

Architectural Firms Plan Around Coronavirus

OC Billings Rise 4% Despite Home Working

By PETER J. BRENNAN

Architectural firms appear to be adjusting well to the coronavirus, reporting a 4% increase in Orange County billings, according to the annual Business Journal ranking in this week's issue.

The 23 firms on this week's list reported OC billings of \$465.5 million for the 12 months ended June 30.

While growth continues, it didn't keep up with the pace of a year ago, when the 29 architecture firms grew more than 8% to \$499 million.

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Thirteen of the companies reported growth this year, including six that saw billings increase by more than 10%. A year ago, 17 firms reported billings that topped 10%.

The firms this year reported a 2.2% decline in licensed architects to about 400, while overall employment was flat at 2,663.

The list ranked the biggest firms with annual OC billings topping \$5 million.

The firms reported more growth outside OC as companywide billings surged 12.1% to \$2.1 billion.

New Top Name

AO Architects of Orange retained its top spot with \$64.5 million, a 6.4% increase while its OC employment dropped 4.5% to 277.

"We feel this sector is fairly recession



Rendering of MVE + Partners' 4th & Main apartment project in downtown Santa Ana; 7 stories, 220 units

proof as the work from home phenomenon continues," Partner Rob Budetti said.

The firm, previously known as Architects Orange, recently acquired Sunnyvale-based WHL Architects to expand into Silicon Valley and boost its offerings to science and tech firms (see separate article, page 18).

No. 7 MVE + Partners Inc. of Irvine also reported a healthy 7.8% increase to \$22 million in billings. When the coronavirus struck here in March, members of the architectural firm began working from their homes.

"The good news is [as] we were going into pandemic—we were on pace for a record year," MVE President Matt McLarand told the Business Journal in May.

"We were fortunate to have a backlog of work coming into this pandemic."

The Business Journal's engineering firm list, which includes several firms also on the architecture list because of varied practice groups, shows even more growth, 6%, than the architects (see separate article, page 27).

Notable Changes

■ Aecom, a Los Angeles-based firm with an Orange office, leapfrogged the most spots from No. 19 to No. 9. Its billings jumped 71% to \$15.2 million, making it the biggest climb on the list even though its OC employee count slipped 1.6% to 503.

■ Last year's biggest percentage hike was 167% from the former Irvine-based

gkkworks, which was then acquired by CannonDesign. New York-based CannonDesign, which has its office in Irvine, reported billings jumped 10% to \$22 million, good enough to jump one place into the No. 7 spot.

■ No. 9 Jacobs, which has an office in Irvine, reported its billings declined 13% to \$15.2 million. Companywide billings at the Dallas-based firm jumped 38% to \$595 million.

■ The biggest decline was 17.6% to \$6 million at tBP/Architecture Inc. in Newport Beach, now at No. 20.

■ The biggest employee drop was 16.1% to 136 at KTG Architecture + Planning. Billings at the Irvine-based firm, ranked No. 5, also fell 12% to \$28.8 million. ■

THE LIST

ARCHITECTURE FIRMS

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Corporate Foundations/Giving, Aerospace & Defense Contractors

RANKED BY OC BILLINGS

Rank	Company	OC architecture billings for 12 months ended 6/30/2020 (millions)	Companywide architectural billings for 12 months ended 6/30/2020 (millions)	OC licensed architects •yearly % change	OC employees •yearly % change	Percentage breakdown of business	Notable projects/clients	Top local official(s)		
Prev. Rank	•Address •Headquarters	•yearly % change	•yearly % change			•Commercial •Government •Healthcare •Retail	•Hospitality •Residential •Education •Other	•Orange County •U.S. •International	•Title •Phone/fax	
1	AO Architects ⁽¹⁾ 144 N. Orange St. Orange 92866-1413 Orange Website: aoarchitects.com Email: info@aoarchitects.com	\$64.5 6.4%	\$64.5 6.4%	62 3.3% 277 -4.5%		14% 0% 0% 28%	7% 45% 0% 7%	24% 75% 1%	2nd & PCH, Long Beach; Bosscat Kitchen & Libations, Orange; Inn at the Mission, San Juan Capistrano; Exposition Point, Los Angeles; Park & Paseo, Santa Ana; First Point Affordable Multifamily, Santa Ana	Jack Selman CEO (714) 639-9860/(714) 639-5286
2	Ware Malcomb 10 Edelman Irvine 92618-4312 Irvine Website: waremalcomb.com	\$61.2 3.3%	\$145.7 24.9%	22 10% 219 12.3%		80% 0% 7% 8%	0% 0% 0% 5%	51% 44% 5%	Alliant Insurance Services, Riverside University Health System, Irvine Ranch Water District, Keck Medicine of USC, Moulton Niguel Water District, SEB Professional	Ken Wink/Lawrence R. Armstrong/Jay Todisco CEO/chairman/president (949) 660-9128
3	LPA Inc. 5301 California Ave., Ste. 100 Irvine 92617-3226 Irvine Website: lpainc.com Email: lpa@lpainc.com	\$60.3 1.2%	\$107.3 3.5%	83 5.1% 257 -5.9%		47% 8% 9% 0%	0% 0% 36% 0%	56% 44% 0%	Spectrum Terrace Phase 2, Edwards Life Sciences Phase 2, Crown Valley Park Community Center, TGS Management Company LLC, Glaukos headquarters	Wendy Rogers/Dan Heinfeld CEO/president (949) 261-1001/(949) 260-1190
4	Gensler Newport Beach 4675 MacArthur Court, Ste. 100 Newport Beach 92660-8811 San Francisco Website: gensler.com Email: anne_bretana@gensler.com	\$35.3 17.7%	wnd	20 -28.6% 99 -13.9%		wnd wnd wnd	wnd wnd wnd	Rutan & Tucker, Irvine Co., FivePoint, UCI, Bank of America, Four Seasons Cabo del Sol, Hoag, SOCCCD	Anne Bretaña/James Young co-managing directors (949) 863-9434	

Abbreviations: NR: not ranked; wnd: would not disclose
Note: To the best of our knowledge, this information is accurate as of press time. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy and thoroughness of the list, omissions and typographical errors sometimes occur. Unless otherwise noted, the information on this list was provided by the companies themselves. List may not be reprinted without permission of the editor. Photos show the first

top official listed.
(1) Previously listed as Architects Orange