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2016 Rising Star Chris Hartmann

Kirkland & Ellis LLP partner Chris Hartmann has orchestrated a number of complex commercial real estate transactions over the past year, including a client's \$900 million acquisition of airport logistics assets, earning him a spot among *Law360's* top real estate attorneys under age 40.

In addition to his work creating an open-end fund for Aeroterm US to purchase the massive airport logistics portfolio last December, the 35-year-old, on this year's Rising Stars list, was busy on a number of other transactions over the past year, advising the joint venture acquisition of a \$540 million New York City hotel and a portfolio of Washington, D.C., office buildings for \$1.3 billion, as well as the sale of a client's \$435 million Texas office building and other deals.

Hartmann represents clients not only on acquisitions and sales, but also helps them create joint ventures, draw up property management agreements and obtain financing, advising on multiple aspects of a transaction, a facet of the job that he said he loves.

"In other practices, it may be a little bit more segregated in the sense that a lawyer will only work on one

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aspect of a transaction. In real estate, it allows you to be knowledgeable and an expert in many areas of real estate and be involved in all aspects of a transaction," he said. "I think it's great because when I engage with clients or with other counsel and something comes up on a particular deal, I'm the person, I know what's going on."

Hartmann joined Kirkland in 2011 from Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP. Coming out of law school in 2007, he says he was interested in practicing corporate mergers and acquisitions,

but after interviewing with his longtime mentor Andrew Small — now a partner at Kirkland — Hartmann says that he learned that his idea that real estate only deals with easements, zoning and land use disputes was completely wrong, and he was drawn to the practice area.

"In my interview I came to quickly realize that there are a lot of very sophisticated, smart, talented real estate investors who are doing deals that in many respects look like corporate private equity transactions," he explained. "What sealed the deal for me is finding it had those

corporate features. What I really liked about real estate is that there's something tangible."

Hartmann said two transactions over the past year that were especially interesting for him to work on were the AeroTerm purchase and the New York City hotel joint venture.

He represented AeroTerm as the sponsor in a \$600 million open-end fund to acquire a portfolio of more than 120 airport logistics assets — buildings located on the edge of an airport, where planes load and unload cargo — located in the United States and Canada for a total sale of approximately \$900 million.

He said that the deal was fascinating because of its complexity, which

included the international aspects of the deal, with some of the assets located in Canada. There were tax issues to address, the structuring of foreign entities and bringing on Canadian counsel for additional advice, he explained.

In New York City, Hartmann was one of the lead partners who represented a leading private equity real estate fund in its \$540 million joint venture acquisition of the Times Square DoubleTree hotel as the first phase of a \$2 billion mixed-use redevelopment.

The \$540 million price tag bought Hartmann's client leasehold interest in the building pursuant to a right of first offer — the first time that Hartmann worked on a deal involving a right of first offer, he said.

"It was a high-dollar deal, but it's a lot more than just a purchase for \$540 million. There's a lot that went into that," Hartmann said. "It's the most interesting deal I've worked on."

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