

# neighborhood

## Time to *Reposition?*



**Eastcastle Place** Milwaukee, Wisconsin

We've learned one important lesson through all these years. There is one constant in the senior living industry — things are always changing. Communities designed as recently as 15 years ago now need to be repositioned. Deep culture changes are sweeping through the skilled-care world, leaving existing nursing homes hard to market to today's seniors and their adult children. The concept of assisted living has risen to the forefront and means different things to different sponsors. And...the list of changing perceptions, values, attitudes and expectations continues to grow.

As communities look to embrace change, they need to enlist an experienced and diverse design team that not only can address the building architecture; they need a team that also stays in tune with the surrounding community, the organizational needs as well as the marketing and branding initiatives.

The first step is to evaluate the current position of the existing facility. It is important to understand the modern

standards for a successful CCRC and measure the existing facility against these standards. Based on this evaluation, the organization may need to add or strengthen components of their community. While some cases may only require simple changes and renovations, other may require a complete tear down and new construction effort. The current standards for a state-of-the-art CCRC include:

- *Independent Living in modern, amenity-filled apartments or detached duplexes.*
- *Assisted Living Apartments featuring one- and two-bedroom layouts.*
- *Memory Support component designed to support a resident-centered care model.*
- *Skilled Nursing also designed to support a resident-centered care model.*
- *Common Areas that support the lifestyle of all residents but organized in a manner that allow it to be efficiently staffed.*

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### > New to the AG team

AG welcomes a new list of talent to both its architecture and engineering team.

Architecture:

Russell McLaughlin, AIA

Mark Linser, AIA, CDT

Melinda Poeppel

Erica Busse

Alissa Kuether

LaVonne Langlieb

Intern – Nicholas Mischo

Engineering:

Roger Schwartz

Michael Humes

Intern – Joshua Wilson

### > Congrats to our recent LEED AP

**employees** – Mike Mikecz, Scott Moseler, Umihana Sofic, Tracey Schnick and David Trinkner.

### > Visit [www.agarch.com](http://www.agarch.com) for regular

updates on project work, new employees and other AG highlights.

➤ **NEW COMMISSIONS**

**New Construction**

Kirkwood — a \$72 million CCRC for Presbyterian Manors of American in suburban St. Louis, MO

**Repositionings**

Illinois Saint Andrews Society along with Sawgrass Partners have commissioned AG Architecture for the master planning and repositioning of The Scottish Home in North Riverside, Illinois.

**Additions**

Riverside Healthcare Senior Services has commissioned AG Architecture to design a 40-bed addition to the Robert Miller Healthcare Center in Kankakee, Illinois.

➤ **PROJECTS IN PROGRESS**

**StoneRidge — Mystic, CT**

StoneRidge called upon AG to complete the design and construction of their senior living community. Currently under construction, Phase 2 includes an aquatic center, auditorium, independent living apartments and a common area expansion. Additional independent living apartments and a memory support component are part of the future plans.

# Repositioning *cont.* Eastcastle Place



A delicate balance must be maintained throughout the design process. The design team is challenged to maintain a sense of history, and honor the long-standing reputation of the community, while creating a new direction for the brand.

Part of the modern outlook of CCRC's is the prime importance of a residential feel. Some organizations require only cosmetic alterations, while others require organizational changes in order to eliminate the institutional environment that has evolved over the years.

An important and sometimes simple step is to re-address the entrance to the community. It not only helps to re-brand the community; it also creates a focal point and a sense of welcoming.

This repositioning process affects the senior living community as well as the community surrounding it. Strong leadership is needed to communicate the proposed design to its neighbors and facilitate healthy conversations regarding the plan for the future. While spirited dialogues can occur, the team must stay focused and work to keep all parties satisfied with the design solution.

As the design moves forward to the construction phases, the well being of the residents is of the utmost importance. Minimal disruption to their daily lives must be achieved. This requires a high level of communication and coordination. Throughout the design and construction phasing, the goal is to only move the residents once.

It is also important to support the caregivers to help them adapt with the changes. In many cases work areas are reduced and adjacencies are modified in a way that supports the repositioned level of care. As a result, it is important to educate and communicate with the caregivers so they are part of the process

every step of the way. By including them in the process, it helps everyone in the transition phases of the project. It gets them up and running as efficiently and effectively as possible once the new space is complete.

**Case Study — Eastcastle Place:  
Repositioning Challenges**

- Although the existing campus had a 100-year history of providing exceptional care to the elderly, the organization was experiencing marketing challenges due to major perception problems in the marketplace.
- The existing campus is located on a tight urban site made up of several aging facilities created by several architects in multiple architectural styles that were constructed in the 1890s, 1920s, 1950s and 1970s.
- The campus lacked the necessary facilities to meet current CCRC standards.
- Multiple entries and a lack of focus needed to be addressed.
- Though new assisted living had been recently constructed, it was difficult to market due to the aged nature of the balance of the campus.
- While new solutions needed to be created, Historic Preservation compliance issues had to be addressed.

**Eastcastle Place** Milwaukee, Wisconsin



# AG Method *makes a difference*

## Repositioning Solution:

- Engaged an experienced senior living consultant.
- Thoroughly evaluated the existing physical conditions and the ability to be adapted for new uses.
- Developed a master plan for repositioning that included thoughtful demolition, new construction, remodeling and adaptive re-use to create a modern CCRC.
- Construction phasing was carefully planned to minimize relocation and stress to existing residents.
- Worked closely with a construction manager to manage costs.
- Created a central point of entry to provide focus to the entire campus.
- Planned means and strategies for additional, future-focused development of the campus.

## Eastcastle Place



- Part of the 2006 addition that bridges the architectural gap between several structures within the community.
- The historic landmark structure.
- A 1990s project that paved the way for the current reposition effort.

## Getting the job done – AG re-vamps the design process

Though innovative design is a fundamental cornerstone of any development, discipline is needed to ensure that it will be constructed within strict cost parameters. AG has created a unique methodology to support detailed pricing estimates during conceptual and schematic design phases. Most projects require guaranteed maximum prices at the end of the design development stage. AG's well-refined package and the support of their in-house engineering staff assures that the formerly critical construction document phase is a simplified process of documenting difficult decisions made much earlier in the design process.

## The Traditional Bid Process

Traditionally a client would tell an architect what type of building they were looking for, and the architect would start a process that could take eight to ten months to get from a building design to bid documents. The client would fall in love with the design, but then the project would be put out to bid. Another month or so would pass while everyone waited for the results of the bid. Inevitably the price tag placed on the building would be too much for the client to afford, and it would go back to the drawing board. The question is, when budget plays such a key role in defining the design of the building, why does it take so long to put real numbers on the project?

When a slump in the economy affected one of AG's large clients and their construction work came to a halt in the late 1990s, AG stopped to ask themselves this same question. As they geared up to work with another large client, they had the extra time and manpower available to re-think how they approach the design process. Steve Alexander believed there had to be a better way.

AG Architecture is a full service architectural engineering firm that continues a 40-year commitment to the design of innovative senior living environments. Due to their architectural, structural, mechanical and electrical expertise in this niche market, they drew on their years of experience

to develop a new method for delivering drawings to their clients. They now give them a project cost extremely early in the process.

"Due to our years of expertise, we know intuitively what goes into these communities," comments Alexander. "We can put it onto paper quickly and shorten the process."

## The AG Method of Delivery

AG uses their over 35-year history of CCRC experience to put together a unique set of plans and specifications that allows a contractor to do complete take-offs and confirm the budget. Instead of 10-12 months, this package is pulled together in 4-6 weeks after conceptual design is completed and the client has a ballpark budget. Together, the client, development consultant, architect and contractor can make conscious design decisions. They have a solid platform to determine where to cut costs or add budget allowances early in the process.

"It allows us to confirm cost at a time in the process when it is easier to make changes to accommodate the market," describes Alexander. "If you have to make adjustments to meet the budget after construction documents are complete, everything becomes a compromise."

From \$20-70 million projects ranging from 200,000 to 400,000 square feet, AG has re-defined their project delivery method. Instead of sending a project out for bid, holding their breath and crossing their fingers that the cost will be reasonable, AG now knows that the final construction drawings are a formal documentation of important construction decisions made much earlier in the design process. No more back to the drawing board, they stay right on track.

"It allows you to make informed decisions as to what you can and cannot do," describes Alexander. "Decisions are made with everyone up front prior to final documents. It is the best, most economical way to put all the parts together."

While the traditional bid process still occurs, AG Architecture has chosen to capitalize on their years of experience and deliver an added benefit to their clients. They created an innovative service and improved the way they work.

## GETTING TO KNOW John Cronin, AIA

AG Architecture offers a staff of skilled professionals that bring knowledge and experience to every project. Each employee has an interesting background that gives him or her a special place on the AG team. We want you to get to know our team.



John Cronin has a Bachelor of Science in Architectural Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and a Masters of Architecture from the University of Texas-Arlington. Architecture has always been of interest to John. Drafting and industrial arts classes in high school made a path in architecture and engineering seem logical. After completing his Masters, he made a "pit stop" back in Wisconsin on his way to pursue a career on the East Coast.

He took a job with Shepherd, Legan, Aldrian, an earlier generation of AG Architecture, in order to pay a few bills...19 years later he remains a fixture in the organization. While he didn't quite make it to the East Coast, Wisconsin has proved to be a solid home base for his design successes nationwide. AG is proud to have him as a Senior Associate and an integral part of the design team. When he is not working in the office, you may find him biking, hiking, or working on his house. He is hoping to find some time to travel in the near future. He wants to explore Europe and experience the architectural history that he has studied for so long. If he had to pick one place to start, Florence, Italy would top the list. John is also the 2006 AG NASCAR Fantasy League Champion.

### How do you like to work?

"I like to work collaboratively with the client to create their vision. It is important to nurture and develop the client relationship in order for that to happen."

### What do you like about architecture?

"I like designing buildings. I like listening to the client and trying to put what I hear in the client's words into something they can be proud of. Whether they live or work there, I want the environment to be well-designed and well-thought out."

### What do co-workers say about John?

"It is good for someone of my experience level to learn from John and have him critique my work. He exudes confidence and has the knowledge to design a building of any style to meet the needs and wants of his clients. He is always able to pull concepts from the existing context in order to create a building facade that completes the fabric of the community."

*Eric Harrmann – AG Architecture*

### What do clients say about John?

"John is never satisfied with just an acceptable outcome, he 'pushes-the-envelope' to achieve a superior solution. I enjoy dialoguing with John; he maintains a level of stimulating reasoning supported with actual successes. He is an excellent listener as well as the first to admit when in error and the last to seek recognition!"

*Matt Furno – Eastcastle Place*

1414 UNDERWOOD AVENUE SUITE 301  
WAUWATOSA, WISCONSIN 53213-2653