

INSPIRATION



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Multifamily housing is defined as a building that contains more than one family at a time; in other words, apartments, townhouses, condos, duplexes and such. Interior designers working on multifamily projects may imagine entire communities—new construction or renovations—decorate models, and do single space refreshes like a clubhouse, leasing center, and gym. It's a competitive and evolving segment of the design market as three design firms—Determined by Design, Crimson Design Group, and Kandrac & Kole—will attest. To apply one's creativity and expertise to impact hundreds of lives at a time can be immensely rewarding.—Jane Dagmi

Harper House designed by Crimson Design Studio. Photo: Reagan Taylor

MEET THE DESIGNERS

Kia Weatherspoon believes that interior design is the greatest form of empathy. As principal of Determined by Design, she is a pioneer and agent of change in affordable housing, and chose that niche to change the longtime narrative that says one's socioeconomic standing affords a certain lifestyle level, with some people being less than or not as worthy as others. Her mission, known as Design Equity, challenges developers to do better when it comes to creating elevated spaces for all. Weatherspoon has projects all over the United States.

Cheryl Stauffer, principal of Crimson Design Group, is privy to be in a working relationship with the number one developer in Central Ohio. Designing mostly Class A properties for high-income earners age 23 to 50, the goal is to create a luxury home experience for the tenants as if they are at a resort. And build-

ing on this, she's working with developers to offer prospective tenants the option of purchasing designer-curated furnishings. Based in Columbus, Ohio, Stauffer loves collaborating with local Amish woodworkers and upholstery artisans who contribute to the success of each project.

Since 2015, Joann Kandrac and Kelly Kole of Kandrac & Kole have enjoyed growing the multifamily side of their business which now accounts for 50% of their current work. Based in Atlanta, the in-city properties they design typically serve young professionals in their 30s with suburban properties being more family-oriented. In all of their projects, they strive to include art or furniture that leaves a lasting impression or better yet, is deemed Instagram-worthy because Instagram, they say, is a strong marketing tool for their largest target audience, the Gen Z/Millennial crowd.



“A lot of times the residents we speak to are just in awe that such beautiful spaces are for them. They make statements that they never thought they could live in a building like this. I think that speaks volumes to how people, in many cases people of color or chronically homeless, still don't think well-designed spaces are for them. It reminds me that we have a lot of work to do. No one should feel like an elevated space isn't for them.” — *Kia Weatherspoon*

“I believe there's a fine line between holding strong in what you think the design should be and working with the developer on their needs and vision. It's important to remember this work is not personal but needs to be scalable and profitable. This means working to set yourself apart from other communities and drawing high occupancy levels by staying ahead of what the consumer is currently asking for.” — *Cheryl Stauffer*



“We have huge buying power and are able to buy most products at the wholesale level so we are able to design with quality, and with durable and trend worthy furnishings.” — *Kelly Kole (far left)*

“Multifamily is a great addition to our residential business. It allows our work to be seen in public. In our residential business there isn't a sense of competition, but in this area of our work we need to be better than the guy down the street. It fuels a little more creativity!” — *Joann Kandrac (left)*

Photo: Kandrac & Kole by Lauren Rubinstein.

FOR OUR FIRST LOOK AT MULTIFAMILY DESIGN, FOUR DESIGNERS SHOW RECENT PROJECTS AND SHARE ABOUT THE BIZ OF THIS HOT DESIGN SECTOR



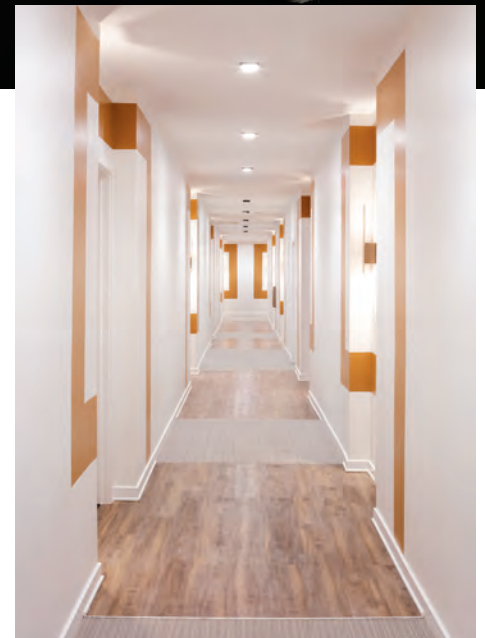
THE Work

THE SCOPE OF WORK ENTAILS DESIGN, PROCUREMENT, AND INSTALLATION, AND DEVELOPING THE STORY THAT TIES IT ALL TOGETHER.

Weatherspoon: “For my team, it is not about designing things that are trendy—we want spaces to be relevant to the community. We use the community story and history to drive our design concept and create these impactful moments.”

Stauffer: “When working with a potential multifamily client we not only work to develop their space but also their brand. This helps to create a cohesion in all projects within a company as well as give them a definitive style.”

Kole: “Each community has its own personality and character traits whose vibes usually attract a certain demographic whether it be young professionals, retirees, etc. Our design focus is on creating a desired image of the brand and selling the benefits of that particular community—whether it be location, amenities, floorplans, etc. “



Top, down: For Momentum at Shady Grove, affordable apartment housing in Maryland, Weatherspoon’s design concept—zones etched in travel—reflects the community’s history with railways, coal, and the postal service. The dramatically lit lobby feature wall, with different planes and directions of woodgrain, keeps the eye moving.

Likewise, in the resident corridors at Momentum, Weatherspoon created a front door zone for each resident, establishing a design rhythm with paint, flooring, and lighting.

Photos: this page: Jennifer Hughes Photography; opposite: clubhouse by Emily Followill; lobby by Addison Jones



BUDGETS & BUSINESS

ADHERE TO A BUDGET BUT DON'T LET IT INTERFERE WITH GOOD DESIGN

Weatherspoon: “Every project has a budget, whether affordable, market rate or luxury—and no matter the market segment. My job as a designer is to design to the budget, and that is what we do every time—successfully. And it is not at the cost of using less than building materials, fixtures and features. Budgets exist, and we just design within them.”

Kole: “Our clients like one turnkey quote which is sometimes broken up into draws depending on the size of the project. We have huge buying power and can buy most products at the wholesale level so we are able to design with quality, durable and trend worthy furnishings. No matter what, we collect 100% up front for procurement funding. We have lost a few jobs over this but feel strongly that we are not a bank for our clients.

Stauffer: “So much of the design work we do in this field is about value engineering. We work to make sure we put forth all efforts to save while not sacrificing the design. We mean it when we state to our clients that we are stewards of the finances. With our years of experience, we understand the cost that goes into these types of projects and can ensure a great financial outcome that includes high leasing occupancy for our clients.”

Kandrac: “Our first project was a model in an exclusive part of Atlanta. We learned quickly that the furnishings did not need to be as ‘high quality’ as we would use in a residence, but still needed to look that way.”

Top: A resident clubhouse designed by Kandrac & Kole features separate activity zones, with swivel chairs that can be positioned toward the chat group or TV.

At the Belmont, Stauffer hired a local artist to hand-paint a 360-degree mural in the lobby. Its faded patina with the custom light fixtures, originally made for a historical building in Washington D.C., lend a vintage Art Deco vibe to the space.



PANDEMIC PRIORITIES

COVID-19 HAS MADE LIVING AMONGST NON-FAMILY MEMBERS CHALLENGING; A GOOD MULTI-FAMILY DESIGNER, HOWEVER, KNOWS HOW TO EASE THE DIS-EASE

Weatherspoon: “Unfortunately, because there is a notion that low-income people in affordable housing tear spaces up, we have always been in a mindset of specifying high quality, cleanable, antimicrobial, high use materials. Our space plans are also designed to be flexible, supporting both quiet and communal areas. COVID has not impacted how we design because we think about things from a maintenance and operations perspective on every project.”

Kandrac: “We are thinking of the work-at-home resident more than ever—easy access to packages, business centers with access to a printer, conference rooms for Zoom meeting or client meetings. Fitness centers to get out of your apartment and exercise. Dog parks and dog spas are increasingly popular, and we are currently working on a bicycle repair shop in one of the communities.”

Stauffer: “The pandemic has certainly created a need for more outdoor amenities, which can include everything from private cabanas, rentable outdoor event space, BBQ cook out spaces and pet washing stations. This has been an upcoming trend that I believe will only grow from here.”

Attracting YOUR IDEAL CLIENT

A BLEND OF MANIFESTING AND MARKETING, STAYING FOCUSED, KNOWING THE MARKET, AND TRUSTING YOUR GUT ALL AID IN THE PROCESS

Weatherspoon: “For a long time, we had to go after developers very aggressively letting them know our services for affordable housing are not a luxury but a standard. We had to advocate for design and educate developers. We had to tell them they weren’t doing good enough. Thankfully we have some good partners now who want better design outcomes. In fact, a lot of times we are brought in by the developer.”

Stauffer: “My first multifamily project was actually from a residential client who is a developer. In doing this project, I realized how important the relationships we build and foster with our clients, are, and that we grow with them.”

Kole: “We are making an effort to have our projects professionally photographed and put on our website to attract new owners and management companies.”

MULTIFAMILY *Trends*

THE EVOLUTION OF MULTIFAMILY HOUSING REFLECTS THE PRESENT AND ANTICIPATED NEEDS AND CONCERNS OF THE GREATER GOOD



Weatherspoon: “Affordable housing is changing because my Determined by Design team is challenging developers to do better. We are challenging them by saying socioeconomic status doesn’t matter; it is about creating design that empowers people’s lives. It is not about lifestyle; it is about creating elevated spaces for everyone.”

Kole: “Renters’ desire for personalization and less stress are on the rise, and they will continue to demand the highest in technology and security in their homes. Telecommuting and working entirely from home will put pressure on owners to have the best in co-working spaces, conference rooms and business centers.”

Stauffer: “The growing emphasis on overall wellness will continue to be a focus. This will create new needs such as working circadian lighting and purified water into units. Common areas and amenities will also be informed by creating an environment of overall wellness for the residents.”

Opposite: The leasing center of MAA Allure Buckhead, designed by Kandrac & Kole, with rendering by Joan Looney.

Above: In the modest-sized community gym, Weatherspoon specified Polar Moss, a self-sustaining dried natural, to bring in texture and softness which she says is much needed in communal spaces, especially in lower income properties, because it promotes comfort and healing.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

Designers Today; Publication number 220-30; The Mailing address of the Known Office of Publication, Bridgetower Media, 7025 Albert Pick Rd. Ste. 200, Greensboro NC, 27409-9519. The Mailing address of the Headquarters and General Business Offices of the Publisher (not printer), Bridgetower Media, 7025 Albert Pick Rd. Ste. 200, Greensboro NC, 27409-9519. The Full Names and Addresses of the Publisher, Editor and Managing Editor are: Robin Martinez (Publisher), 7025 Albert Pick Rd. Ste. 200, Greensboro NC, 27409-9519, Jane Dagmi (Editor) 7025 Albert Pick Rd. Ste. 200, Greensboro NC, 27409-9519, Andrea Lillo (Managing Editor) 7025 Albert Pick Rd. Ste. 200, Greensboro NC, 27409-9519.

Designers Today is owned by New Media Investment Group, Inc., 1345 Avenue of the Americas, 46th Fl., New York, NY 10105. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities, Citizens Bank NA, 28 State Street, MS 1500, Boston MA 02109.

Issue Date for Circulation Data is July 1, 2020; the average number of copies of each issue during the preceding 12 months is: (A) Total number of copies printed 14,465. (B1) Paid/ Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions 10,736; (B2) Paid/Requested Subscriptions: 0; (B3) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales and requested: 0; (B4) Other classes mailed USPS: 55; (C) Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation: 10,791; (D1) Non-Requested Distribution by mail, samples complimentary and other free copies: 2,104; (D2) In-county Non-Requested distribution: 0; (D3) Other classes mailed Non-Requested Distribution: 2; (D4) Non-Requested distribution outside the mail: 1,381; (E) Total Non-Requested distribution: 3,487; (F) Total Distribution: 14,278; (G) Copies not Distributed: 187; (H) Total: 14,465; (I) Percent of Paid/ Requested: 75.57%.

The actual number of copies of a single issue published nearest to the filing date are: (A) Total number of copies printed 13,644; (B1) Paid/ Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions: 9,702; (B2) Paid/Requested In-County Subscriptions: 0; (B3) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales and requested: 0; (B4) Other classes mailed USPS: 52; (C) Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation: 9,754; (D1) Non-Requested Distribution by mail, samples complimentary and other free copies: 1,901; (D2) In county Non-Requested distribution: 0; (D3) Other classes mailed Non-Requested Distribution: 2; (D4) Non-Requested distribution outside the mail: 1,800 (E) Total Non-Requested distribution: 3,703 (F) Total Distribution: 13,457; (G) Copies not Distributed: 187; (H) Total: 13,644; (I) Percent of Paid/Requested: 72.48%.

Electronic Copy Circulation; The Average number of copies in the last 12 months was: (16A) Requested/Paid Electronic Copies, 3; (16B) Total Paid/Requested Print and Digital Copies were 10,794; (16C) Total Requested Copy Distribution & Paid/Digital Copies was 14,281; (16D) Percent Paid/Requested Circulation was 75.58%.

Electronic Copy Circulation; The Actual Number of Copies of a Single Issue (16A) Paid/Requested Electronic Copies, 3; (16B) Total Paid/Requested Print and Digital Copies was 9,757 (16C) Total Requested Copy Distribution & Paid/Requested Digital Copies was 13,460 (16D) Percent Paid of Both Print & Paid/Requested Circulation was 72.49%.

(Signed) Robin Martinez, Publisher

REQUIRED BY TITLE 39 U.S.C. 3685 STATEMENT SHOWING OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION OF designers today, publication number 220-30, filed October 1, 2020, Published 8 times per year, \$0 (Free) annually, at Bridgetower Media, 7025 Albert Pick Rd. Ste. 200, Greensboro NC, 27409-9519. The General Business offices of the Publishers are at Bridgetower Media, 7025 Albert Pick Rd. Ste. 200, Greensboro NC, 27409-9519.