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NYC Real Estate Firm Expands With 4 Atty Hires

By [Emily Lever](#) | July 13, 2021, 4:46 PM EDT

Lester Bleckner & Shaw LLP has added four attorneys — one partner, one senior associate and two associates — to grow into its mission as a full-service real estate firm, the firm announced Tuesday.

Partner David Berlyne, who lateraled over from DLA Piper LLP, and senior associate Rebecca Clareman, a former in-house counsel for a developer, joined the law firm as of Tuesday, along with associates Jonathan Pizarro-Ross, formerly of McCarter & English LLP, and Corey Trail, formerly assistant corporation counsel for the New York City Law Department.

"This is an opportunity to represent the new movers and shakers as well as established companies" like big real estate investment trusts, or REITs, Berlyne told Law360 Pulse regarding his move.

A small firm based in New York, Lester Bleckner was formed in 2018 as a full-service real estate firm, handling everything from investment to construction and leasing to litigation. Berlyne, who before DLA Piper also worked at Weil Gotshal & Manges LLP and Berwin Leighton, said he felt a BigLaw firm was no longer the right place to practice real estate law because of the pressure to charge clients high rates based on benchmarks set by the M&A practice, where the client base is more moneyed. This often locks out small or up-and-coming clients, he noted.

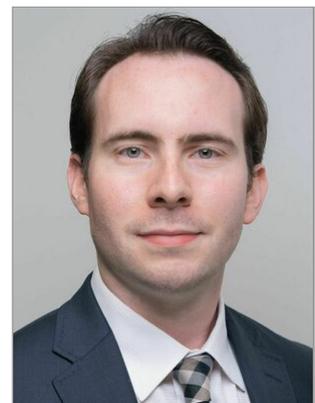
"In the real estate space, it's making less and less sense as time goes by to be at a megafirm," Berlyne said. "Your experience is being narrowed progressively year after year."



David Berlyne



Rebecca Clareman



Jonathan Pizarro-Ross

Lester Bleckner's client base ranges in size and type. Clients include institutional real estate owners and private equity firms, as well as media companies, nightlife and entertainment venues, cafes, and restaurants — clients Berlyne could not have represented as a BigLaw partner but that he described as "next-generation clients."



Corey Trail

"You're missing out on a big part of legal practice if you're only representing established clients," Berlyne said. "We enjoy being part of the real estate industry; we enjoy being part of the business community, helping clients navigate city government and leasing agreements."

The group of four new laterals is important to that perspective, Berlyne said.

"One of the great things we have to offer clients is a variety of great new perspectives on a deal," Berlyne said. "Rebecca [Clareman] comes with a general counsel's perspective and Corey Trail has the experience of having been in city government and representing the city in so many transactions."

Trail was most recently assistant corporation counsel at the New York City Law Department in the Economic Development Division. Pizzaro-Ross was most recently an associate at McCarter & English specializing in real estate financing transactions, while Clareman served as general counsel and sole legal officer at RedSky Capital LLC, a Brooklyn- and South Florida-based developer, handling joint venture agreements, lease renegotiations, and the buying and selling of properties.

"When my partners and I founded our practice in 2018, we were looking to create a new kind of real estate law firm. Rather than specialize in one area, we are a 'one-stop shop' that is fully equipped to represent our clients from dirt to sky and beyond," the firm's founding partner Ian Lester said in a statement. "We know David, Rebecca, Jonathan and Corey will be assets to our clients and we're proud to welcome them to Lester Bleckner & Shaw LLP."

--Editing by Bruce Goldman.

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