

ARCHITECTURE FIRM AO ELEVATES TWO SENIOR ASSOCIATES AND ONE ASSOCIATE

Promotions within the AO Multifamily studio recognize leadership, commitment, innovation, and dedication to client service.

ORANGE, CA, July 20, 2021 – [AO](#), a leading full-service architecture firm with design expertise spanning the full commercial real estate spectrum, today announced the promotions of three employees: senior associates Mike Connell and Kara Sutch, Architect, LEED AP BD+C, and associate Paolo Leon, AIA, NCARB, MBA. These promotions acknowledge the leadership and commitment to AO's success exhibited by each team member within the firm's Multifamily studio.

"We are proud to promote Mike, Kara, and Paolo in recognition of their demonstrated expertise, technical skill, and innovation that elevates our multifamily projects and advances our firm," said Steve Gaffney, managing partner at AO. "We appreciate their commitment to the success of our team and projects, and the quality client service they consistently deliver which is the foundation of AO's relationship-driven philosophy."

Promotions

- [Mike Connell](#) was named senior associate within AO's Multifamily studio. With over 30 years of industry experience, Mike specializes in project management for complex multifamily and mixed-use developments. His recent assignments include East Montecito Village, a 297-unit, four-story tuck-under community in Chula Vista, La Mirage at Route 66 in Rancho Cucamonga, a 168-unit mixed-use apartment complex located at the historic Route 66 gateway to the city, and The Core Natomas, a luxury multifamily community offering extensive resident amenities in Sacramento.
- [Kara Sutch](#), Architect, LEED AP BD+C, has 25 years of experience and joined AO in 2005. Promoted to senior associate, Kara's project management expertise includes multifamily, mixed-use, student housing, structured parking, and retail developments. Her recent assignments include Skyloft in Irvine, a luxury five-story multifamily community featuring an expansive rooftop deck, Cameo, a sophisticated 262-unit urban community in Orange, and Mark Riverside, an adaptive reuse project that converts a historic building façade into an urban, seven-story mixed-use apartment community in the heart of downtown Riverside.
- [Paolo Leon](#), AIA, NCARB, MBA was elevated to associate and brings more than a decade of experience across a broad range of project types including multifamily, mixed-use, retail, education, healthcare, and civic projects. He provides management support within the studio and across multiple projects, collaborating with internal and external teams to guide and execute assignments while managing both design and technical tasks with an emphasis on client satisfaction. He is currently secretary and board member for the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Orange County and sits on the board of directors for Think Together.

About AO



AO is a relationship-focused, design-driven architectural, interior and planning services firm helping clients create places where people and business flourish. In its 46th year, the firm boasts diverse expertise across multifamily, retail, hospitality, mixed-use, science and technology, data centers, restaurant, healthcare, office, industrial, parking, landscape, interiors, global design, modular, healthcare, and transit-oriented development. AO is known for its ardent collaboration with developers and owners, and deep expertise across various building types. AO operates from offices in the cities of Orange, San Diego and Sunnyvale, CA and Atlanta, GA, where it serves clients across the Americas, Asia and beyond. Visit aoarchitects.com to learn more.