



THE
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THE ARCHITECTURE OF ASPEN – AN ADMIRER’S GUIDE

September 26, 2018

The architecture and design of The Little Nell hotel aim to welcome guests as if you’re stepping into the comfort of a luxurious private home. As featured in Architectural Digest online, [our interiors were recently renovated](#) in “Aspen Modern” style, which is cosmopolitan yet cozy. Modern, but timeless. This aesthetic helps reflect the city of Aspen as a whole while distinguishing it from other mountain towns in Colorado.

To help celebrate Aspen’s architectural significance, we’ve interviewed local firm, [rowland+broughton](#).

Since 2003, r+b has established itself as one of the top Colorado-based architecture and design firms providing both residential and commercial services. Led by Principals John Rowland, AIA and Sarah Broughton, AIA, the award-winning firm has remained on the cutting edge of mountain, resort and modern urban lifestyles since its’ inception.

John Rowland brings more than two decades of experience in architecture and design to r+b. Inspired by the collaboration with clients, artists and other design practitioners, John sees the opportunity for an intrinsic integration of art, space and light in the unique contextual relationships inherent to each of his projects.

Sarah Broughton maintains over two decades of experience in the architecture and interior design industry. She is the champion of r+b’s design philosophy and rigorous quality control standards, as well as a leader to her design staff. Sarah directs participation and management of all phases of the design process.

Our Architecture of Aspen interview with the rowland+broughton team is shared below and has been redacted for brevity.



John Rowland and Sarah Broughton. Courtesy photo.

The Little Nell: Thanks for your time, r+b. We're excited to share with our guests some of your perspective surrounding the architecture in Aspen. To begin, we'd like to take a look at the future. What is the future of architecture in Aspen?

r+b: Aspen's architectural progress must complement historical aspects, as well as future needs and demographics. Structures will be designed to entice a younger demographic than before within the commercial/hospitality spaces. Additionally, we look forward to the continued rise of Mountain Vernacular style and developments providing a sense of place and sustainability.

TLN: What can a visiting architect expect when visiting Aspen? Is there a singular style for which our city is best known?

r+b: Aspen maintains its historical significance, while also being much more contemporary than one might expect from a mountain town. Aspen is rich with Victorian and mining influences with a deep sense of culture from the surrounding area.

The Little Nell: Architecturally, how does Aspen compare to other mountain towns? What makes it so significant?

r+b: Aspen embraced the Bauhaus style which transformed spaces in town into a contemporary way. Additionally, the "Aspen Idea" has instilled a rich focus on mind, body, spirit and the desire to experience nature and the great outdoors.

TLN: Can rowland+broughton share any favorite buildings on the Aspen must-see list?

r+b: It's hard to begin, we have a laundry list of favorites. The selection which comes to mind (in no

particular order) includes the Wheeler Opera House, Crandall Building, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen Institute campus, Cloud Nine, Ute City Building and White House Tavern!

Crandall Building Exterior



Wheeler Opera House Exterior



White House Tavern



Cloud Nine On-Mountain Restaurant



Aspen Art Museum



TLN: If possible, can r+b provide a brief history of Aspen's architectural evolution?

r+b: When we first arrived in Aspen in 2000, there were very few architects who were seriously practicing modern architecture. Mostly, there was a strong influence of the mountain lodge style. Then there was a shift toward mountain modern; a style with a vernacular language, but a bit more refined. Now we are seeing a huge acceptance toward a strong modernism vocabulary, which we believe is an outgrowth of the success of many of the online media design sites, as well as magazines such as *Dwell*, *Metropolis* and *Wallpaper*. We believe this new found love of modernism has some potential consequences with regard to context. It pains us to see new homes or buildings that completely disregard their surroundings. We refer to it as "the UFO phenomenon." You will see in successful projects the effort to respond and reflect on a project's context, sort of like an unspoken dialogue.

We thank the [rowland+broughton Team](#) for their insights and architectural perspective. For the budding enthusiast or the long-established architect, Aspen represents a paradise. We welcome you to [The Little Nell](#) and during your stay, our concierge can help direct you to Aspen's most renowned architectural gems.