

CHANCERY MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

In 2023, hotels are finding inspiration in senior living community designs, reversing the typical flow of influence. Senior living architects and designers have made strides in catering to an aging population, influencing areas like hospitality, socialization, accessibility, sanitization, and technology. Hotels are adopting concepts from senior living, such as creating communal spaces, fostering social interactions, and focusing on universal design. The senior living industry's emphasis on sustainability, incorporating technology, and meeting the needs of an aging demographic has led hotels to rethink their approach to customer experiences and design, benefiting both residents and caretakers.

What Hospitality Companies Are Borrowing From Senior Living Architecture and Design

Throughout the years, hotels and restaurants have been a source for senior living community design inspiration. Now, that inspiration is beginning to flow in the opposite direction.

As senior living architects and designers have forged ahead in these areas in recent years, hotels in 2023 are taking notice. And they are taking inspiration from senior living designs in areas such as hospitality, socialization, accessibility and sanitization — all with the goal of being more cognizant of an aging population.

“In our hospitality [practice], we’re stealing things from senior living — who would have thought that that could happen?” said Banko Design Founder and Principal Melissa Banko on a recent Senior Housing News architecture and design webinar. “We’re seeing things that, in our senior living communities, the hotel industry hasn’t gravitated to yet.”

The reason why is that the senior living industry has made great strides in recent years to cater to the incoming boomer generation. And in doing so, it has laid a blueprint for other industries to follow, from hospitality to multifamily.

Senior living leading the way

For years, Steven Levin, managing member of CapEx Solutions, has walked into high-end hotels and wondered: “Why can’t this be a senior living community?” But in recent years, some high-end senior living communities have met — and even exceeded — the standards set by storied hotel chains like the Four Seasons and the Ritz Carlton.

That trend is exemplified in Maplewood Senior Living’s award-winning Inspir community in Manhattan, according to Levin, who has inside knowledge of the project from his time working as senior vice president at landlord Omega Healthcare Investors (NYSE: OHI).

In particular, the community combines care and hospitality-forward design in a way that “works well,” he said.

Hotels are also taking inspiration from senior housing in getting guests to socialize better, according to Banko. That was born out of operators’ efforts in the last three years to get residents out of their rooms and into common spaces.

“How do you get folks who are staying in a hotel to not just go in their room and check emails?” Banko said, of hotel companies’ thought processes. “What can we do to have communal workspaces and [food and beverage] moments at night, so that you are socializing and networking with those who you’re staying in a hotel with?”

She added: “Hospitality has said, ‘Oh, you have all of these great gathering spaces in senior living and that is what we are driving, right? We want our residents to be out and social....we want them to have these great spaces to gather and build relationships.’”

Greg Gauthreaux, associate principal of Perkins Eastman, noted that senior living communities are achieving that goal by creating close-knit ties among residents. But that isn’t always a tangible object or design.

“It’s also a feeling or even just an experience within a community,” he said.

Sanitization in particular became a focus for many operators during the Covid-19 pandemic, and now senior living is leading by example. She added hotels are using senior housing industry knowledge for vendors, specifications and fabrics.

“When we were being hired to design hospitality spaces, they were so jazzed that we worked in senior living because we know how to specify buildings that could be bleached six ways to Sunday already,” said Banko.

Universal design — the practice of designing spaces for use by people of all kinds of abilities — is another area where hotels are borrowing from senior living.

“Regardless of whether it’s a senior living community, multifamily property or hotel ... we need to be more cognizant of an aging demographic,” Banko said.

Leveraging technology

In 2020 as senior living residents sequestered in their rooms amid Covid lockdowns, technology often helped bridge a gap by connecting them with loved ones or medical professionals. These days, technology is a much bigger focus of senior living prospects, and community designs have leveled up as a result.

In incorporating additional technologies for residents, Steven Levin, managing member of CapEx Solutions, said one of the challenges in senior living is getting the hundreds of systems to work under one unified system.

What designers are trying to do is come up with the most cost effective solution for the various technologies they have available to them.

Gauthreaux said designers are looking to better incorporate varying technologies into senior living. Examples he provided were interior lighting and communication technologies, such as Google systems or installing Amazon Alexas.

Even things such as lighting schemes throughout a facility’s corridors or in a resident’s unit are becoming more commonplace that better supports their way of living. Monitoring systems are also becoming more incorporated so caretakers can better keep an eye on residents without the need of having to restrict their movements.

Alongside better supporting residents, the technology is supporting caretakers and staff as well.

“I think there [are] all sorts of different monitoring forms that are being introduced to rooms so that caretakers...can keep better tabs on their residents,” Gauthreaux said.

Additionally, senior housing facilities are having to better incorporate technology due to the residents understanding how to use it. Banko said things such as theaters being converted into “Zoom rooms” and podcast rooms have come about from resident requests.

However, there is still concern for data output and what operators are going to do with it once they have it.

Banko and Gauthreaux both said a changing trend alongside technology is designing with community in mind and allowing residents to be more free to take part in the space as they need, such as by having their own patio. The goal, Banko said, will be to design facilities that residents will enjoy rather than what an oldest son or daughter will like.

And Banko stressed the human element is still a key factor in any customer-facing industry like senior living.

“You can do it all on your phone, but it does not work for senior living,” she said. “We are pushing that into hospitality.”

Increasing demands for sustainability

In recent years, both senior living operators and real estate investors, including Brookdale Senior Living (NYSE: BKD), have undertaken an increasing number of ESG projects. That trend is continuing and accelerating in 2023 and beyond.

When new communities are being designed, Levin said a focus on sustainability has become commonplace with a heavy focus on using non-toxic substances in construction and design. Additionally, sustainability focuses have an economic impact as well.

“There are reports...that those people with high ratings in sustainability and environmental efficiency get lower rates when it comes to debt,” he said.

And in some markets, going green can serve as a “differentiator,” Gauthreaux said.

“They start realizing maybe if we do get that plaque or that paperwork, it is something that can differentiate us from the folks down the street,” he said.

Among the more commonplace sustainability options coming into facilities are low flow and automatic faucets, energy saving toilets, reduced water for landscaping and using astroturf.

When these options are implemented into a facilities structure from the beginning, Levin said there is no direct impact to the integrity of the design.

“I think if there is proper planning, research and buy-in in the overall design and development team, I think there is no issue with actually implementing and executing sustainability programs within the building,” Levin said.

However, some of the features listed do have higher initial costs to implement. The trade-off comes in long-term savings and efficiencies in utilities, which lead to ultimate savings.

Additionally, Levin noted communities can have uses for sustainability as a marketing tool, though individual residents may not select a community simply because it is green. However, investors and lenders are looking for projects that utilize it.

Original Article:

<https://seniorhousingnews.com/2023/08/18/what-hospitality-companies-are-borrowing-from-senior-living-architecture-and-design/>

Stoney Creek Project Update

The Grandview Retirement Residence is a 159-suite building, designed to provide seniors with accommodation in a beautiful neighbourhood with a host of services and amenities. It is located in downtown Hamilton, Ontario, adjacent to the affluent Stoney Creek neighbourhood, and is at the central location with access to retail, restaurants, parks and health care providers.

- On April 15, 2023, Grandview hosted a spring themed Open House.
- In June, Grandview celebrated it's One-year Anniversary and Grand Opening with a large community event and an official ribbon cutting ceremony. The event was well attended by the community and even made the front page of the Stoney Creek Newspaper.
- The marketing team was able to take advantage of all the attention the event gained and created a marketing campaign that included advertorials, articles, social media ads, and online video ads.

