



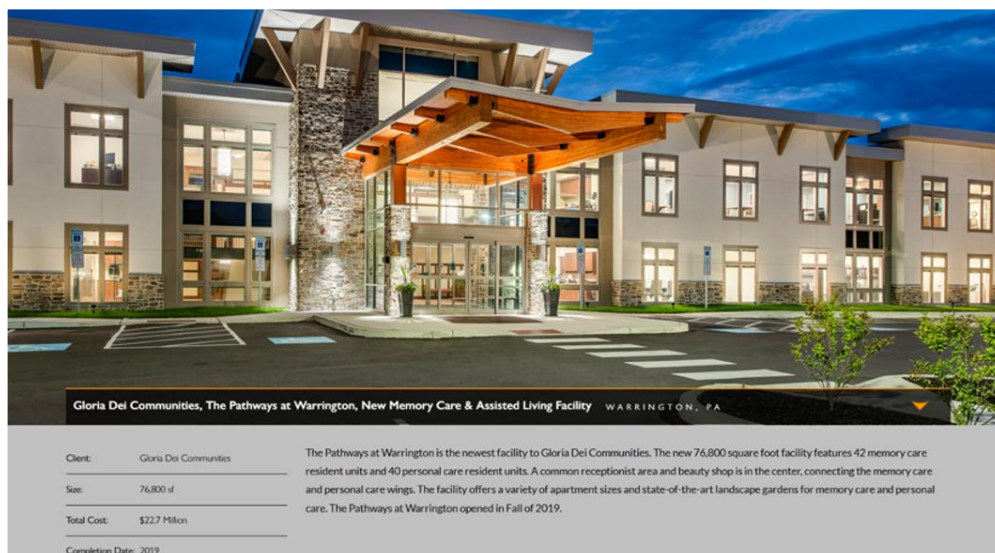
Mission-Driven Design: The Best Choice for Not-For-Profit Senior Living Developers

Mission-centered architecture enables not-for-profit senior living organizations to balance care, financial sustainability and long-term community impact.

By Martin Kimmel, AIA, NCARB

For architects designing not-for-profit senior living communities, mission-centered design is essential, and budget is always a key consideration. Somewhere along the way though, architects developed a reputation for disregarding budgets, putting design and fiscal responsibility at odds. But that mindset does not work when designing not-for-profit senior living communities.

Our firm, [Kimmel Architecture](#), has become known as a firm on a mission. We call it "[Extraordinary Solutions for Ordinary Budgets](#)," a promise to help institutions spend their resources wisely and accomplish great things that advance their mission. It reflects our belief that thoughtful design is not measured by how much money is spent, but by how effectively resources are used to advance an organization's mission.



We know the most successful projects emerge when architects and owner-operators work as true partners. Design decisions should not be guided by architectural ego but an understanding of the institution's values, operational goals, and long-term vision. As architects, we must take financial constraints seriously, understanding the realities of funding and design accordingly.

Beyond reconciling cost with design-by-design waste out, we as architects should be helping to create value by focusing on our clients' mission of service. Not-for-profit owners have a genuine mission of service that was at the core of their founding and that should be reinforced and celebrated every day and everywhere. It should be visible and tangible not only in the care provided, but in architecture and the spaces themselves. It is the job of the Architect to dive deep into the Institutional Mission and use it as a catalyst for greatness. Whether for a renovation, addition or new facility, we as architects should be helping to strengthen the institutions that we work for by connecting their mission with design that not only respects it but celebrates it.

These values and the actions taken for our Not-for-profit senior living communities must be viewed through both a care lens and a revenue lens. Unlike for-profit development, earnings are not distributed to investors, but these organizations still must generate revenue. Without it, they cannot sustain their operations. They need to reinvest in their communities to remain viable over the long term.

The underlying value systems between for-profit and not-for-profit organizations are similar, but not-for-profit owner-operators typically make decisions with a much longer time horizon. Because they will own and operate these communities for decades, they must live with the choices made during the design phase. Short-term decisions can create long-term consequences, while thoughtful planning can provide benefits for years to come.

That differs from investor-driven real estate, where the primary objective is often to open a property, stabilize operations, maximize value and eventually sell the asset before moving on to the next opportunity.

Not-for-profit organizations still must compete in their markets, but their long-term outlook allows mission-driven design to take precedence. Design should support their brand and mission through residences, amenities and care infrastructure that attract and retain residents, maintain occupancy and keep waiting lists strong.

At the end of the day, mission-driven design is about aligning architecture with purpose. By balancing care, financial responsibility and long-term vision, not-for-profit senior living organizations can create communities that are both sustainable and deeply meaningful. As

architects, our role is to help them achieve that mission through thoughtful design and responsible stewardship of their resources.



About Martin Kimmel, AIA, NCARB

Martin Kimmel, AIA, NCARB, is Founding Principal and Chief Creative Officer of Kimmel Architecture (formerly Kimmel-Bogrette Architecture + Site), a nationally recognized architecture and interior design firm headquartered in suburban Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and specializing in delivering for Mission Driven Owners in senior living, healthcare, education, and government. For more information, visit <http://www.kimmelarch.com>