

Abel at The Allen: Abel Design Group tapped for Houston luxury mixed-use tower

BY BRANDI SMITH



Left: RESIDENCES AT THE ALLEN Hospitality Living Dining. Right: RESIDENCES AT THE ALLEN Hospitality Master Bathroom.

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Jeffrey Abel



Taylor Alford

When it's complete, The Allen promises to be one of the most prestigious developments in Houston. Nestled between Downtown and River Oaks, the 35-story, mixed-use project will house 172 premier rooms in the Thompson Hotel, 19 floors of luxury condominiums in The Residences at the Allen, two restaurants, ballrooms and meeting spaces, a spa and fitness club, a one-acre elevated pool deck, and more.

“This is a world-class development that really captures everything that Houston has been yearning for,” says Taylor Alford, Director of Operations at Abel Design Group.

DC Partners, which is leading the \$500 million development, tasked the Houston-based firm with the challenge of designing the entire 900,000+ square feet of interior in the tower.

“The design logistics of a vertical mixed-use development are challenging, to say the least,” laughs Jeffrey Abel, the design group's Managing Principal.

“Solving those logistical issues involves answering questions such as how do you offer The Residences at The Allen private space? How do you deal with simple things such as trash? How do you organize deliveries for homeowners? Working with the developer and the base-building architect, we're able to anticipate a few of those issues and plan around them,” Abel explains.

Along with logistical maneuvering, designing 35 floors and their various features demanded incredible creativity and flexibility.

“Our truly phenomenal design team understands how to work through a hotel design that isn't replicated over and over again, mandating that efficiency is the name of the game,” says Abel. “Furthermore, we must think differently when laying out the condo designs that do not vertically stack with hotel room configurations below. Those same condos will be built out

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RESIDENCES AT THE ALLEN Hospitality Plunge Pool

Residences At The Allen

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prior to the completion of the overall building, thus we must anticipate the wants and needs of our future clients whom we have yet to meet.”

Beyond just the more residential spaces, Abel Design Group is responsible for The Allen’s bespoke design in the condo and hotel lobbies, grand stairs, ballrooms, meeting rooms, pool deck and more.

“We were afforded the opportunity to create spaces with different looks, feels, and experiences that you won’t find elsewhere in Houston,” Abel says.

Much like choosing a favorite child, it’s difficult for members of the team to pick the feature they most connect with, but the penthouse suite gets top marks from Abel.

“It has 30-foot-high, soaring ceilings and just a fantastic volume within which we get to work and play,” he says.

As for Alford, he says The Allen’s hotel lobby will be exquisite.

“This hotel will be unique in that we designed a check-in on level 7 of the building. The soaring 18-ft high windows capture an impressive view of the downtown Houston skyline,” he shares. “This sets up a truly remarkable opening sequence as you enter the hotel.”

That view, as well as perspectives from the tower’s other vantage points, is one of the elements that excites Abel most.

“The way the building is positioned on Allen Parkway afforded us as architects and designers the opportunity to capture views that are not possible anywhere else in the city,” he says. “The park and bayou are the front yard of the tower and the skyscrapers downtown are our ‘mountainscape’. It really does celebrate the whole of Houston.”

The on-site sales gallery for The Residences at The Allen is now open, allowing interested parties to take virtual tours and even view a potential home with customized features and finishes. Along with residential sales, The Allen is also leasing retail and office space.

“This entire development will become the center of the Houston hospitality district that is rapidly evolving along Allen Parkway,” says Abel.