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SENIOR LIVING: EVOLVING MODELS

Housing options for the senior living market are exploding, bringing opportunities for a diverse and unexpected range of flooring.

■ By Ruth Simon McRae



The Katherine and Charles Hover Green House Nursing Homes at night.

Post-World War II babies, aka Baby Boomers, will account for 20% of the U.S. population by 2029. This large and influential group, which started turning 65 in 2011, is engaged in thinking about what's next.

As Baby Boomers plan their futures, they are asking questions. Do I look for a smaller house on one level? Do I find a retirement community that has plenty of activities and opportunities for personal development? Do I look for an independent living situation with extended care options? Should I move closer to family? This exploration is naturally impacted by health issues that may come up at any time during the process.

Senior living communities offer a huge diversity of possibilities, from independent living with aging-in-place support to independent living/assisted living facilities built in luxury resort communities to cottage and small-house communities, including nursing care types and full continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs) built on college campuses, just to name a few. And this is in addition to other creative scenarios, such as multifamily housing designed to include a range of ages as well as naturally occurring retirement communities. Granny Pods—an interesting option with an unfortunate name—are small modular homes with medical-monitoring technology and accessible features that can sit in the backyard of a main house or be clustered into communities with a central care-giver. Aging in place is often the most desired option, either at home or in a multifamily housing situation.

The highly varied senior housing facilities described above illustrate the range of options available in the senior living land-

scape. In each case, a wide spectrum of flooring helps support design, functioning and the wellness of the residents.

ROBSON RESERVE AT PEBBLECREEK

Robson Reserve at PebbleCreek is located in Goodyear, Arizona. With resort-style luxuries, this senior living and wellness community houses 224 luxurious independent and assisted residences. PebbleCreek is one part of Robson Resort Communities, a master-plan neighborhood for people 55+. Many Robson communities have added a senior living care component, starting with independent and assisted living and now expanding in some locations to memory care as well.

The PebbleCreek facility is a new, three-story building for both independent and assisted living, with approximately 30% being assisted. Designed by Thoma-Holec Design, the facility has an elegant feel with transitional decor and a hospitality ambience that makes the most of its sunny Arizona locale.

According to designer Tabitha Evans of Thoma-Holec, the community begins with the lobby experience. "From an interiors perspective, the floor design pulls you in with an arrangement I call the runway," says Evans. "There's a chevron pattern created by the flooring that draws you into the room. And as you look through the center, which is framed by a series of columns, you see a beautiful water fountain surrounded by foliage from exotic



The Atrium in Robson Reserve at PebbleCreek featuring custom carpet from Shaw Contract and Supergres Ceramiche Stonework tile.

plants." The porcelain tile in the entry is Chevron by Refin and Supergres' Stonework in colors Ardesia Nera (black slate) and Quartzite Bianca (white quartzite). Islands of custom carpet from Shaw Contract create many large seating areas.

The color palette is neutral with judicious use of brights. "We decided to use color in moderation to keep the environment non-agitating and calming," Evans explains. "Seniors can have a lot of different things that make them uncomfortable, and so we try to make the furniture and everything inside as serene for them as possible. Yet there are some areas, such as the Internet café, that are really loud and exciting. There are also several [bright] areas in each 'neighborhood' inside the community." Each corridor has its own theme, which is reflected in the palette, featuring accents of fuchsia and blue and green and orange.

The Internet café is the most colorful public area. Configure from Shaw Contract, a bold geometric carpet tile with a hexagon motif, coexists nicely with a similar smaller-scale upholstery fabric and bold abstract paintings. As described by Evans, "Visually, it is very loud. The purpose is to wake you up and get you going for the day. You get your morning coffee and grab a yogurt and hopefully socialize and interact with other people."

One outstanding feature of Robson Reserve at Pebble Creek is the artwork, which enhances the interiors throughout and is featured in a dedicated art gallery room. Many pieces that are displayed throughout the facility are from veterans, purchased during a special show at Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin West.

Flooring supports the luxurious hospitality quality of the interior as well as providing functional solutions. Ceramic, carpet and luxury vinyl plank all create complementary textures. This is especially true in the Atrium, a central gathering area where the spaces merge, creating a junction between corridors leading to the many community spaces,

such as dining, the art gallery, the billiards area and the mail room.

There are several dining areas, including a piano bar that has the same Stonework nearly-black tile as the lobby—the bar space was an opportunity for the designers to use a very dark floor, which is usually not seen in senior living. In other dining room areas, the layout of dining tables and tall dividers was designed to help with acoustics. Some larger booths are arranged at an angle so that seniors can easily slide in. The patterned custom broadloom flooring visually reinforces this design with a patchwork of textures arranged in an

interesting breakup of pattern and angled lines. The assisted living dining room is a bit simpler in layout yet has the same type and level of finishes.

A theater, with a nearly 9' screen, features Engage broadloom from Shaw's Tracery collection. Other spaces include yoga and multiple lounge and activity rooms with a range of luxury vinyl tile and plank from Shaw's Noble Materials and Grain + Pigment collections. The library, designed as a cozy bird's nest, allows residents a second-floor view of the greenery outside. The Sunset Lounge, another space with a boutique feel, features fabric with soft, multicolored moths on the chairs. Both room designs are supported by Shaw's The Park carpet tile. A game room uses Shaw's Solitude LVT plank. Evans found the coordination and range of products in Noble Materials to be useful in her design process, selecting many products from this collection.

Robson Reserve at PebbleCreek is a finalist for a National Association of Homebuilders Best 55+ Housing Award in the Independent Living Community category.



The Internet café in Robson Reserve at PebbleCreek featuring Configure from Shaw Contract.

THE COMMUNITY AT SUNSET WOOD

The Community at Sunset Wood is a nonprofit 501(c) organization that offers apartments to seniors 62 years and older in the village of New Hartford, a small quaint town outside of Utica, New York with walkability to restaurants and shops. The campus consists of 42 suites and 24 penthouses, housing 72 tenants between the ages of 62 and 100.

Sunset Wood has an interesting history. The organization started in 1882 on the third floor of Thaxton Hospital as the Home for Indigent Men. The organization became Sunset Homes of Utica, staying in the hospital building from 1882 to 1972. After ten years of fundraising, the current facility was built in 1984, with a 24-unit addition added in 2003.

Sunset Wood is an independent living facility with an aging-in-place model, supporting its tenants and families by helping to bring in any level of outside care needed. Some people reside with zero outside help, some people with intermittent care, and some people age into 24-hour care and hospice. Local resource partners include physicians, hospitals, nursing, physical and occupational therapy, companion care and home care services, as well as the local office of the aging.

For a senior living community, The Community at Sunset Wood offers a very affordable option. The rent for a one-bedroom with dinner included every night, weekly housekeeping and cable is about \$1,500 per month. The two-bedroom apartments—which are double the size of the single-bedroom



A living room at The Community at Sunset Wood featuring Forbo's Flotex Journeys sheet goods and Wood planks in the Antique Wood color.

units—rent for \$2,400 per month. From a management perspective, this model can be a challenge because the organization is not able to fund its upgrades with funds from a large up-front cash infusion as in some other senior living models.

Executive director Dominick Manfredo joined Sunset Wood four years ago as director of operations. In that role, he oversaw the latest renovation in 2017, participating in a complete paradigm shift in the facility's use of flooring. An earlier renovation in 2014 had seen a substantial interior upgrade of the facility with lobby and rooms carpeted and an updated color palette. After three years, the light green higher-end residential carpet selected was stained and worn from the constant cleaning. Sunset Wood's interiors committee evaluated a variety of flooring alternatives before making its selection.

From a flooring perspective, what stands out is that the new renovation at Sunset Wood uses almost entirely Forbo's Flotex. Flotex is an extremely dense flocked textile that brings together the performance properties of resilient and textile floorcovering. After being introduced to this product at Leading Age, Manfredo decided that Flotex would be the optimal solution for all of the facility's public areas. A combination of the botanical patterned Journeys sheet goods and the wood grain visual Antique Wood in plank format were selected with two color palettes chosen in order to delineate space.

Manfredo relied on the expertise of Carrie-An Brutsman, Forbo's national senior care specialist and certified interior designer, for the design and flooring layout. Brutsman designed the flooring arrangement by helping match the design



A living room at The Community at Sunset Wood featuring Forbo Flotex Journeys and Wood planks in the Red Wood color.

concept with building architecture and creating rug-type insets that reflected the geometry of the ceiling.

Sunset Wood now has Flotex in offices, lobbies, certain corridors, the dining room, living room and library. The apartments have multiple wood tone flooring from Tarkett's Access luxury vinyl collection, paired with a traditional broadloom carpet by Mohawk.

"The tenants absolutely love the flooring," says Manfredo. "They love how their walkers glide, and how getting in and out of chairs at the dining room table is much easier." This may be due to Flotex's density, which is higher than that of a typical loop pile carpet. Manfredo continues, "The noise reduction has been pretty significant as well. We have trained all our dining room staff how to clean the product. When we've had spills, we've taken a hot rag and literally wiped it off. There are only two things that could stain the product. One is bleach, which we don't allow in our building. The second is a yellow mustard, which we have taken out of our dining room, replacing it with a higher-end French Dijon-style mustard."

The new flooring supports the comfortable, warm ambience of the lobby. "It's not like a traditional grand continuing care retirement community," notes Manfredo. "We chose this design in this product in order for it to feel like home. The response we've had since putting the flooring in from new people walking through the door has been outstanding. So I think we've really hit the mark on making sure that it creates a welcoming space, and we're looking forward to doing more hopefully in the future."

THE KATHERINE AND CHARLES HOVER GREEN HOUSE NURSING HOMES

Located in Longmont, Colorado, the Hover community

was first established in 1989 on the Hover farm, a tree farm from the early 1800s. It was initially built as a set of retirement cottages for its owners and was expanded in 1997 to include assisted living housing. In September 2019, The Katherine and Charles Hover Green House Nursing Homes were added to the campus with four homes and twelve residents in each.

SWBR—a multidisciplinary design firm that just celebrated its 50th anniversary—headed up development of the four homes. SWBR is well known for its expertise in building on the Green House model, an alternative living environment to the more traditional nursing home. Design director Rob Simonetti led the building of the Hover Green House Nursing Homes, working with a team of local architects, interior designers and structural engineers and Hover's internal team.

The new homes were designed to reflect the Tudor style of the original Hover mansion. Design motifs were scaled down in order to make these 8,000-square-foot houses feel home-like. Each of the homes is designed to reflect one of the four seasons. Expressed in the decor and color palette, this design theme was brought into the living room, kitchen, dining room, den and foyer of each home. Resident bedrooms are all the same between the homes.

The flooring in the Hover Green Houses has a very subtle design approach that creates a residential feel. Carpet is used in many areas. Simonetti notes, "A lot of providers question whether to do carpet or hard surface. But carpet is more appropriate for a home-like environment, so we just have to find the right carpet that stands up to spills, is primarily level loop and has the right backing and serviceability—for example, so we can pull out a tile and replace it—to make it work. The

THE GREEN HOUSE PROJECT AND EDEN ALTERNATIVE

According to SWBR design director Rob Simonetti, "The Green House Project is a great model of care for skilled nursing. Its goal is de-institutionalizing the environments and the care for seniors by creating much smaller environments of just ten to 12 elders. In the new environment, typically a Green House home, care is offered in a residential setting by empowered staff that have been retrained to create opportunities for meaningful life. The wellbeing of the elder is paramount.

"We have seen and heard really great results in environments built on the Green House model, and we've built some great stories. So I am a true believer not only in the model generically, but more specifically when the providers stay involved with the greenhouse model, they get some better outcomes for both residents and staff. The staff is a huge component of why you do this type of housing; it is at least as impactful on staff as on residents.

"The Green House organization offers access to annual meetings and conferences where all the providers come together to share their stories; they share the good stuff and share the bad stuff in an effort to make sure the next time people don't make the same mistakes. There is a lot to look out for in the physical environment, such as access, that provides an environment that allows the elder to maintain their independence. But at the same

time, the code has not caught up to the desired environment in many cases and is very different state to state. Experiences with resources are shared on the physical side, including what equipment to buy, which flooring functions best, etc. You want a space to look residential, yet you want commercial functionality.

"Another issue is staffing size—how to really live up to the goals of an empowered workforce. And then what does it look like when you have both a traditional nursing home and then add green houses? From a labor standpoint, how do you change your model of care to a Green House home? How do you manage that sort of this disparity of physical environment for the residents and the staff? There may still be the old institutional model of care, of the nursing home, the hierarchy."

Hover Senior Living Community's CEO, Lisa Czolowski, has a background in the Eden Alternative and was eager to bring that model of care to its new skilled nursing houses. The Eden Alternative was established by Dr. Bill Thomas with a goal of improving the well-being of elders and their care partners by transforming the communities in which they live and work. Ten to 15 years later, the Green House movement sprang from this culture-change organization. Both are very similar in goals, with Green House concentrating on the physical environment, and Eden historically focusing on culture change.



The hearth room in Hover Green House with Mica Tile from Shaw's Unearthed collection and Composed luxury vinyl plank.

carpet is a pretty simple pattern. We are specifically not going for anything that looks like hospitality, which a lot of providers do, because we're not designing a high-rise hotel, we're designing a home. So, the carpet pattern is as neutral as it can be without being solid." Shaw Contract's Sculpt Tile in Bisque is used in the bedrooms; Mica Tile from its Unearthed collection is used in corridors, the hearth room, den and office.

"For people with dementia issues, pattern is really important," Simonetti adds. "Flooring that has a pattern that could be inter-

preted as something else can be a problem. We see a lot of organic patterns that look like leaves and dappled light, which is not a good choice for someone with perception issues. Products used at Hover have pattern and range that are textural yet do not reference something specific."

Light level in the home is also key. "In a big home of 8,000 square feet, some spaces may be distant from windows, so you may have to choose a lighter color to be more reflective and bring light deeper into the house," says Simonetti. "Yet the color of furnishings and flooring needs to be dark enough to be serviceable, so they can be maintained."

Ann Sacks' Prescott porcelain tiles in two sizes are installed in the bathrooms, which have a no-threshold shower. The

same pattern tile is used in a smaller scale within the shower for a better grip due to the higher number of joints. The larger-scale pattern installed on the main floor with fewer joints was chosen from both a cleaning and aesthetic perspective. Hair care is also done in these bathrooms; the porcelain tile is resistant to staining by hair dye.

Living areas have luxury vinyl plank flooring with an inset of carpet, designed with an intentional directionality. Commenting on the mix of resilient and soft flooring, Simonetti says,

"Something I have been really happy with is that flooring manufacturers have developed products that marry well and are able to be installed together without transitions. Five to seven years ago, there would have been a transition strip that would have been a tripping hazard." Shaw Contract's Composed vinyl planks are used in the kitchen, pantry and entry foyer; Mannington's Biospec Sheet Vinyl is used in storage and back-of-house areas.

Simonetti likes the acoustic benefits of carpet, especially in the dining room. "Acoustics are a huge consideration in a Green House home," he notes. "This is especially true when you have an open kitchen environment. We needed hard surface flooring in the kitchen, and Hover also chose to do hard surface flooring in the dining room. We were careful with our selection of acoustic ceilings and window treatments in order to provide acoustical comfort. So in the living room, we used a harder reflective ceiling with carpet on the floor and then in the dining room we paired a resilient floor with a softer ceiling."



The den in Hover Green House with Shaw Contract's Composed luxury vinyl plank.

THE SPIRES AT BERRY COLLEGE

Many universities and colleges are sponsoring retirement communities on their campuses, hoping that young and old will find synergy while creating a new revenue stream. The Spires at Berry College is a fine example of this trend.

Located on a beautiful quarry that has been in operation for many years, The Spires is adjacent to Berry College in Rome, Georgia. In 2015, the college trustees were trying to decide what they could do with all that land and one of the predominant ideas they kept coming back to was a continuing care retirement community. They wanted a community that would be not for profit, and that would be a place that someone could live their entire life without having to worry about leaving for health or financial reasons.

The Spires has received tremendous interest from potential residents, especially Berry alumni. The facility is being opened in a phased delivery due to its many component parts. The Commons and one independent living wing will open in June 2020. The other components are a second independent living wing, the Lodge (a smaller apartment building with 17 two-bedroom apartments), 26 freestanding cottages, and the healthcare building with memory care, skilled nursing and assisted living—all of which will open between July and October. Independent living units are already 80% leased out.

The college engaged Greenbrier Development of Dallas,



The Spires lobby features engineered wood and porcelain tile flooring.

Texas to handle all of the development, marketing, planning and financing for the Spires. When the community opens, Greenbrier Senior Living will be responsible for the day-to-day management services, including an executive director and a full staff of managers and executives who will oversee operations.

One of the drivers in the creation of The Spires was a desire to build on Berry College's work-study culture. According to Morgan Lamphere, Greenbrier's vice president of marketing, "One of the key reasons that the college created the Spires and developed it on their site is so that students have an opportunity to work, and our residents will be able to mentor and support some students."

Berry is consistently found among the rankings of the country's most beautiful colleges. It has the world's largest contiguous college campus, spanning more than 27,000 acres of woodlands, meadows and streams. Due to the beauty of the campus, location became a key design feature and theme, from siting to materials. Tony Teague, Greenbrier's vice president of development, is responsible for permitting, design and construction. Teague reports, "When we were designing the project, a lot of emphasis was placed upon making sure that as many people could have the best views as possible both from their individual apartments and community spaces. The commons area—where the dining room is—and the entry foyer are both positioned to get a view of Eagle Lake and the mountains. So when you when you walk in, the views are the centerpiece."

Faulkner Design, an independent design firm, was hired to do the interior design and specification. According to Nicole Hill, senior project manager for Faulkner Design, the design team drew much of its inspiration for the interiors from the natural elements surrounding Berry College. "We have a lot of natural elements, such as stone and wood, and some references to organic elements like leaf motifs. In

GUIDING SENIOR CARE DEVELOPMENTS

SAGE, the Society for the Advancement of Gerontological Environments, is a unifying organization that promotes the collaboration of all of the people involved in building elder communities. Rob Simonetti is the current president of SAGE.

One of SAGE's key products is its Post Occupancy Evaluation. Every year a multidisciplinary team from SAGE goes to a senior living community to tour the facilities, interview staff and residents, and observe the physical environment. The team produces a white paper and other resources to communicate the results of what has been seen, what is working, what is not working and how future environments can improve from the study.

In the last three years, Engineered Floors' J+J Flooring has taken an interest in the post-occupancy evaluation and taken on a sponsorship role, which has allowed SAGE to do a longer and more thorough study in a wider geographic area. This ultimately raises the knowledge level of the entire industry. According to Simonetti, "J+J is trying to understand better the issues of flooring and environments with senior housing. And they are really sincere about it, not just trying to figure out how to make the color and pattern better."



The casual dining room at The Spires features broadloom carpet.

our color scheme, we use plenty of neutrals in the furniture because you need that. For accents, we stayed with a lot of richer jewel tones to mimic colors you would find in nature, for example, a blue that was pulled specifically from Eagle Lake. In addition to that green blue, we also have a saffron that is a nice deep kind of wine color—saffron in its original state, not its cooked state, which is yellow—and an acorn chestnut color as well. So that's what we mean by jewel tones—deeper and more saturated colors mixed with plenty of neutrals, such as soft grey and ivory and some chocolates."

The Spires uses a traditional approach to flooring choices, using materials that are appropriate for each level of a CCRC yet fully support the design concept. The Independent Living building uses engineered wood flooring in combination with

also hard surface options for the residents to choose from for the kitchen and bathrooms."

The Healthcare Building includes assisted living, memory care and skilled nursing with some differences between areas in terms of flooring selection. Broadloom carpet is used in assisted living corridors, bedrooms and living areas, with vinyl plank installed in kitchens and bathrooms. Fifty percent of memory care apartments use carpet in bedrooms and living rooms, and 50% use vinyl plank in these areas. Skilled nursing corridors and rooms are all luxury vinyl plank.

At full capacity, The Spires will house approximately 220 independent living residents in 170 apartments. The healthcare building has a capacity for 34 residents in skilled nursing, 36 in memory care and 36 units in assisted living. ■

porcelain tile in the lobby and paired up with broadloom carpet in the dining areas. Corridors and multipurpose and fitness rooms have broadloom carpet. In the apartments, luxury vinyl plank is installed in entry areas and the kitchens; carpet is in bedrooms and living areas. All of the carpet in The Spires is specified without pad in a direct glue installation. Porcelain tile is specified for the salon, and cork flooring for the aerobics studio. According to Teague, flooring options and upgrades are available. "Most bedroom and main living room areas are carpeted," he adds. "But we do offer the residents an option to upgrade to another type of flooring, such as engineered wood. There are

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