

"Evolving Retiree Expectations Impact Retirement Housing Design"

With a huge number of baby boomers approaching retirement with greater capital assets and higher superannuation payouts, it is evident that the retiree marketplace is undergoing an enormous transformation.

But it is not only assets and income that are changing. Lifestyle expectations and, hence, housing needs are also rapidly evolving. The future clientele for retirement housing come with a variety of lifestyle expectations which can be significantly different to those of retirees during the 1990s. And these changing lifestyle expectations have significant implications for design briefs and development outcomes.

So what are these development and design brief implications?



Vasey Housing Association NSW Self-care Retirement Development

Technology

The need to design to accommodate home business activities with high-speed data communications.

Flexibility

The need to be able to easily retro-fit electrical, communications, kitchens, bathrooms and décor at the time of turnover to adapt to changing market expectations in the near and medium term future.

Storage

The need to provide sufficient storage for equipment associated with healthy and recreational lifestyles.



The Salvation Army Building, 348 Elizabeth Street Surry Hills

Urban lifestyles

The need to reflect in the architectural style of the buildings that the clientele 'came of age in the 1970s and 1980s' when Australians started to travel extensively, metropolitan cultures became more cosmopolitan and sophisticated, 'modernism' influenced style, and when entertainment and dining out became a significant part of Australian culture.

The need to build into the architecture the long term ability to adapt to the stylistic and lifestyle expectations of those who came of age in the 1990s and early 2000's when Australians adapted to downsizing, job flexibility, part-time work, the global workplace, multi-national business, the internet, full-time careers for women, the requirement for continuing career education, a car for every adult member of the household, and a doubling in the size of the average home since the 1970s.

Extended families

The need to accommodate extended family occasions reflecting the diverse households that developed with the frequency of divorce, re-marriage, de-facto relationships and immigrant influences.

Independent living

The need to adjust to the desire of many retirees to live independently in more convenient apartment style accommodation without the imposition of large, communal-style village life.



Vasey Housing Association NSW Self-care Retirement Development

Mobile lifestyles

The realisation that the purchasers of the retirement accommodation may also have other recreational accommodation elsewhere and may spend the time living in several places and travelling extensively, consequently requiring higher levels of security and maintenance for the proposed retirement development when they are not in residence.

Ageing in place

The need to build in design flexibility for the better health and extended life expectancy of 'old, old age'.

The need to address in the design the unpredictable impact of dementia, where family desires and financial constraints may result in needing to support a person suffering early dementia for an extended period.

The need to be able to introduce future electronic monitoring of residents suffering early dementia.

These changes will have profound impact on the design of retirement housing. The changes require development of insightful briefs to inform architectural solutions. Peter Dalton's experience combining social planning and architecture can guide clients to better prepare appropriate design briefs.

Peter Dalton Architects Pty Ltd, as Architects and Social Planners, have been pioneers in the field of design for retirement and disability.

Peter Dalton has considerable understanding of the requirements of housing and retirement development, having been Chairman of the Retirement Housing Tri-Industry Group representing the Voluntary Care Association (forerunner of the Aged and Community Services Association) the Housing Industry Association and the Local Government and Shires Associations. He has also been Chairman of the Medium Density Housing Committee of the HIA.

Past and present clients of Peter Dalton Architects include:

Anglican Retirement Villages
Aevum Limited
Bradcorp (was Bradman Corporation)
Capitol Apartments
Multiplex Developments
The Salvation Army
Vasey Housing Association NSW

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Peter Dalton Architects has specialised in private, multi-residential and retirement housing design for over two decades. We provide advice and design services to ensure the client achieves a design that is both feasible and compliant.

For an insight into the aged care industry visit the Aged & Community Services Association of NSW & ACT: www.agedservices.asn.au