



## Cooper Robertson expands leadership team and promotes key designers

February 28, 2023 - Design / Build



Shown (from left) are: Elizabeth Stoel and Brad Barnett.

New York, NY Architecture and urban design firm Cooper Robertson has hired Elizabeth Stoel, known by colleagues as Betsy, as the firm's director of architecture, and Brad Barnett as director of urban design. Also adding to the firm's architecture, design and planning influence are the recent promotions of seven team members into associate and senior associate positions.

Stoel, AIA, LEED AP BD+C has spearheaded award-winning architecture and urban design projects, with notable strengths in institutional and in public realm works, among others. Many have earned acclaim from the American Institute of Architects (AIA) New York and Florida chapters, the Municipal Art Society's MASTerworks award for best new building in 2020, and honors from the Urban Land Institute and various architecture publications.

Known for a multidisciplinary, collaborative approach to new and adapted buildings as well as public spaces, Stoel has led such projects as a \$70 million charter school in the Bronx, an elementary school and middle school science leadership academy within Drexel University's uCity Square innovation district in West Philadelphia, and the Madison Square Boys & Girls Club's flagship clubhouse in Harlem. She has offered key design leadership on competition-winning public space projects including Constitution Gardens on the National Mall and the St. Petersburg Pier, a new 26-acre public space in St. Petersburg, Florida. Stoel's influence extends to past teaching positions with Pratt Institute, New York Institute of Technology, Parsons The New School for Design, and Harvard University's Graduate School of Design. She has been cited and published widely in leading architectural journals, and she has served as project editor for the respected publication PRAXIS.

"My continuing aim is for design that makes a positive impact on urban environments," says Stoel. "Regardless of scale or typology, these interventions can have a catalytic effect on a neighborhood, community or city. It's not always about the biggest budget, but always about architecture and design for a meaningful outcome."

#### Urban Designer Adds to Firm's Leadership

With a longstanding mission to help cities and organizations become more flexible, resilient and inclusive, Brad Barnett, AICP, is renowned as a leading urban designer with experience on the West Coast and East Coast, having worked for both Sasaki and Mithun. Expert in large-scale master plans and complex urban projects, his imprint is seen in award-winning projects such as a major transit-oriented neighborhood plan for Kirkland, Washington, and currently he is on the Cooper Robertson project team for a major masterplan in a suburban area of Chesapeake, Virginia.

Adept with the application of data-driven, computational design tools to shape urban design decisions, Barnett previously served as Sasaki's director of their data and design team and spoke at national forums including the International Downtown Association's annual conference. His work has been recognized for pushing the boundaries of urban design practice, including Fast Company's

Innovation by Design award and the 2020 Regional & Urban Design award from the American Institute of Architects (AIA).

“Cooper Robertson stands out as a leading urban design firm with an extensive portfolio of works merging waterfront, resiliency, public realm design and transit, among other aspects,” says Barnett, who writes and speaks frequently on those topics. “The firm’s legacy is in thinking about these urban challenges with a holistic and creative perspective that balances open space with development opportunities and social infrastructure. It’s a special team and I’m enjoying getting to work.”

As members of the firm’s core leadership group, Stoel and Barnett bring their interests in varied project types and multidisciplinary processes to a range of new works. Cooper Robertson’s recent wins range from the 200-acre Riverbend master plan on the Connecticut River to the expansion of the Buffalo AKG Art Museum in Buffalo, New York. A new master plan for Pennsylvania’s Brandywine Conservancy & Museum of Art has recently been completed, as are international works such as the campus expansion for the Lyford Cay International School in Nassau, the Bahamas.

### Promotions of Firm Leaders

Adding to Cooper Robertson’s expansion of its leadership team and firm growth are three staff elevations to senior associate, including Wendy Cronk, AIA, who currently is involved in the Princeton University Art Museum project; Lloyd Helen, ARB, who also is working on the Princeton University Art Museum, as well as the Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute project in Utica, New York; and Michael Austin, AICP, LEED AP-ND, a valued mentor to the firm’s younger designers and project lead for the University of Maryland Master Plan.

In addition, four employees have been advanced to associate, each of whom is adding to the firm’s expertise in cultural projects. These people include Isil Akgul, LEED Green Associate, who is currently working on the New Museum in New York City and the new Enterprise Center for the Breech School of Business Administration at Drury University; Alina Ahmad, now involved in museum programming and renovation work for several high-profile institutions worldwide including a Long-Range Space Plan for the J. Paul Getty Trust; and Mark Miller and Collin Gardner, both advancing work on the Princeton University Art Museum

“Cooper Robertson’s expansion of its leadership team further extends the firm’s expertise in transforming cities, creating cultural landmarks, and crafting memorable, sustainable, and resilient places,” said Mike Aziz, AIA, LEED AP, partner. “We’re very pleased to welcome Betsy and Brad to Cooper Robertson’s senior team. These highly accomplished and high-profile practice leaders bring new strengths and significant project experience in the areas where we are growing the fastest, ensuring that we will remain industry leaders and trusted collaborators.”