



SCOTTSDALE

By

DESIGN

The Airpark is home to a surprisingly large connected network of architectural firms and support businesses. So what do they have planned for the area's commercial development?

By Jimmy Magahern

Allen+Philp Partners designed the Mountain Shadows resort in Paradise Valley.
(Photo courtesy Mountain Shadows)



3rd story Architecture did the recent refurbishments on the rooms and suites at the iconic Hotel Valley Ho.

(Photo courtesy Hotel Valley Ho)



Scottsdale include the repurposing of the old Quilted Bear restaurant at Scottsdale Road and Lincoln into the Fat Ox, the redesign of the Monument Club at Troon North and the major refurbishment of the historic Hotel Valley Ho.

"I had an office here years ago and it was still pretty industrial – you know, mostly warehouse space with a lot of trucks coming in and out," he says. "But now it's becoming the place where so many of the construction industry people ended up landing. It's not the most affordable place to set up shop, but it's become the place to be if you're in the construction field. Whether it's architecture, manufacturing, design, installation or real estate, this area's just got that great connectivity with everybody in the industry."

Daugherty also likes being located near so many support businesses making fixtures, furnishings and other materials that builders depend on.

"I mean, there's cabinet companies and plumbing companies and lighting companies around here, and it's just so convenient having them all in one place," he says. "Rather than go on the internet and kind

Rick Daugherty knows he's not the only architect in the Airpark.

"Oh, there's a lot of architects in this area," says the affable, leonine-haired owner of 3rd story Architecture, settling into the firm's conference room on the second floor of the small 15-year-old office building it occupies on 78th Street just south of Paradise Lane.

From the adjoining patio ledge, Daugherty can see the offices of Erik B. Peterson's

PHX Architecture, whose past projects include the expansion and remodeling of McDowell Mountain Golf Club, J.W. Marriott Desert Ridge and the design of Market Street Kitchen at DC Ranch. On the next street over to the west is Michael Fries' FM Group, Inc., whose completed area projects include TruFusion Scottsdale, Lush Burger and Blur nightclub.

"I was actually a little hesitant at first about setting up our offices here," says Daugherty, whose own past projects around

of flounder your way through company websites, you can actually walk over to their showrooms and often see things you wouldn't otherwise find on the Web."

Lastly, Daugherty likes being in a location where clients are happy to come to him.

"My very first office here was in Downtown Phoenix, on the second floor of a building overlooking Moe Allen's Body Shop," says the Ohio transplant, with a laugh. "And there were people who'd say, 'Wow, I just don't like all the congestion and traffic down there. Can you meet me up here at our offices?'"

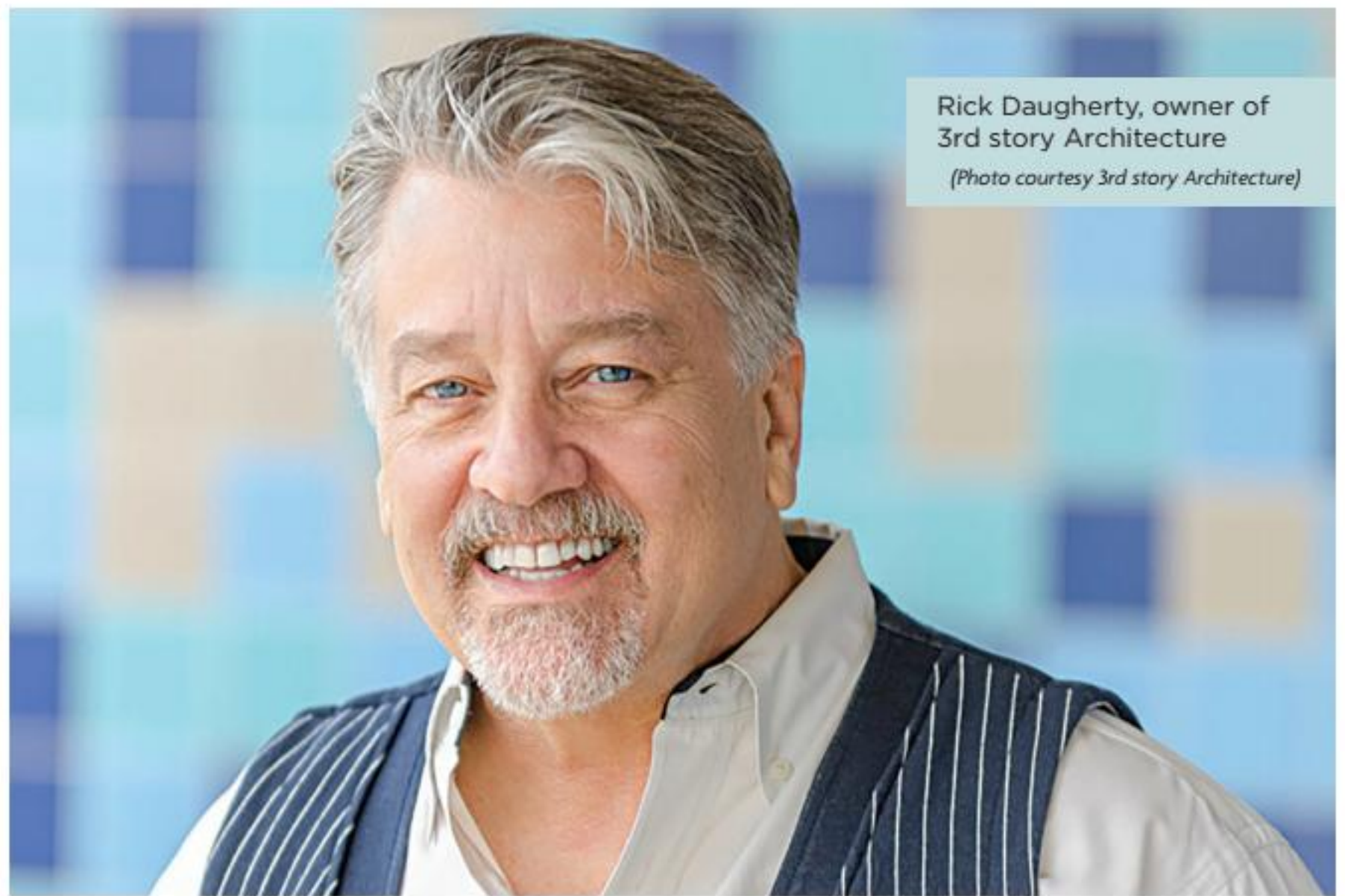
Since moving into the Airpark about three years ago, Daugherty says no one ever balks over meeting in his office. "We've got great freeway access here, plus being in North Scottsdale gives us a good boutique address for people who are image-conscious about their firm. We never have the issue of being geographically undesirable."

Daugherty ponders the Airpark's evolution as a hub for architecture and interior design, comparing it to the way urban downtowns have long been the defacto centers for legal, advertising and financial offices. "The character of the Airpark has changed significantly," he observes. "It used to be that if you weren't airplane-related, there was no reason you'd want to be here. Now there's just a lot of energy here – and a real good synergy between architects, manufacturers and consultants. It makes



Dino Ortis of Allen+Philp Partners

(Photo courtesy Dino Ortis)



Rick Daugherty, owner of 3rd story Architecture

(Photo courtesy 3rd story Architecture)

“ We never have the issue of being geographically undesirable. ”

– Rick Daugherty, owner of 3rd story Architecture

it easy to get things done quickly: 'Let's go run for lunch and we can talk about this project.'"

A tour helicopter passes overhead, an almost constantly recurring reminder that the thriving business hub does indeed still surround a busy airport. Daugherty just shrugs. "We love the activity of the Airpark. The airplane noise doesn't even bother me anymore!"

The Airpark Feel

Dino Ortis has seen a similar transformation around Old Town Scottsdale, where his architectural firm, Allen+Philp Partners, is located.

"It's definitely been an area in transition, too," says the partner in the firm, who works as director of operations. Unlike the Airpark, however, where changes have, for the most part, been embraced by the business community, Old Town has been caught in a branding tug-of-war between Millennial-driven revitalization and a steadfast adherence to its quaint Western heritage.

That can make things tricky for architects looking to build commercial properties befitting the character of the place.

"What's important to us, relative to

our design philosophy, is to have a really good understanding of the locale," Ortis says. "You know, what's the story behind the location? We strive to use the natural materials and colors that complement the local landmarks and those kinds of things. And, along with our client, we try to express the locale's story in the form of the building's design. A big part of what we do is work with the client to express the feel of the place through the design and material selections."

In designing for an evolving area like the Airpark, that can put an experienced architectural firm in the peculiar position of either designing its new properties to blend with its old, or creating buildings that flow with the newer styles reshaping the area.

In Allen+Philp's case, the firm is already responsible for having designed or refurbished some of the most iconic properties in Paradise Valley and North Scottsdale: Mountain Shadows, the Sanctuary Resort, the Boulders, Hyatt Scottsdale, the Scottsdale Princess. On tackling new Airpark projects (like its current office development on the southwest corner of Scottsdale Road and Princess), does it go with the "feel" of those upscale landmarks, or model its new properties after more contemporary

upstarts like the Optima Kierland condominiums and other live-work-play developments encircling the airport?

"One thing you'll notice is that each of our projects is unique," Ortis says. "We don't typically do the same thing over and over. We like doing projects around town that really stand out."

"That said, we still try to be respectful of what people expect in a locale," he adds. "And if it's an area that's been transitioning, we factor in how we can respectfully further that transition. Hopefully, that leads to something unique that still takes the location into consideration."

Now Trending

Residentially, the Airpark is still favored by Baby Boomers. While its employment centers have been luring Millennials, younger condo buyers, by and large, have shown more of an attraction for Old Town. Which demographic, then, should the Airpark's commercial architecture aim to appeal to?

Fortunately, says Daugherty, both age groups are embracing the same trends.

"The Baby Boomers want to live like Millennials, but they have money to live in North Scottsdale," he says, with a chuckle. "They're not into the mega-mansions anymore. They'd rather have a nice condo, with little maintenance. They want to lock and go."

Commercial development will likely follow the lead of these hybrid, high-dollar mill-oomers.

"They want to be able to walk to a restaurant or a take a short jaunt to museums and parks and art galleries," Daugherty says. "Those kinds of things are what's typically urban core, yet we're kind of right on that edge in the Airpark."

It's less edgy than Old Town's boisterous nightlife scene. "We're not in with all the clubs and the noise and everything else that projects." And it's not teeming with Baby Boomer bar crawlers – at least, not yet. "We want to live a more intimate lifestyle, where you don't have a thousand people running through your building every day."

Airpark businesses also want to be energy efficient, says the longtime green design proponent. But they don't want to worry about upgrading to the latest green technology every year. "The problem is, the day that you have achieved 'green,' the next day, you're not anymore. There's always a new technology coming out that maybe is a little bit better, a little less expensive. That makes investors worry that green construction doesn't last as long. So we just want to get a little bit greener with each project and provide every client stewardship on that."

The Airpark's population wants high tech, too, Daugherty says – but nothing too complicated. "We hear a lot of, 'Don't make me have to be a computer operator just so I can turn on the lights!' That kind of thing."

In the end, having a large connected network of architectural firms and support businesses right in the Airpark probably bodes well for its own commercial redevelopment.

"It's always kind of been that for us, we're more about people than buildings," Daugherty says. "What the people want their experience of living and working in a place to be. So it helps when the architect is one of those people." ■



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