



**black  
spectacles**

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# THE FUTURE OF ARCHITECTURE: A CASE STUDY WITH KIRKSEY



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**CHECK-IN #2**  
**ELIGIBILITY**  
**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**  
**DENTAL**  
**VISION**  
**COMMUNITY ROOM**

**CHECK-IN**  
**ADULT PRIMARY CARE**  
**OB/GYN**  
**PEDIATRICS**  
**LAB**  
**PHARMACY**

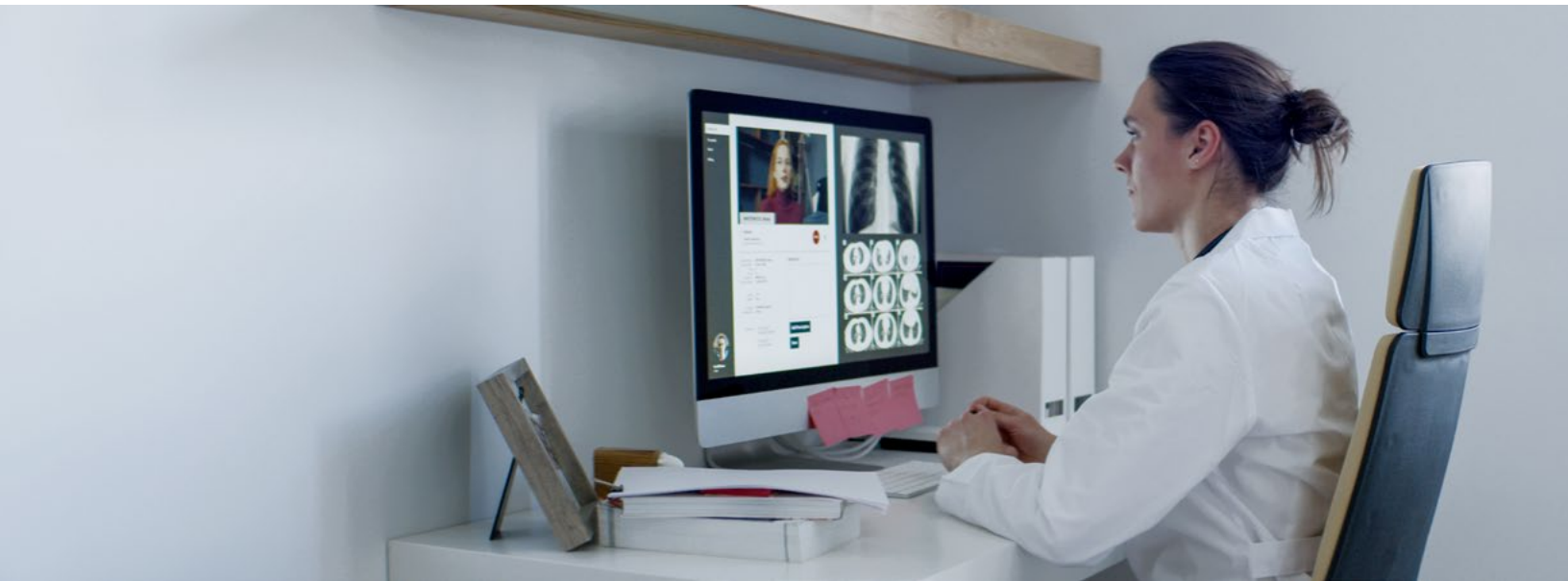
# The only constant in life is change.

Greek philosopher Heraclitus's argument is alive and well in modern day. As the world is ever-changing, what does that mean for the practice of architecture? Designing for the future and amending workplace culture are components to consider when firms are planning for tomorrow. Executive Vice President of Healthcare Projects at Kirksey Architecture, David McLemore, shared how designing in the healthcare industry is more vital than ever, and what he thinks the field of architecture will look like in five years.





## ADAPTING DESIGN



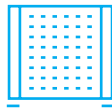
Shifting designs to be moldable for varying climates has moved to the forefront of project planning, according to McLemore. Working in healthcare, he notes that the industry is based on a service care model, where most healthcare is delivered face-to-face but there is an emerging demand for telemedicine. There are facets of healthcare that require in-person analysis, so with safety at the forefront of design, architects configure spaces and provide solutions to enable patients to receive the care they need. For patients where physical examinations and treatment are not a necessity, telemedicine has been vitally important to providing accessible healthcare. Creating and designing facilities to have the infrastructure for telemedicine rooms is now a consideration on most projects, McLemore says. Accounting for the amount of telemedicine rooms in a facility, whether that space can be a flex space when in-person visits increase again, considering the acoustics of telemedicine rooms to ensure the best experience for patients, are now items on the checklist in designing healthcare facilities.

## Adapting Design Facets



### Acoustics

Applying to telemedicine, accounting for how sound echoes through video when treating patients virtually.



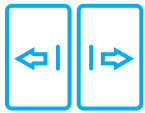
### Temporary Barriers

Designing screens that don't appear to be temporary, but can be removed when they're not needed. Permanent features like millwork and casework are designed to be both aesthetically pleasing and functional to fit screens and plexiglass.



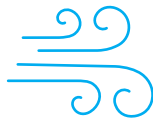
### Patient Workflow

Reimagining the patient path to have the least amount of interaction possible during critical check points, including logging height, weight, taking blood, entering the exam room and checking out.



### Autodoors

McLemore notes, "No one is questioning having autodoors anymore, they say, 'Oh yes, we have to have them.'" Kirksey is revising a clinic so every doorway is equipped with autodoors now. They also work in the hospitality space and have implemented technology from that industry, such as no-touch key card elevator access and automatic entry into public bathrooms into their healthcare facilities.



### Airflow

Bettering air circulation, filtration, in-line sterility, preventing microbial growth through ductwork are all critical enhancements but could be cost prohibitive in getting facilities built if this becomes code.



### Bathrooms

Improving the sterility of bathrooms is best practice, but might not become code, says McLemore. Facilities have shut off their hand dryers because they blow the water all around and actually could be less effective in preventing germ spread. Now they work towards a sink design where you have a hands free water, soap and dryer feature.



## ENHANCING MENTORSHIP

Shifting design priorities isn't the only thing changing in architecture. Mentorship is creeping to the forefront of firms' priorities moving forward, especially at Kirksey. In an attempt to get a grasp on what will work best within the staff at Kirksey, the firm has conducted three surveys across all offices, prompting employees to share what they need to be able to work from home, and then, what they need to feel comfortable coming back to the office. In eliciting these responses, they uncovered a common denominator in challenges employees face, and that was the absence of mentoring in our current environment.

Kirksey's surveys unveiled the difficulties in mentoring across all departments - for Marketing, Accounting,

for the entire company. This is particularly apparent in web calls, where interactions and agendas are planned, and less spontaneous. In person, ideas crop up, and the flow of conversation leads to learning opportunities and dialogue, but working from home, the staff loses those key moments. McLemore believes while mentoring is a priority for Kirksey, and the field at large, this sadly is a lost year for more mentorship. Looking to the future, there will be an emphasis on support and mentoring not only to compensate for this year, but also because the importance of mentoring in the development of emerging professionals is impossible to ignore.





## MODIFYING WORK ENVIRONMENTS

“We’ll have to find a way to facilitate working from home,” McLemore says. Beyond the current restrictions, this is something to consider for many firms thinking to the future. Given that, it flexes the innovative muscle for creating flows of information digitally between those electing to go to the office and those working from home. The constant struggle is remaining connected, collaborative and productive. Offices were moving towards a



co-working model, removing barriers for better sight lines and common areas for fluid workspaces. Now, offices have temporary screens up, moved everyone further apart, hallways are unidirectional. The difficulty in offices is helping staff work in smaller, more insular spaces while staying safe and connected. So the goal is to remain physically distant and mentally close - how is that achieved?

### Home Office Needs



#### Video + Audio Equipment

Microphones and headphones are necessary updates to those on video calls frequently.



#### Presentation Materials

McLemore says running a design meeting without the normal four monitors at his disposal has proved difficult, but he will make updates where necessary to accommodate.



#### Technology

Kirksey purchased digital drafting pads, and adapted their design process to implement sketching on that surface.



## In-Office Updates



### Temporary Screens

As mentioned, making room for barriers is key for safety right now, but designing the space to appear as though they are intentional both when present and when away is something designers and architects are tasked with in their own office as well as with projects.



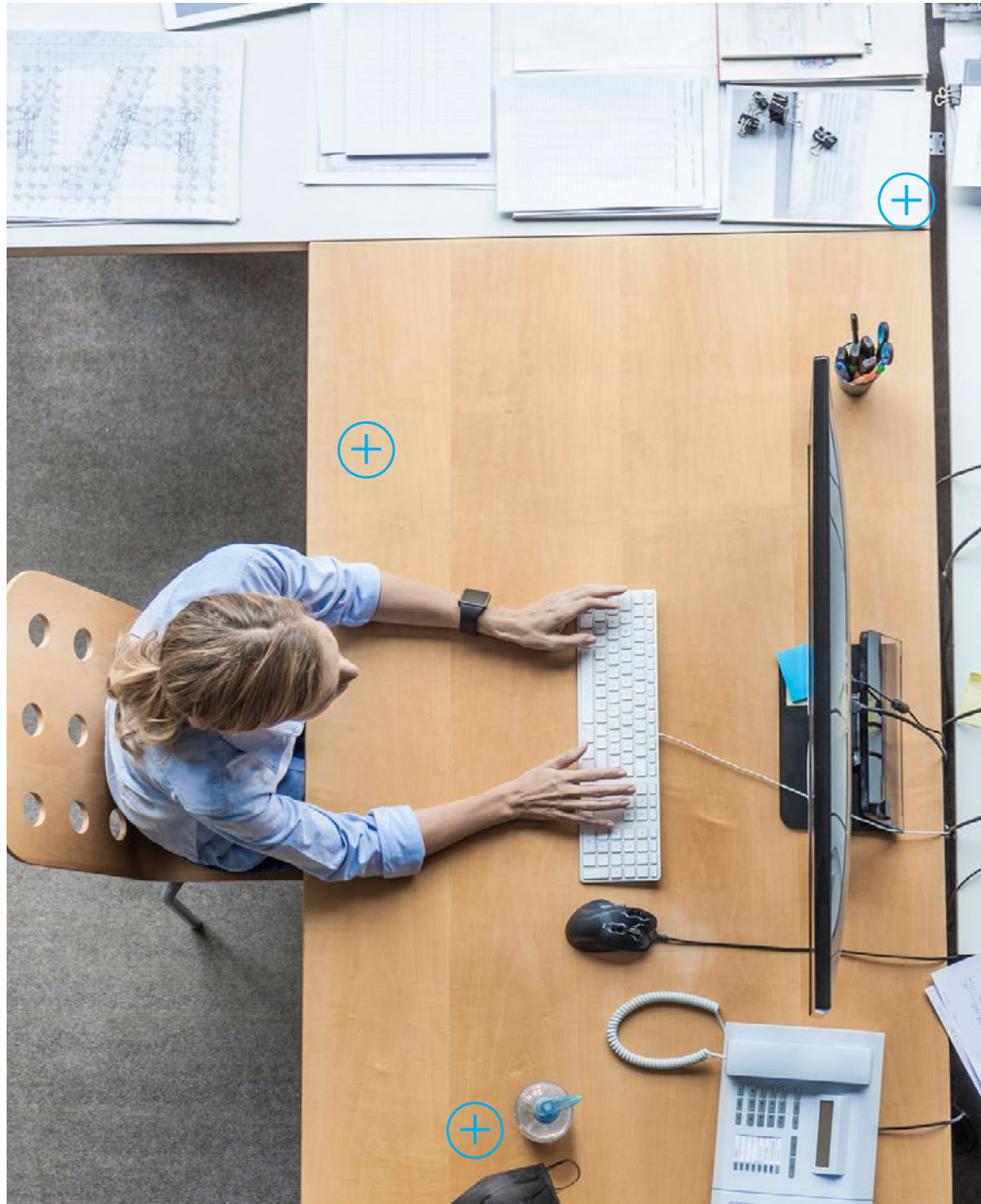
### Modular Furniture

Dedicated desks and workspaces are back in vogue instead of the communal atmosphere that was gaining popularity. Reconfiguring and purchasing smaller, individual stations in lieu of the larger tables for group congregating.



### Behaviorial Procedures

Adhering to new policies like unilateral directions in hallways, wearing masks while away from your personal bubble, keeping the volume of people in certain areas low.



Ironically, despite implementing more rules and structure in the office, the architecture industry shows that flexibility with evolving work environments and design processes is the future.



A group of people are gathered around a table, working together. One person is pointing at a tablet, while others are looking at papers and documents. The scene is a close-up of their hands and the materials on the table, suggesting a collaborative work environment.

# camaraderie + connectedness



## RACING TO THE SOLUTIONS

McLemore says there's a bit of a competitive nature to race to find solutions first, but also has witnessed the spirit of other firms working together towards the larger, shared goal of keeping the public and their staff safe. He says, "The, 'we're all in this together' mentality is prevailing. The quicker we can help each other get back to school, get back to work, we can get back to a degree of normalcy." There has been plenty of exchanges of information between firms, featuring individuals who own, operate and work in office environments, outlining how they can best adapt and protect their staff. In a time where division and separation is the norm, there has been a lot of camaraderie and connectedness in the industry.



“Healthy buildings,  
healthy people,  
healthy planet.”



## ABOUT KIRKSEY

Kirksey is a Houston and Austin-based architecture firm, passionate about great architecture and all things sustainable. In 1971, a young architectural intern named John Kirksey, just one year out of college, with a single project and an entrepreneurial spirit, set out to create the firm now known as Kirksey Architecture — a leader in the architectural field in Texas. What started out as John and a couple of friends working on an independent project in a makeshift studio set up in his attic, has grown into a multi-specialized practice more than 150 strong, headquartered on their own corporate campus in Houston, Texas with a second office in Austin.

David McLemore joined Kirksey in 1995 and serves as the firm’s Director of Healthcare Project, having managed the design of more than 5 million square feet of healthcare, research and academic healthcare space. David is involved in specific project coordination including feasibility studies, site planning, programming, planning, contract documents, and post-occupancy research. David also heads up the Kirksey Intern Development Program to support the education and licensure efforts of our aspiring young professionals.



**DAVID MCLEMORE**  
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spectacles**

