

# KIND PLACES



Designing  
Multifamily  
Spaces That  
Residents  
Actually Use

streetsense.

# RETHINKING AMENITY SPACE



*Creating  
Long-Term  
Value*



Owners, developers, operators, and partners put so much effort into the amenity spaces of residential communities — but too often they languish, gathering dust and adding to overhead rather than providing value for residents and operators. Never forget that active spaces are a powerful leasing tool.



# RETHINKING AMENITY SPACE



For Class-A projects, it's no longer enough to prioritize leases getting signed. Creating and designing for long-term residents is what drives renewals — the ultimate creation of value for multifamily communities.

We believe in making spaces that people are drawn to, that are comfortable, and that even non-residents can get excited about. We design with the mindset of a resident: how they think about space, how they use space, and what they need in 2021 and going forward.

In the following guide, we summarize how we think about amenity space design, how to create spaces that residents actually use (and thus, create long-term value), and considerations for the future of residential multifamily living.

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# THINK LIKE A RESIDENT

A resident should feel like they've arrived home not when they open the door to their specific apartment, but when they open the door to the building.





## *Think Like a Resident*

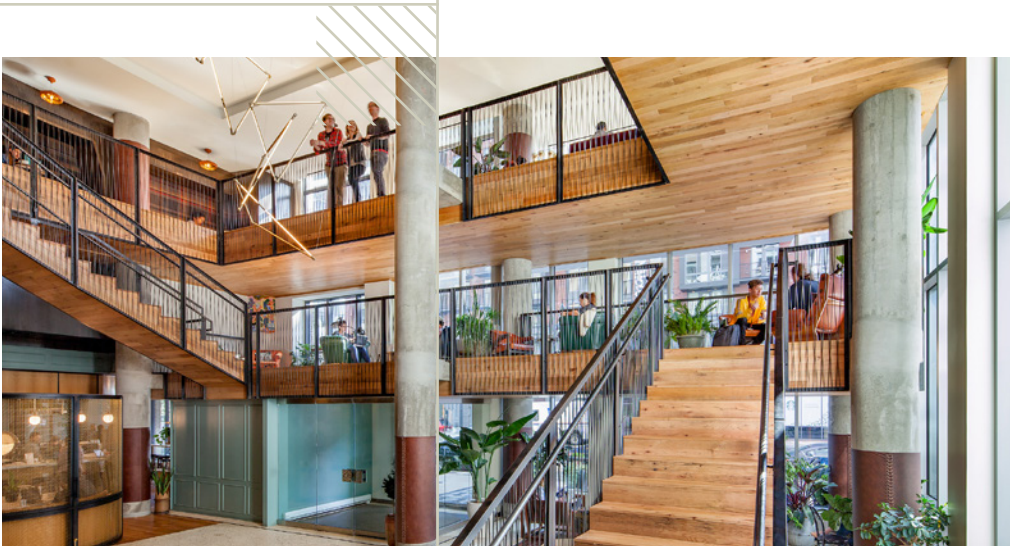
*Think about how people actually think of and use space.*

For a resident, it's all one space. They don't draw the same lines of distinction that operators do between the leasing area, lounge area, lobby, exterior, courtyard amenities, etc. You have to look at it through their eyes in order to create something they'll love.



*Aspire to create a sense of belonging.*

There's huge value to someone forming an emotional connection to the place in which they live. Design alone can't deliver that — it's a combination of the staff, the space, the programming, design, and even the other residents.





*Think Like  
a Resident*

*Counterprogramming  
residences.*

What do people lack in their apartments, and how can amenity spaces complement that? A large table, makerspace, work surfaces, areas for large groups, fireplaces, and more can offer real utility to residents. We see too many spaces with a sofa, some chairs, and a large TV — but that's one of the things residents have totally covered in their apartments. We know what they have in their homes, so counterprogram to create a holistic experience.



*The Apollo is in a dense urban  
environment, which is why we created  
a lush, green rooftop lounge.*



*Think Like  
a Resident*

*Counterprogramming  
the neighborhood.*

What the neighborhood is missing is as important as what the neighborhood has — the spaces you make should counterprogram the neighborhood, and offer things that the neighborhood doesn't.



○  
*The Lockwood's surrounding neighborhood is full of parks and gardens, but not as many bars and restaurants — so we created a clubroom space that evokes an Edwardian pub.*





*Think Like  
a Resident*



*Don't rely on retail integration  
as a silver bullet.*

Retail integration only works where retail works. If the retail doesn't work on a regular lease pro forma basis for that location, it's just going to be a drain. Operationally, it's not similar to a music studio or dog run — it's a continuous operational challenge and it has to be right to add value.





# MAKE EVERY SPACE A WORKSPACE

Any kind of public space in your community will end up serving as a workspace — residents don't limit themselves to just the formal coworking space. Embrace this: design to make your spaces work for the most uses possible.





*Enable working in every amenity space.*

People naturally spread themselves out, and typically you'll see a couple people in each available space. Thus, every space should be comfortable to work in. It should work like a coworking space but not feel like a coworking space.

*Design to support multiple work styles.*

A successful space won't necessarily read like a coworking space, but there will be tables at the right height, outlets that are readily available, and more touches that support comfortable work. Give people options: long tables, a larger conference room, smaller breakout or phone booth-style rooms, individual seats, etc. In our experience, people love niches, and tucking into smaller spaces.



*Make Every Space a Workspace*





*Design for how people do work,  
not how they should do work.*

People have different work styles and you don't have to design for all of them. Instead, design for how people most often like to work, not how they should work. Ergonomically, bar seating isn't ideal for work. However, we see again and again that people love to work at bar tops — bar seating is easily some of the most used and activated spaces we see in communities we've designed.

*Create the acoustics +  
lighting to support.*

Acoustic wall panels limit echo — crucial for usable workspace. Similarly, lighting is no longer just about how people feel in the space, it's also about how people will look when they are videoconferencing from the space.



*Make Every  
Space a  
Workspace*



*Don't forget the outdoor office.*

If there's outdoor space available in your community, you can bet residents will use it occasionally to work. Anticipate this with easily accessed power sources, as well as shade structures.



*Make Every  
Space a  
Workspace*

*Flexibility and personality  
should work together.*

Prioritizing flexibility does not mean sacrificing personality — this is a mistake tons of designers and operators make. We know from experience that having a distinctive personality enriches the experience of a place.



# 3

# DESIGN FOR *FLEXIBLE* *WELLNESS*



Residents don't want more equipment. They want more flexibility in fitness space, and for that space to feel like the rest of the community.





*Design for  
Flexible  
Wellness*

*Infuse personality into  
fitness spaces.*

A fitness center should be a part of the amenity aesthetics: it doesn't have to match, but it needs to be a part of telling that story.



*Bring the residence aesthetic  
into the fitness area.*

Community look and feel shouldn't stop at the fitness center — design your fitness experience to create fluid, seamless spaces that residents feel invited to enjoy.



*Design for  
Flexible  
Wellness*

*Make flexible fitness spaces.*

Residents don't want more equipment, they want more open space. Sliding doors allow for classroom space when needed, or semi-private workout space when not used for group fitness. Can your community's fitness area enable today's exercise trends with Apple TV, Peloton, Obé Fitness, and other gym apps?

*Make it resonate.*

How can you program the fitness area and personalize the experience for guests? Motivational programming, like group challenges, trophies, and banners can offer a means of engagement and attachment.



# NEVER LET TRENDS *ECLIPSE THE FUNDAMENTALS*

Let go of the fantasy of “future proofing.” The uncomfortable truth — something that the pandemic has thrown into sharp relief — is that we often don’t know what we’ll need in five years from now. Don’t prioritize trendy design: stick to solving for long-term challenges and creating a space that feels true to the neighborhood. The fundamentals never go out of style.







*Don't sweat the trends — instead, invest in thoughtful solutions for ongoing challenges, like mailroom placement, package handling, and cold storage.*

Where is your mailroom? Your delivery pads, loading dock, package acceptance area? What's the plan for oversize delivery items? How can you integrate cold storage? Safe storage for grocery and food delivery programs, meal kits, and CSAs is a huge pain point for residents.

*Don't get tricky with tech integration.*

Your tech is only as good as your implementation of it. Anything with a serious learning curve is at risk for becoming unused.



*Never Let Trends Eclipse the Fundamentals*





*Design with operational considerations in mind.*

Your spaces are only as good as your support spaces: concierge, catering, and event staging. If you don't have space to support that, it'll negatively impact the front-of-house experience. Always think through circulation paths — they're as important as design.

*Trends come and go, but natural light, comfortable space, and thoughtful adjacencies never go out of style.*

Think through every placement: are the amenities clustered in a few areas, or do you have to walk down long corridors to reach them? Are there restrooms near the roof deck so that residents don't have to go back to their apartment? Is the oversized package room close to the elevators? Don't design for the tour; design for the everyday experiences residents will have within the community.



*Never Let Trends Eclipse the Fundamentals*





## Authors



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