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With a Spirit of Innovation and a Focus on Community Transformation, The Architectural Team Celebrates 50 Years of Design Impact and Leadership

By Alex_A_G | Mar 12, '21 11:30 AM EST

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Reflecting its dedication to social impact, the architecture, planning, and interiors leader The Architectural Team (TAT) has announced its renewed commitment to creating vibrant, equitable communities through innovative design solutions that address key issues impacting urban livability nationwide.

The statement of purpose comes as TAT celebrates its 50th anniversary, and underscores its role as a trusted advisor for its clients and an advocate of design excellence in a range of buildings and project types. The firm is known for a wide array of work including urban infill complexes, creative master planned communities, engaging mixed-use destinations, resilient waterfronts, historic preservation and adaptive reuse, and uplifting affordable housing, and senior developments. As the world emerges from a year of pandemic and economic challenges, these opportunities have become even more vital.

“The past five decades have brought a remarkable urban resurgence for cities large and small, and as TAT reaches this important milestone, we’re taking the opportunity to express our gratitude to our clients and colleagues, and to reflect on our foundational promise of strengthening the communities in which we work, as well as our role as an advisor and advocate in that process,” says Robert J. Verrier, FAIA, NCARB, founding principal of TAT. “We continue to believe in the transformative power of architecture, and we thank our team members for their commitment to this vision. Our pledge for the next 50 years is to accelerate our efforts in creating positive change – through the pursuit of forward-looking design solutions that will make our cities more livable, more exciting, and more resilient and sustainable.”

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- **The Best of History and Innovation.** Since launching TAT in 1971, Verrier has inspired generations of architects with a steadfast belief in the potential of architecture to engender civic pride, revive local economies, and improve quality of life. Best known as a pioneer in preserving and adapting scores of historic mills, wharfs, schools, and hospitals nationwide, Verrier has demonstrated the social, cultural, and economic value of smart building practices for decades, an outlook that continues to influence the firm's work. As TAT's practice and portfolio has expanded to also encompass a wide array of innovative new construction projects – from housing to hotels and large-scale mixed-use complexes — Verrier's deep knowledge and expertise in real estate development has shown emerging designers how they can advocate for better designs and building projects.

"TAT's culture of excellence has enabled us to expand our portfolio nationally, including with market-leading new construction projects," says senior partner and managing principal Michael D. Binette, AIA, NCARB, regarded as an expert on multifamily planning and design and a trusted advisor for major national developers. "I joined TAT as an intern in 1982, and having grown with the firm, I can attest to how this nurturing yet rigorous atmosphere is fundamental to our success."

Binette adds that in 2021 TAT's leaders will continue to foster emerging designers. "As we grow our leadership opportunities and look to the future, supporting the talent and energy of tomorrow's designers will ensure that we continue to push the envelope in addressing the most critical issues of our moment," he says.

Within the firm, a heightened focus on elevating new voices and perspectives brings added creativity to TAT's widely respected master planning, multifamily and mixed-use design practice. Emerging leaders, including recently named Associate Tom Schultz, AIA, NCARB, will take on important new roles and expand their involvement in project design, client management and business development – strengthening the firm's ability to serve as an effective and responsive strategic partner.

- **Focus on Creative Housing Solutions.** One of the country's leading planners and designers of multifamily buildings and communities, TAT enters its sixth decade with a goal of designing housing that is more livable, more exciting, and more sustainable. Over the course of its 50 years, TAT has served as a powerful advocate for better housing, and as a thought leader in the national media on critical development tools such as historic and low-income housing tax credits and waterfront resilience considerations for rising sea levels and other climate challenges.

Known for longstanding partnerships with public agencies, nonprofits, housing authorities, and top national developers, TAT has designed tens of thousands of housing units nationwide, broadening residential options across all income levels in cities as diverse as Worcester, Massachusetts; Bloomington, Indiana; and Jacksonville, Florida. Working with leading development groups including AvalonBay Communities, Greystar, Wood Partners, Toll Brothers, Mill Creek, Trammell Crow, The Green Cities Company, Lendlease, Trinity Financial, and Winn Development, many of the firm's latest projects serve as case studies in housing innovation. Highlights include:

- **Clippership Wharf**, a waterfront community that addresses rising sea levels with Boston's first-ever living shoreline.
- **Courthouse Lofts**, one of the nation's first adaptive reuse projects to convert a historic courthouse complex into mixed-income housing.
- **Evergreen Village**, the nation's first assisted-living facility funded by a combination of state subsidies, tax-exempt bonds, and Low Income Housing Tax Credits.
- **Residences at Brighton Marine**, a veterans' supportive housing campus lauded for combining a suite of onsite services with thoughtfully designed homes for both individuals and families.

- **The Anne M. Lynch Homes at Old Colony**, an affordable housing community that recently unveiled a groundbreaking Passive House complex for seniors.
- The ongoing redevelopment of **Sibley Square**, a 1 million-square-foot adaptive reuse complex anticipated to catalyze the revival of Rochester, N.Y.
- **Yarn Works**, the transformation of a landmarked riverfront mill building into mixed-income housing with a trendsetting approach to flood mitigation and storm resiliency.

Building on this legacy and looking to the future, TAT's architects and designers are pursuing a new wave of ideas and projects that advance the field of multifamily design. "From Massachusetts to Florida," says principal Jay Szymanski, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP, "we're working with developers, nonprofits, and public officials to support cities nationwide with sustainable and accessible infill and transit-oriented developments, well-planned workforce and affordable housing, and inventive design solutions that overcome unique and complex technical challenges."

- New Ideas in Design Innovation, Technical Virtuosity and Respect for Context. According to Michael Liu, AIA, NCARB, senior partner and design principal, TAT's respect for context has its roots in Verrier's early work, which instilled an institutional respect for older buildings and neighborhoods. He feels that has given the firm a unique sensitivity to context when designing the ground-up buildings that form the majority of the firm's work today. That sensitivity often finds a forward-looking contemporary expression. "We don't strive to design buildings that necessarily look like they've always been there," says Liu. "We want to design buildings that look like they've always belonged there."

Sometimes that means incorporating an existing familiar iconic structure into a contemporary new building so that the contrast enhances both and preserves a local landmark. Liu points to design juxtapositions such as 100 Shawmut in Boston's South End in which a six-story historic warehouse is incorporated into 14 stories of sleek and geometrically dramatic new construction. Another example was the firm's now-iconic design for Lovejoy Wharf, which combined a similarly visible, but previously anonymous historic warehouse with a striking contemporary addition to form an exciting waterfront headquarters for clothing brand Converse and a gateway landmark to the city. Liu credits the mutual support and mentoring cited by Binette as allowing TAT to develop a firm of colleagues with the design and technical sophistication to develop solutions requiring a unique level of design innovation and technical virtuosity. "The knowledge depth and dedication of our staff has given us the expertise to develop solutions to otherwise daunting design problems. It's expanded the range of solutions available to us," continues Liu. He cites examples such as the 30-foot cantilever which allows the 35-story Raffles Boston Back Bay Hotel & Residences to rise over an adjacent occupied building, or the construction of the fourteen-story Bower building over an operating train station.

Key to this atmosphere of innovation is the input of an increasingly diverse group of TAT professionals. "By welcoming the expertise of all team members, we're advancing our implementation of green strategies such as Passive House and emphasizing the pursuit of WELL, Fitwel, and other new certifications and design standards that promote physical and emotional health and wellbeing," says TAT principal Edward Bradford, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP. "Energized by fresh leadership, our growing interiors team is also developing innovative new concepts that raise the bar in terms of healthy materials, residential layouts, and amenities programming."

As part of the firm's celebration of its 50th anniversary, TAT has also bolstered its dedication to emerging leadership as part of its core mission, committing to advancing the next generation of architects, planners, and interior designers. In fact, dozens of emerging designers have built entire careers at TAT -- including three of the firm's seven principals. "Sharing knowledge and offering access to our collective experience and expertise is one of the best ways we can help young architects as they enter professional practice," notes architect and TAT principal Gary Kane, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP, who has led many of the

firm's educational initiatives. "These efforts are a critical investment in a better and more just future for our cities and all of society as these young professionals go on to shape communities around the world."

Echoing these sentiments, TAT's founder Verrier concludes, "Architecture can play an important role in the generation of thriving, prosperous communities. Our firm was founded with this sense of purpose, and it fills me with pride to see the creativity and dedication our team members bring to work with them every day in pursuit of designing a better world. As we chart a course for the future together with clients, collaborators, and partners, encouraging fresh perspectives and creative solutions will continue to be central to our approach -- and I am excited to see what emerges."
