square are examples of such a confluence of mission. Verrier enjoys an unusually strong reputation among real estate developers, business and institutional leaders, and charitable groups.

“The depth and breadth of Bob’s work has made an indelible mark on our national landscape. Long before historic preservation was formalized as a body of knowledge, Bob’s genius was to capitalize on the prevailing ethos of the region to “use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without,” says Diane Georgopoulos, FAIA, architect at MassHousing and sponsor of Verrier’s FAIA submission.

As current Alumni Association President of the Boston Architectural College—the oldest volunteer faculty, open enrollment, evening architectural school in the United States, Verrier remains committed to maintaining a strong collaborative partnership with the College to help prepare future architects for the profession. This is evidenced by his active and ongoing personal involvement at the BAC, which includes coaching and mentoring individual students in formal programs such as the College’s “Gateway Project” and his participation in numerous committees to include the Cascieri Lecture Series Committee and the Ames Scholarship Committee. Over the past 40 years, Verrier’s firm has contributed to the education and training of over 250 young architects through an active commitment to student internship training.

A career of transforming places

Verrier is one of four original partners to found The Architectural Team in 1971. Since then, the firm has quietly transformed neighborhoods in Massachusetts and throughout the United States with major waterfront, commercial, institutional and historic preservation and adaptive reuse projects. Verrier and his staff of 60 professionals have designed more than 250 affordable-housing developments, a fact that helped him earn a lifetime achievement designation from Habitat for Humanity of Greater Boston in 2010.

More recently, he was presented with the 2011 Industry Excellence Award from the Rental Housing Association of Boston in recognition of his lifetime achievement in community and civic activities and excellence in development. Verrier has also been instrumental in the preservation of hundreds of architecturally significant historic structures, including many landmark mills, factories, churches, schools, hotels and hospitals dotting New England. Verrier recently co-authored several articles including, “Reinventing Historic Assets” for *Urban Land*, “Old Mills, New Lives” for *Sustainable Facility* magazine, and “Recycling History” for *College Planning & Management*.

Many of the firm’s projects have become national models for high-quality, mixed-income housing approaches to transform and revitalize blighted areas.

“Our firm is deeply supportive of protecting our historical fabric and creating more and better affordable housing for all Americans,” says Verrier. “These projects make positive economic transformation possible, while also preserving our architectural heritage – not only in New England, but in other distinct architectural regions throughout the U.S. – and enriching the lives of families in those communities.”

The announcement comes as Verrier's firm, The Architectural Team, celebrates its 41st anniversary. The AIA Fellowship designation also adds to Verrier's long list of honors, including a National Historic Preservation Award personally presented to him by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 for the preservation and adaptive reuse of Baker Chocolate Factory, Dorchester Lower Falls, Mass.

Bob Verrier, FAIA, managing principal of The Architectural Team and a newly elected member of the AIA College of Fellows. At right, an image of the Battery Wharf complex, Boston, designed by the firm.



Projects that bear Verrier's signature have earned more than 80 awards for design achievement and excellence, including four J. Timothy Anderson Awards for Excellence in Historic Preservation, two Paul E. Tsongas Awards, and 11 awards from the Boston Preservation Alliance and the Massachusetts Historical Commission, among others. Prominent new building projects in Boston have included Battery Wharf, a luxury condominium with a five-star hotel, and **West End Place**, winner of an American Institute of Architects (AIA) design award and a 23-story, mixed-income and mixed-use tower called **The Metropolitan**, in Boston's Chinatown.

In addition to planning and designing large-scale multifamily residential buildings, The Architectural Team has transformed many of the country's historic hospitals and mills for new uses. For the first phase of **Baker Chocolate Factory**, winner of seven awards for historic preservation, the firm adapted eight defunct industrial buildings located on the Dorchester complex into a 318-unit, mixed-income housing facility. More recently, the firm completed the Baker Chocolate Factory's final phase, Lofts at Lower Mills–The Watermill, a 17-unit loft-style renovation of a former boiler building, which earned the firm from Boston Preservation Alliance's 2011 Preservation Award.

"With the skill and foresight to find value in our nation's abandoned industrial and public buildings that have helped to spur the economic vitality to these communities, Bob's clients have come to rely on him for his expertise," adds Georgopolos, "and the fact that so many of them return to him year after year is a testament to his adroitness."

Other examples include **Building 114**, located in the historic Charlestown Navy Yard, which formerly served as a United States Navy joinery shop. Verrier transformed the derelict waterfront structure into a new 108,000 square foot biomedical research laboratory while restoring the building to National Park Service's historic rehabilitation standards, earning two Preservation Awards. The commission required the interpretive reconstruction of collapsed sections of the original building, which Verrier designed to be respectful of, yet clearly distinguishable from, the original. **Whaler's Place**, a senior housing project, earned the 2009 National



Recent projects by Verrier and The Architectural Team include mixed-income housing for the Baker Chocolate Factory complex (left) and The Metropolitan tower (right).

Communities of Quality® Award for Exemplary Development for the Elderly from the National Affordable Housing Management Association. The design for adapting a historic factory into the 154-unit the **Apartments at Boott Mills** was honored with a J. Timothy Anderson Award for historic preservation.

Verrier is available as a source for news and trends features on affordable housing, historic rehabilitation, architectural design and planning, as well as Boston real estate development. ###

About The Architectural Team, Inc.

Founded in 1971, The Architectural Team, Inc. is a 60-person master planning and architectural firm that has grown through its design excellence and commitment to responsive and collaborative client relationships. The Architectural Team has developed a portfolio of distinctive design solutions for a broad range of building types and programs, and has earned more than 80 awards for design excellence. These include the new construction of large urban mixed-use developments, multifamily residential, commercial, hospitality, recreational, and academic facilities, as well as a national reputation for historic preservation and adaptive reuse. The firm is located in the restored 1840s-era Commandant's House in Chelsea, Mass. Visit www.architecturalteam.com.