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lives in
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How a theme park design company is reinventing retirement living

By Sissi Wang
Illustration by Luke McGarry

Paulette Johnson is turning 70 this year. She lives by herself in a modest garden home in a retirement community in Hamilton, Ont., where she organizes dance sessions and karaoke blowouts, and writes for the community's biweekly bulletin. Johnson moved to the neighbourhood, St. Elizabeth Village, six years ago, after her husband passed away. "The first six months, I was rather quiet," she says. "And then I started getting involved. Now I'm so involved I have too much on my plate." By that measure, St. Elizabeth is a successful retirement complex: On any given day, more than a dozen classes, social events and recreational activities are scheduled for the 900 residents of the 114-acre site.

But St. Elizabeth Village isn't content to stop there. In April, the developer behind the facility, NovaCore Communities Corp., announced an \$800-million renovation that will transform the site. The population will surge to more than 3,000, with the goal of turning what's a rather typical active living complex into a themed lifestyle community. That might sound like marketing jargon, but the plan really is to build the revamped community around a theme—a fictional storyline, more accurately. Perhaps it's fitting, then, that the company handling the master plan is better known for roller-coasters and waterslides than shuffleboard courts. Toronto-based Forrec Ltd. has designed theme parks around the world, including a massive water park in Beijing, and is now bringing its approach to St. Elizabeth. The company will remake the retirement community into a pastoral mill town, complete with a spinning water wheel and old-time windmill, and carry the aesthetic

Welcome to, Seniors World



throughout the development. Forrec says the theme will imbue St. Elizabeth with a sense of history, strengthen community ties and emphasize that the site is a real town—not merely a collection of homes for people living out their final years. Forrec completed a themed retirement complex once before, and it's now one of the most prominent in the U.S.

"We don't like to call it a 'retirement community,'" says Gordon Dorrett, Forrec's CEO. "As soon as you say that, you think it's a bunch of old people sitting on couches watching TV. And that's the exact opposite of what we're working on." Indeed, Forrec's previous project is listed under "resorts" on its website, alongside luxe vacation compounds in Mexico, Singapore and Thailand.

The first phase of the renovation at St. Elizabeth, which includes a town square, is slated to be completed by the end of 2017, but the entire expansion plan will take roughly a decade to finish. The ambitious plans reflect the huge market for quality seniors' housing anticipated to develop in the future. By 2051, retirees are expected to represent a quarter of Canada's entire population, and by 2030, roughly 80% of new housing demand will come from people entering retirement, according to the Conference Board of Canada. Forrec's bread and butter might be theme parks, but when a market is that big, it makes sense for Forrec to transfer its skills into a new domain. Retirement living comes in many forms, of course, running the gamut from condos that allow independent living to assisted-living facilities. Forrec is dabbling in the "adult lifestyle community" category, which offers a more suburban feel situated close to nature. There are nearly 300 such communities in Ontario alone.

Indeed, as demand grows and projects get off the ground, differentiation will be key for developers to attract residents. Living spaces for seniors have gone from bare-bones and institutionalized to upscale, stocked with amenities and designed to facilitate independence for as long as possible. Now

developers are thinking more creatively. Some are going niche, providing communities targeted at specific demographics. Forrec, with its expertise in planning attractions and storytelling, can give developers a novel feature with which to market their projects. "As far as I know, this is something unique in Canada," says Laurie Johnston, CEO of the Ontario Retirement Communities Association (ORCA).

For residents, what Forrec provides is a bit of fantasy. The story it has crafted for St. Elizabeth involves a mill owner founding the town many decades ago, lending some whimsy to what would otherwise be a group of homes and apartments on a patch of land just outside Hamilton. To even entertain the concept requires suspension of disbelief—much like a trip to Disney World. But if ever there were a time to indulge in escapism, it's in our twilight years.

Forrec, with its portfolio of theme parks and other attractions, might seem like an odd choice to plan a retirement community. But a look at its design philosophy should eliminate any confusion. The company has roots in landscape architecture, as a firm that started under the name Sasaki Strong & Associates in the 1960s. (It was changed to Forrec, meaning "for recreation," in 1998.) Forrec's turn to entertainment started in earnest with the idea to add a carousel to the West Edmonton Mall. "Nobody out there was doing attraction design at the time," says Dorrett. "So we hired architects and signage folks, and built our network of people who understand rides and attractions."

Forrec ended up designing the five-acre indoor water park at the mall in 1985 (the biggest of its kind at the time), which attracted attention and brought in new business. The company broke into the U.S. in a big way by handling the master plan for Universal

Studios in Orlando, followed by a Six Flags amusement park in Texas. Today, theme parks make up the bulk of the company's projects, and it's worked on everything from Legoland Deutschland to the Happy Magic Water Cube in Beijing. (Ironically, Forrec's global presence means it's virtually unknown in Canada. "An ex-mayor once described us as one of Toronto's best kept secrets," Dorrett sighs. "Our problem is literally 95% of what we do is outside North America.")

Forrec's work with Universal Studios led to an unusual client for the company—H. Gary Morse, who had developed a prosperous retirement community in Florida, later dubbed The Villages, complete with pools and golf courses. He had a vision to build a town centre (most of the residents came from small towns) that would also provide a change of pace from the monolithic shopping malls in the area. Morse learned about Forrec through a supplier who had worked with the company on Universal Studios Florida, and he was impressed with its ability to create imagined environments that feel authentic. "Gary Morse didn't want retirement living to be where people wait for the rest of their years to go by, but rather a place where you could celebrate every day," says Steve Rhys, executive vice-president of Forrec, who oversaw the project.

In some ways, Forrec started small in working on The Villages. The company drew inspiration from St. Augustine, a Florida town founded in the 1500s by Spanish settlers. Forrec borrowed the architectural feel of the place and created buildings in a Spanish colonial style for the town square. More challenging was figuring out what should happen in the square—an architectural style alone isn't enough to create a community. In that sense, designing for a retirement complex is not far removed from planning a theme park. "The only difference is that you're only at a theme park for a day, whereas you can be at The Villages 365 days a year," Rhys says.

Forrec planned the square to accommodate live entertainment, automotive shows and other kinds of performances. That required a keen eye for detail, such as installing garden walls that serve a decorative purpose during the day but can be used as seating for a nighttime performance. "We made sure the sound systems and everything needed to support any kind of entertainment—jugglers or square dancing or a book reading event—are there," Rhys says. Morse, meanwhile, courted restaurants and shops, opened a movie theatre and installed doctors' offices to ensure that behind the Spanish colonial facade, The Villages functioned

just like a traditional town.

The square, dubbed Spanish Springs, was a novelty when it opened in 1995 and helped attract hordes of new residents. "When we started marketing that to our pipeline of clients, interest just went crazy," says Villages vice-president Tracy Mathews, who is also Morse's daughter. "We were really lucky to find Forrec. Their creativity really helped us put our vision into bricks and mortar." Homes closed at the rate of 5,000 per year. The Villages decided to expand and recruited Forrec to design a second—and then a third—town centre.

Forrec crafted more elaborate backstories for these projects. Lake Sumter Landing taps into the nostalgia for small town America and is designed to resemble a seaside village. For Brownwood Paddock Square, which opened in 2012, Forrec drew on Florida's history as a home for cattle ranches. Sculptures of longhorned cattle dot one sidewalk, not far from a silo painted with the face of a steer. There's a movie theatre in a barn and a stage for live performances fashioned out of a log cabin.

Forrec's work has played no small role in helping The Villages grow. Today it spans 82 square kilometres, with 55,000 homes and more than 120,000 residents. (The preferred method of transportation seems to be golf cart.) In 2014, *Forbes* named it the fastest-growing small city in America. Despite Forrec's success with The Villages, the company hasn't actively pursued other retirement community projects. But Forrec knew there is a market for this type of work—especially after St. Elizabeth's owner, NovaCore Communities, got in touch. Tony DiFruscio, the company's president, wanted to renovate St. Elizabeth with a town square and felt Forrec's approach aligned with his vision. DiFruscio visited The Villages and came away impressed. The success of St. Elizabeth could now determine whether Forrec has a whole new line of business on its hands.

Every project at the company starts with a narrative. Sometimes Forrec draws inspiration from the client's brand, or the history or culture of where the development is situated. That story informs every design decision, helping to establish the look and feel of the place and to ensure a consistent visitor experience. "A story about a place is critical in the work we do," says Dorrett. "A lot of times, the client and the visitor will never see the story, but that doesn't matter. It allows us to constantly think about why



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we're doing these pieces." At its Toronto head office, Forrec runs a creative studio where nearly 20 illustrators, 3D renderers and other artists not only help visualize new developments but weave the backstories as well. (The company's lead creative director, James Anderson, has an architecture background, but he's billed as the "chief storyteller expert.") For St. Elizabeth, the team turned to local history and the fact that the Hamilton region was home to a number of mills. The story it concocted involves a settler constructing a mill near the water, falling in love with a local woman and, together, building the mill into a viable business. As it grew, the settler doled out plots of land to his workers to build cottages, thereby marking the beginning of the town. The renderings for St. Elizabeth show a mill (naturally), a water tower and wells, and wagon wheels casually strewn about the town centre. "You don't have to read the story, but when you get there, you'll feel like there's a reason this place exists," Rhys insists.

In many ways, it feels like a promotional hook. "I think the theme is just a fun add-on," says Johnston at ORCA. But it's also a real differentiator. Those in the retirement living industry are quick to tout upscale amenities they offer—swimming pools, gourmet food, personal trainers and so on—to counter the stereotype of seniors' homes as sterile, lifeless and depressing. The reality, though, is that such amenities are becoming the norm. That's partly why other complexes are exploring unique concepts.

Aegis Living operates three communities in California that cater to Chinese seniors. The facilities follow feng shui design principles, staff members are bilingual and activities such as tai chi, calligraphy and mah-jong are offered. The Escapees Care Center in Texas lets RV enthusiasts live in their vehicles, while providing access to dining facilities and medical care.

ShantiNiketan, meanwhile, caters to Indian immigrants and has been a hit since it opened

in Florida a few years ago. The founder, an immigrant himself, created the retirement community to resemble an Indian village. There's yoga, Bollywood movies and Indian cuisine on-site. ShantiNiketan is undergoing a \$115-million expansion, including 1,000 more living spaces, and is also planning a new branch in California. For residents, the big draw is the opportunity to be around other Indian immigrants, according to a story by NPR last year. That report drew a somewhat unpleasant conclusion about aging: We gravitate toward people like us, and think more negatively about other cultures.

That tendency to withdraw in old age is something Forrec's designs fight against. "What they're actually creating is a social model," says Johnston. "I believe [that's] what people will be attracted to." Such communities in the U.S. tend to be gated, whereas St. Elizabeth, with its town square and retailers, could actually entice outsiders to visit. In that way, it's much more integrated with surrounding towns, encouraging socialization and hopefully preventing residents from feeling cut off. That's part of the reason The Villages has been successful—the community actually attracts curious tourists.

For Rhys at Forrec, the St. Elizabeth project is more than just work. As he approaches retirement himself, he hopes the overhaul can serve as a model for other seniors' communities. And if it's successful, Forrec could lead the way. "The boomer population doesn't think they are getting older," he says. "They are looking for places that have a buzz of activities, and it's amazing for them to see that can be made into reality."

As a resident of St. Elizabeth, Johnston is looking forward to the changes. What she's particularly excited about is the prospect of new coffee shops and restaurants opening up—the only eatery currently on-site closes at 4 p.m. For all the elaborate storylines and faux authenticity crafted by Forrec, sometimes it's the simplest things that matter most. ■

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How one Canadian theme-park company is redesigning retirement living

看加拿大主题乐园设计公司如何重新诠释养老生活

Paulette Johnson is turning 70 this year. She lives by herself in a modest garden home in a retirement community in Hamilton, Ont., where she organizes dance sessions and karaoke blowouts, and writes for the community's biweekly bulletin. Johnson moved to the neighbourhood, St. Elizabeth Village, six years ago, after her husband passed away. "The first six months, I was rather quiet," she says. "And then I started getting involved. Now I'm so involved I have too much on my plate." By that measure, St. Elizabeth is a successful retirement complex: On any given day, more than a dozen classes, social events and recreational activities are scheduled for the 900 residents of the 114-acre site.

Paulette Johnson 今年 70 岁了。她独自生活在一个带花园的房子里，就在安大略省汉密尔顿的一个养老社区，在那里她组织舞蹈和唱歌活动，并为社区更新两周一次的公告。六年前，Johnson 在她的丈夫去世之后搬到了圣伊丽莎白村的这个社区。“前六个月，我很安静，”她说，“然后我开始参加活动。现在我太投入了，有太多事儿要做了！”如此看来，圣伊丽莎白确实是一个成功的养老综合社区：每天都有许多课程，或社交，娱乐活动齐齐上演，丰富着这 114 英亩社区中的 900 位居民的养老生活。

But St. Elizabeth Village isn't content to stop there. In April, the developer behind the facility, NovaCore Communities Corp., announced an \$800-million renovation that will transform the site. The population will surge to more than 3,000, with the goal of turning what's a rather typical active living complex into a themed lifestyle community. That might sound like marketing jargon, but the plan really is to build the revamped community around a theme—a fictional storyline, more accurately.

但是，圣伊丽莎白并不满足于此。今年四月，项目开发商诺瓦克社区公司宣布了一项 8 亿美元的改造计划——将对这个社区进行改造。该计划目标是居民数量增至 3000 以上，并且把一个典型的活跃生活综合体变成一个主题式的生活社区。虽然这听上去有点像是营销术语，但是这个计划切切实实将围绕一条虚构的故事线打造一个真实的主题社区。

Perhaps it's fitting, then, that the company handling the master plan is better known for roller-coasters and waterslides than shuffleboard courts. Toronto-based Forrec Ltd. has designed theme parks around the world, including a massive water park in Beijing, and is now bringing its approach to St. Elizabeth. The company will remake the retirement community into a pastoral mill town, complete with a spinning water wheel and old-time windmill, and carry the aesthetic throughout the development. Forrec says the theme will imbue St. Elizabeth with a sense of history, strengthen community ties and emphasize that the site is a real town—not merely a collection of homes for people living out their final years. Forrec completed a themed retirement complex once before,

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也许听起来有点奇怪，比起沙弧球场，承接总体规划的这家公司，其在游乐场和水上乐园项目设计上更是名声斐然。总部位于多伦多的 FORREC 公司设计了世界多个主题公园，其中包括北京的一个大型水上乐园，而现在，FORREC 把其设计方法运用到圣伊丽莎白这个项目上。FORREC 计划将圣伊丽莎白从一个养老社区改造成一个磨坊田园小镇，伴有旋转的水轮和旧时的风车，并将美学概念贯穿于整个设计之中。FORREC 如是说，这个主题将赋予圣伊丽莎白历史感，加强社区内部的联系，并突出整个社区是一个真正的小镇——不再只是老人们度过晚年的住所。FORREC 曾完成过一个主题式养老综合社区的设计，而那个社区现在是美国最著名的一个养老综合社区。

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“我们不想称它为‘退休社区’，”Gordon Dorrett（戈登·多雷特），FORREC 公司首席执行官，说，“如果你说，这就该是一群老年人坐在沙发上看电视的地方。对不起，这绝不是我们想做的。”事实上，FORREC 网站上有一整个“度假村”板块，上面罗列了 FORREC 做过的项目。其中包括墨西哥，新加坡和泰国的豪华度假休闲综合体。

The first phase of the renovation at St. Elizabeth, which includes a town square, is slated to be completed by the end of 2017, but the entire expansion plan will take roughly a decade to finish. The ambitious plans reflect the huge market for quality seniors' housing anticipated to develop in the future. By 2051, retirees are expected to represent a quarter of Canada's entire population, and by 2030, roughly 80% of new housing demand will come from people entering retirement, according to the Conference Board of Canada. Forrec's bread and butter might be theme parks, but when a market is that big, it makes sense for Forrec to transfer its skills into a new domain. Retirement living comes in many forms, of course, running the gamut from condos that allow independent living to assisted-living facilities. Forrec is dabbling in the "adult lifestyle community" category, which offers a more suburban feel situated close to nature. There are nearly 300 such communities in Ontario alone.

圣伊丽莎白改造的一期包括一个城镇广场，预计将于 2017 年底完工，但整个扩建计划的完成大约需要十年。雄心勃勃的计划反映出了巨大的市场——优质的老年公寓预计未来将得到长足的发展。根据加拿大会议局的数据，到 2051 年底，退休人员预计将占到加拿大总人口的四分之一，到 2030 年，大约有 80% 的新增住房需求来自退休人员。FORREC 的主要业务也许是主题公园，但当市场日渐壮大，对于 FORREC 来说，运用自身所长拓展新的领域也不失为一个好的战略。养老居住可以有多种形式，当然，完整的公寓系统能够为独自生活的人们提供便利的生活辅助设施。FORREC 也涉足“时尚生活社区”领域，这个领域的设计目标是为人们提供更加真实的，更接近自然的郊区生活的感觉。仅在安大略省，就有近 300 个这样的社区。

Indeed, as demand grows and projects get off the ground, differentiation will be key for developers to attract residents. Living spaces for seniors have gone from bare-bones and institutionalized to upscale, stocked with amenities and designed to facilitate independence for as long as possible. Now developers are thinking more creatively. Some are going niche, providing communities

targeted at specific demographics. Forrec, with its expertise in planning attractions and storytelling, can give developers a novel feature with which to market their projects. “As far as I know, this is something unique in Canada,” says Laurie Johnston, CEO of the Ontario Retirement Communities Association (ORCA).

事实上，随着需求的增长和项目的建成，差异化将是开发商吸引消费者的关键。老年人的生活空间已经从单纯的养老院向高级化进阶，周到的设施尽可能地为独居提供便利。当下，开发商们更倾向于创造性的思维。有些则是瞄准小众市场，为目标人群量身定做社区。FORREC 公司以其在景点规划和故事线叙述上的经验为开发商挖掘出项目全新的特点，并用于项目宣传之中。“据我所知，这是加拿大特有的东西。” Laurie Johnston，安大略省养老社区协会（ORCA）首席执行官说。

For residents, what Forrec provides is a bit of fantasy. The story it has crafted for St. Elizabeth involves a mill owner founding the town many decades ago, lending some whimsy to what would otherwise be a group of homes and apartments on a patch of land just outside Hamilton. To even entertain the concept requires suspension of disbelief—much like a trip to Disney World. But if ever there were a time to indulge in escapism, it's in our twilight years.

对于居民来说，FORREC 是梦想的缔造者。圣伊丽莎白的专属故事娓娓道来：多年以前，一个磨坊主建立了这座小镇，这个故事赋予了原本只是汉密尔顿郊外的一组住宅和公寓些许奇思妙想。为了使概念更富娱乐性，需要更多的惊喜——这就好比一场迪士尼世界之旅。不过，人的一生中试问有什么时候能远离世俗，那就只有我们的暮年了。

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FORREC 以其丰富的主题公园和景点经验去设计一个养老社区，初看有些奇怪。但是如果仔细端详其设计理念，这种疑虑就可以打消了。上世纪 60 年代，FORREC 以景观建筑设计起家，当时名为 Sasaki Strong & Associates（后于 1998 年改名为 FORREC，意为“为了娱乐”）。FORREC 转向娱乐方面的设计源于在西埃德蒙顿商场加入旋转木马的创意。“当时没有人做景点设计，” Dorrett 说，“所以我们聘请了一些建筑和标志的设计师，并建立起属于我们自己的网络——一群熟悉，了解游乐设施和景点的人。”

Forrec ended up designing the five-acre indoor water park at the mall in 1985 (the biggest of its kind at the time), which attracted attention and brought in new business. The company broke into the U.S. in a big way by handling the master plan for Universal Studios in Orlando, followed by a Six Flags amusement park in Texas. Today, theme parks make up the bulk of the company's projects, and it's worked on everything from Legoland Deutschland to the Happy Magic Water Cube in Beijing. (Ironically, Forrec's global presence means it's virtually unknown in Canada. “An ex-mayor once described us as one of Toronto's best kept secrets,” Dorrett sighs. “Our problem is literally 95% of what we do is outside North America.”)

FORREC 在 1985 年完成了商场里五英亩室内水公园的设计(当时是规模最大的室内水公园),这引起人们的关注,并为 FORREC 带来了新的商机。公司作为奥兰多环球影城总体规划以及后来德克萨斯六旗乐园的设计公司,成功打入了美国市场。现在,主题公园构成了公司的主要业务来源,而它的工作也包括德国乐高乐园和北京水立方嬉水乐园。(颇有趣味的是,拥有全球业务的 FORREC 在加拿大却知之者甚少。“多伦多的前市长曾经形容我们是多伦多保护得最好的秘密,” Dorrett 感叹道,“我们 95% 的业务都是在北美洲以外开展的。”)

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FORREC 与环球影城的合作为公司带来了一位非比寻常的客户——H. Gary Morse, 他曾在佛罗里达州成功打造了一个繁荣的养老社区,后名为“The Villages”,配有游泳池和高尔夫球场。他有一个愿景,想要建设一个城镇中心(大部分的居民来自于小城镇),从大型商区开始,将改变提上日程。Morse 通过一家曾在奥兰多环球影城项目上与 FORREC 有过合作的供应商那里了解到 FORREC,并对 FORREC 能将想象环境打造的如此逼真印象深刻。“Gary Morse 不希望养老社区仅仅是人们度过人生暮年的地方,而是一个人们可以感恩生活的每一天的地方,” Steve Rhys, FORREC 的执行副总裁,该项目的负责人如是说。

In some ways, Forrec started small in working on The Villages. The company drew inspiration from St. Augustine, a Florida town founded in the 1500s by Spanish settlers. Forrec borrowed the architectural feel of the place and created buildings in a Spanish colonial style for the town square. More challenging was figuring out what should happen in the square—an architectural style alone isn't enough to create a community. In that sense, designing for a retirement complex is not far removed from planning a theme park. “The only difference is that you're only at a theme park for a day, whereas you can be at The Villages 365 days a year,” Rhys says.

在很多方面, FORREC 都从小处着手,开始对“The Villages”进行改造。FORREC 公司从圣奥古斯丁——16 世纪西班牙移民在佛罗里达州建立的小镇——获得了灵感。FORREC 借鉴了那个地方的建筑感,为城镇广场设计了西班牙殖民时期风格的建筑。更具挑战性的是:要发现广场的日常属性,因为建筑风格本身并不足以支撑起整个社区。从这个意义上来说,设计一个养老综合社区和规划一个主题公园相差无多。“唯一的区别就是,你只能在主题公园待上一天,而你可以在“The Villages”里住上一整年 365 天。” Rhys 说。

Forrec planned the square to accommodate live entertainment, automotive shows and other kinds of performances. That required a keen eye for detail, such as installing garden walls that serve a decorative purpose during the day but can be used as seating for a nighttime performance. “We made sure the sound systems and everything needed to support any kind of entertainment—jugglers or square dancing or a book reading event—are there,” Rhys says. Morse, meanwhile, courted

restaurants and shops, opened a movie theatre and installed doctors' offices to ensure that behind the Spanish colonial facade, The Villages functioned just like a traditional town.

FORREC 构想广场能够容纳生活娱乐、汽车演出等多种表演。这需要一双善于观察细节的敏锐眼睛，例如花园墙的设置，白天是为装饰，到了晚上则是表演的座位区。“我们确认了音响系统以及任何广场娱乐活动——杂耍，广场舞，读书活动——所需的一切配套设施。” Rhys 说。同时 Morse 决定开设餐厅和商店，以及一家电影院和诊所，以确保在西班牙殖民时期风格的建筑外立面之下，“The Villages”就功能上是一个传统意义上的小镇。

The square, dubbed Spanish Springs, was a novelty when it opened in and helped attract hordes of new residents. “When we started marketing that to our pipeline of clients, interest just went crazy,” says Villages vice-president Tracy Mathews, who is also Morse's daughter. “We were really lucky to find Forrec. Their creativity really helped us put our vision into bricks and mortar.” Homes closed at the rate of 5,000 per year. The Villages decided to expand and recruited Forrec to design a second—and then a third—town centre.

名为“西班牙温泉”的广场在 1995 年完全是个新鲜玩意，为社区吸引了不少的新居民。“当我们通过客户渠道开始宣传，大家都为此疯狂。” “The Villages”的副总裁 Tracy Mathews(Morse 的女儿)说，“我们找到 FORREC 真的很幸运。他们的创造力将我们的愿景变成了现实。“养老院以每年 5000 家的速度减少。”“The Villages”决定扩建并聘用 FORREC 为其设计第二个以及之后的第三个城镇中心。

Forrec crafted more elaborate backstories for these projects. Lake Sumter Landing taps into the nostalgia for small town America and is designed to resemble a seaside village. For Brownwood Paddock Square, which opened in 2012, Forrec drew on Florida's history as a home for cattle ranches. Sculptures of longhorn cattle dot one sidewalk, not far from a silo painted with the face of a steer. There's a movie theatre in a barn and a stage for live performances fashioned out of a log cabin.

FORREC 为这些项目量身定做了详细的背景故事。圣母湖勾起了人们对美国小镇的怀旧情怀，而社区也被设计为类似的湖滨小镇。FORREC 将佛罗里达州养牛场的历史用于设计 2012 年开放的 Brownwood 围场广场。长角牛雕塑点缀在人行道两旁，不远处的筒仓上绘有牛头牛面。谷仓里有一个电影院，以及一个圆木制成的现场表演的舞台。

Forrec's work has played no small role in helping The Villages grow. Today it spans 82 square kilometres, with 55,000 homes and more than 120,000 residents. (The preferred method of transportation seems to be golf cart.) In 2014, Forbes named it the fastest-growing small city in America. Despite Forrec's success with The Villages, the company hasn't actively pursued other retirement community projects. But Forrec knew there is a market for this type of work—especially after St. Elizabeth's owner, NovaCore Communities, got in touch. Tony DiFruscio, the company's president, wanted to renovate St. Elizabeth with a town square and felt Forrec's approach aligned with his vision. DiFruscio visited The Villages and came away impressed. The success of St. Elizabeth could now determine whether Forrec has a whole new line of business on its hands.

FORREC 的工作对 “The Villages” 的发展壮大起了不小的促进作用。现如今，“The Villages” 横跨 82 平方公里，拥有 55000 个家庭和 120000 多个居民。（首选的交通方式似乎是高尔夫球车。）2014 年福布斯称它为美国发展最快的小城市。尽管有与 “The Villages” 的成功合作，FORREC 并没有积极寻求其他的养老社区项目。但是 FORREC 知道这个类型的市场非常庞大，

尤其在圣伊丽莎白的业主——诺瓦克社区交流之后。Tony DiFruscio，该公司的总裁，想为圣伊丽莎白增加一个城镇广场，而且他认为 FORREC 的方法与他的愿景一致。DiFruscio 参观了 “The Villages”，“The Villages” 中的一切无不给他留下了深刻的印象。圣伊丽莎白的成功决定了 FORREC 能否掌握一条全新的业务线。

Every project at the company starts with a narrative. Sometimes Forrec draws inspiration from the client's brand, or the history or culture of where the development is situated. That story informs every design decision, helping to establish the look and feel of the place and to ensure a consistent visitor experience. “A story about a place is critical in the work we do,” says Dorrett. “A lot of times, the client and the visitor will never see the story, but that doesn't matter. It allows us to constantly think about why we're doing these pieces.” At its Toronto head office, Forrec runs a creative studio where nearly 20 illustrators, 3D renderers and other artists not only help visualize new developments but weave the backstories as well. (The company's lead creative director, James Anderson, has an architecture background, but he's billed as the “chief storyteller expert.”)

FORREC 公司的每一个项目都是从一个故事开始的。有时 FORREC 的灵感来自客户的品牌，项目当地的历史或文化。故事与每一个设计决策息息相关，更有助于确定建筑外观和地方特色，以保证一致的游客体验。“一个与项目有关的故事是我们工作的关键，” Dorrett 说，“很多时候，客户和游客不会直接看到故事，但没关系，它让我们不断思考我们为什么要做设计这些项目。”在大多伦多的总部，FORREC 经营着一家创意工作室，近 20 位插图画家，3D 渲染图设计师和其他艺术家，他们不仅将公司的项目可视化，并且构筑起了项目的故事背景。（该公司的首席创意总监，James Anderson，拥有建筑背景，同时他也被誉为“首席故事专家”。）

For St. Elizabeth, the team turned to local history and the fact that the Hamilton region was home to a number of mills. The story it concocted involves a settler constructing a mill near the water, falling in love with a local woman and, together, building the mill into a viable business. As it grew, the settler doled out plots of land to his workers to build cottages, thereby marking the beginning of the town. The renderings for St. Elizabeth show a mill (naturally), a water tower and wells, and wagon wheels casually strewn about the town centre. “You don't have to read the story, but when you get there, you'll feel like there's a reason this place exists,” Rhys insists.

对于圣伊丽莎白这个项目而言，FORREC 的设计专注于当地的历史和文化——汉密尔顿地区是磨坊之家。故事是这样的：一个移民正在水边建造一个磨坊，他爱上了当地的一个女人，他们一起建造磨坊，使之成为可以养家糊口的生计。随着磨坊逐渐壮大，那位移民将地块分发给他的工人去建造房屋，从而形成了小镇的雏形。圣伊丽莎白的效果图展示了一个磨坊（天然的）、水塔和井，以及恣意散落在城镇中心的货车车轮。“即便你并没有读过这个故事，当你到了那里，你会觉得，这个地方存在是有原因的。” Rhys 说。

In many ways, it feels like a promotional hook. “I think the theme is just a fun add-on,” says Johnston at ORCA. But it's also a real differentiator. Those in the retirement living industry are quick to tout upscale amenities they offer—swimming pools, gourmet food, personal trainers and so on—to counter the stereotype of seniors' homes as sterile, lifeless and depressing. The reality, though, is that such amenities are becoming the norm. That's partly why other complexes are exploring unique concepts.

更多时候，它就像一个宣传手段。“我认为主题是一个很有趣的附加功能，” ORCA 的 Johnston 说。但同时它也是一个优势。那些在养老社区产业快销的高档设施，如泳池、美食、私人教

练等一改传统养老社区无聊，毫无生气和令人沮丧的刻板印象。事实上，这样的设施正在逐渐成为一种趋势。这也就是为什么其他养老综合体在不断探索其独特的理念。

Aegis Living operates three communities in California that cater to Chinese seniors. The facilities follow feng shui design principles, staff members are bilingual and activities such as tai chi, calligraphy and mah-jong are offered. The Escapees Care Center in Texas lets RV enthusiasts live in their vehicles, while providing access to dining facilities and medical care.

“Aegis Living”在加利福尼亚有三个主要迎合中国老年人的社区。设施都按照风水原理设计，工作人员都掌握双语，还提供如太极、书法和麻将等活动。德克萨斯的“Escapees Care Center”让房车爱好者生活在房车中，同时提供餐饮设施和医疗保健。

ShantiNiketan, meanwhile, caters to Indian immigrants and has been a hit since it opened in Florida a few years ago. The founder, an immigrant himself, created the retirement community to resemble an Indian village. There's yoga, Bollywood movies and Indian cuisine on-site. ShantiNiketan is undergoing a \$115-million expansion, including 1,000 more living spaces, and is also planning a new branch in California. For residents, the big draw is the opportunity to be around other Indian immigrants, according to a story by NPR last year. That report drew a somewhat unpleasant conclusion about aging: We gravitate toward people like us, and think more negatively about other cultures.

ShantiNiketan 迎合了印度移民。几年前，它在佛罗里达州一经开设便成为了一个大热门。创办者自己就是一个移民，他创造了一个类似印度村庄的养老社区。社区里有瑜伽、宝莱坞电影和印度餐厅。ShantiNiketan 扩建高达 1 亿 1500 万美元，其中包括增加 1000 个以上的生活空间，还计划在加利福尼亚开设一个新社区。据美国国家广播电台报道，这个社区的巨大吸引力在于能有同其他印度移民一起生活的机会。该报告得出了一个关于“老去”不太愉快的结论：我们变得更容易倾向于和我们一样的人，而对其他不一样的文化抱负面态度。

That tendency to withdraw in old age is something Forrec's designs fight against. “What they're actually creating is a social model,” says Johnston. “I believe [that's] what people will be attracted to.” Such communities in the U.S. tend to be gated, whereas St. Elizabeth, with its town square and retailers, could actually entice outsiders to visit. In that way, it's much more integrated with surrounding towns, encouraging socialization and hopefully preventing residents from feeling cut off. That's part of the reason The Villages has been successful—the community actually attracts curious tourists.

步入老年后的一种社会性内向正是 FORREC 的设计想要改变的。“实际上，他们正在创造一种社会模式，” Johnston 说，“我相信这就是吸引人们的东西。”美国这样的社区往往是大门紧闭，而圣伊丽莎白开放的城镇广场和零售店，实际上可以为它吸引更多的来访者。这种方式使之与周边城镇更加融合，极大地鼓励了社会化，并能一扫居民们被隔绝的疏离感。这是圣伊丽莎白村之所以成功的一部分原因——社区吸引了更多好奇的游客。

For Rhys at Forrec, the St. Elizabeth project is more than just work. As he approaches retirement himself, he hopes the overhaul can serve as a model for other seniors' communities. And if it's successful, Forrec could lead the way. “The boomer population doesn't think they are getting older,” he says. “They are looking for places that have a buzz of activities, and it's amazing for them to see that can be made into reality.”

对 FORREC 的 Rhys 来说，圣伊丽莎白项目不仅仅是工作。Rhys 自己也面临着退休，他希望圣伊丽莎白可以成为老年社区的一种典型模式。如果成功的话，FORREC 会成为这个领域的带头人。“诞生于‘婴儿潮’的人们并不认为他们老了，”他说，“他们正在寻找一个充满活力的地方，而令人惊喜的是，他们将目睹这成为现实。”

As a resident of St. Elizabeth, Johnson is looking forward to the changes. What she's particularly excited about is the prospect of new coffee shops and restaurants opening up—the only eatery currently on-site closes at 4 p.m. For all the elaborate storylines and faux authenticity crafted by Forrec, sometimes it's the simplest things that matter most.

作为圣伊丽莎白的居民，Johnson 期待着改变。她所翘首以盼的是新的咖啡店和餐厅的开业，因为社区现有的餐饮场所到下午 4 点就全部关门了。FORREC 所勾勒出的故事线和刻画出的逼真场景足以说明一个问题——最简单的东西往往是最重要的。