

Design trend: Private spaces in public spaces

Public spaces are defined as social spaces that generally are open and accessible to people. Private spaces are defined as spaces belonging to, or for the use of, one particular person or group of people. Why not combine the two and create private spaces in public spaces?

While Denver developers continue to build and plan more projects and rents are on the rise, it is more important than ever to take different approaches to design. Gone are the days of compartmentalized spaces in multifamily living.



Angela Harris
Principal and creative director, Trio Environments, Denver

Historically, common spaces were designed as many small rooms serving different functionalities and were separated by four walls. They included leasing centers, cyber cafés, kitchens, theater rooms and others. The thought process was to design spaces that appeal to a variety of demographics with different interests.

Over the last generation or two, a sense of community has become increasingly popular when choosing a place to call home. While technology continues to take over our lives, people are looking for that human connection more than ever. This is being executed in multifamily projects through designing open-

floor plans that are activated in more sophisticated ways.

Traditional leasing offices are a thing of the past. Salespeople are inviting potential tenants into the clubhouse, which includes comfortable seating, and discussing amenities over a cup of coffee. Kitchen and lounge spaces are becoming larger and more blended so people can cook together or rent these spaces to host larger groups or events. Cyber cafés are transforming into collaborative workspaces and are an extension of the lobby and lounges. Health and wellness initiatives are revamping fitness centers to include spaces for group classes and educational events, as well as juice bars. Aesthetics and design continues to become more significant. Developers are feeling the pressure to stand out among their competitors. Multifamily projects are starting to look and feel more like a resort or hotel than apartment complexes.

While large open spaces and more aesthetically pleasing spaces are becoming more of a norm versus



There still is a need to offer space that is private for tenants to connect with friends, work or have quiet time uninterrupted.

Michael Schinn, BIM HelpDesk

a trend and people are looking to socialize within its community, we still are seeing the importance of creating private spaces within these large, open public spaces.

While people want to enjoy the amenities and high level of finishes in the common spaces, there still is a need to find space that is uninterrupted to either connect with friends, work or have quiet time by themselves. These spaces don't need to be surrounded by walls anymore, but can be defined by ceiling or floor details. We are seeing libraries as an extension to the clubhouse and are work-

ing on creating privatized booths, again defined by floor insets. We have a concept that includes building stacked pods out of shipping containers that have clear glass on one side so that is it private and public. This idea can be extended to individual technology stations, music stations, meditation pods, fresh-food lounges – the options are endless.

Now is the time to collaborate, get creative, think outside of the box and develop one-of-a-kind, authentic projects that people will want to call home.▲

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