TRANSACTION CASE STUDY

# WEST & STEM ARCHITECTS

A sell-side advisory engagement for a Winston-Salem architecture firm

## THE CLIENT






MERGED WITH

NOVUS
*always new*

## DEAL SNAPSHOT

**SECTOR**
Architecture and design

**CLIENT**
West & Stem Architects (est. 2008)

**HEADQUARTERS**
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

**MERGED WITH**
Novus Architects (est. 1992)

**STONEMILL ROLE**
Sell-side advisor to West & Stem

# THE SITUATION

Founded in 2008, West & Stem Architects is a regionally focused design firm in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, led by founder P. Michael West, AIA, and partner James Stem, AIA.

Its award-winning work spans healthcare, higher education, municipal, commercial, and industrial projects, built on a commitment to creativity, functionality, and sustainability.

With 44 years in architecture behind its founder, the firm's next step was a partner that could carry its team, clients, and North Carolina relationships forward.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

## KEEP THE TEAM AND CLIENTS TOGETHER

The right partner had to keep West & Stem's people, leaders, and Winston-Salem client relationships intact, with a clear role for each principal.

## FIND A MATCHING CULTURE

West & Stem's leaders wanted a firm whose collaboration and family-first culture matched their own values.

# HOW WE APPROACHED IT

## A

### POSITIONING

Framed West & Stem as an established Winston-Salem practice with award-winning work across healthcare, higher education, civic, and industrial sectors.

Led with the depth of its leadership and client relationships.

## B

### BUYER STRATEGY

Focused on firms seeking a North Carolina foothold and complementary civic and industrial expertise.

Prioritized cultural fit and meaningful roles for both principals.

## C

### PROCESS

Sell-side advisory from preparation and confidential outreach through partner selection, diligence, and closing.

Supported a transition that keeps the Winston-Salem team together.

## HOW STONEMILL ADVISED

**01** **POSITIONING + PREPARATION**

Built the story around leadership, sectors, and relationships.

**02** **TARGETED BUYER ENGAGEMENT**

Approached firms aligned with the team's markets and culture.

**03** **LEADERSHIP CONVERSATIONS**

Brought principals together to test culture and shared vision.

**04** **COMBINATION PLANNING**

Shaped leadership roles and the future of the local office.

**05** **CLOSING + TRANSITION**

Supported diligence, closing, and the move into Novus.



## WHY THE COMBINATION FIT

### A NORTH CAROLINA HUB

The Winston-Salem office becomes a hub for Novus to build client and partner relationships across the greater North Carolina region.

### CIVIC + INDUSTRIAL DEPTH

The merger expands Novus's expertise in civic and industrial design and strengthens its capabilities across multiple verticals.

### LEADERSHIP CONTINUITY

Michael West becomes Executive Principal of Operations. James Stem becomes Divisional Principal, leading the Winston-Salem office and regional business development.

**2008**
WEST & STEM FOUNDED

**1992**
NOVUS FOUNDED

**44**
YEARS, MICHAEL WEST

**7**
NOVUS OFFICES

With Stonemill as sell-side advisor, West & Stem Architects merged with Novus Architects. The Winston-Salem office anchors Novus in the greater North Carolina region, and both West & Stem principals stepped into Novus leadership roles.

"Our growth has always been rooted in finding exceptional talent that shares our vision for creating transformative spaces."

TOMMY SMITH, CEO, NOVUS ARCHITECTS

"Their commitment to cross-market collaboration and family-first culture perfectly aligns with our values."

MICHAEL WEST, FOUNDER, WEST & STEM ARCHITECTS

Takeaway: for a founder-led firm, the right partner offers more than scale. It gives the leaders defined roles, the clients continuity, and the team a culture that fits.

stonemill

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# LET'S TALK




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