



Michael Syracuse, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, FXCollaborative Architects LLP

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Name: Michael Syracuse, AIA, LEED AP BD+C

Title: Partner

Company Name: FXCollaborative Architects LLP

What was the most challenging part of working during the pandemic?

It has taken a conscious effort to stay connected with everyone while we're not seeing each other in person. I miss the happenstance connections that occur in the office—catching up with my colleagues in the pantry or running into consultants in my office for project meetings. The networking events, cocktail parties, and dinners have moved online. Now we all need to make a deliberate effort to reach out and connect to make new relationships and keep the existing ones going. I have regular meetings with my colleagues just to chat, check in, and make sure they're okay.

What aspects of working from home did you enjoy most?

Even though I've lived in my neighborhood for 20 years, it was not until this year that I appreciated it in such detail. The changing of the seasons, the quality of the lighting, the variety of textures, and the mix of people and uses are amazing. I'm determined to get outside every day and explore while walking my dog, and that has paid off in my new understanding of my corner of the city.

What was your most notable project, deal, or transaction in 2020?

The completion of our new offices at 1 Willoughby Sq. in Downtown Brooklyn! I'm really proud of FXCollaborative when I see the building that we designed for JEMB Realty in the Brooklyn skyline. This "hybrid building" that incorporates a public school and retail in the base is a pivotal addition to the downtown commercial real estate portfolio as the first ground-up office development in downtown Brooklyn in decades. Our workplace includes one of the building's amazing superfloors with high ceilings and a wraparound terrace. It will transform how we collaborate as we return to work in person in the future.

What are your predictions for commercial real estate in 2021?

New York City will start to rebound. As a vaccine for COVID-19 hopefully rolls out soon and the novelty of working from home wears thin, we will find value in returning to the office—but not in the way we did in the past. Offices will shift to become centers of strategic in-person collaboration. Tenants and building owners will need to provide more amenities to enhance collaboration for those

returning in person. More lounges, conference rooms, and project war rooms for teamwork. These spaces will need to be outfitted with technology to support hybrid in-office and remote collaboration. Less rows of assigned desks for focused work that can be accomplished elsewhere. Now is the time to prepare for what our future of work will be.

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