

PILLARS

LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

2022-23 REVIEW





2023 PILLARS CLASS

Lauren Brown, Assoc. AIA - KEM STUDIO

Maria Comeford, Assoc. AIA - Travois

Matt Cross, PE - Kaw Valley Engineering

Dave Dalbey - McCownGordon Construction

Tayler Delzell - Superior Bowen

Jared Hagedorn, AIA - Generator Studio

Nicole Harris, AIA - Health Facilities Group Architecture

Kanishka Jayanetti, AIA - GastingerWalker&

Jim Kersten, AIA - JE Dunn Construction

Margaret Linder - Henderson Engineers

Sarah McDonald, Assoc. AIA - Treanor HL

Rosemary Nelson, AIA - ACI Boland

Michelle Newcome, AIA - HIVE Design Collaborative

Hanh Phung, AIA - TK Architects

Robbie Powell, AIA - HNTB

Ashley Wagner, AIA - Hoefer Welker

ABOUT PILLARS

The Pillars Leadership Training Program of the American Institute of Architects Kansas City prepares a representative cross section of the chapter's emerging leaders and individuals from the building community for their role in shaping the future of both the architectural profession and the greater Kansas City metropolitan area. The training program includes active participation in programs and exposure to community leaders and issues. Each class spends their time exploring core issues that affect our profession and the region within which we practice. Through discussions with leaders and colleagues, dialogue among themselves, tours and research the group will be able to understand and present to the AIA as a whole how we can make a positive change within our community. The AIA Kansas City Pillars program is a nationally recognized program for its originality and depth and has inspired similar AIA leadership studies in other US cities. The program continues to raise the bar of what young professionals want out of their profession and how we as professionals can make an impact on our built environment.







Pillars touring Children's Mercy Park

OCTOBER: SPORTS & DEVELOPMENT

The first of two sports and development-focused sessions, October was centered around the 2026 FIFA World Cup host city bidding and preparations process, supplemented by an understanding of Kansas City as a sports architecture hub with world-class sports facilities.

The afternoon started off in downtown Kansas City, MO at HNTB with lunch and a presentation by Tom Waggoner on the history of sports architecture in Kansas City. Tom, being a foundational Kansas City sports architect himself, walked the Pillars group through 55 years of sports architecture challenges, opportunities, metrics, and culture, all unique to the Kansas City architecture community. The presentation tracked the narrative of his book, *Designed in Kansas City - How Kansas City Became the Sports Architecture Capital of the World*.

Then off to Children's Mercy Park in Kansas City, KS, home of Sporting Kansas City, the Pillars group got an extensive tour of the stadium, including locker rooms, press boxes, spectator suites and club levels, The Boot Room (a swanky new speakeasy), and the pitch itself. Following the tour, everyone gathered in the stadium's Audi Sport Club level for a panel discussion focused around the World Cup, with panelists including Katherine Holland, Director of the KC2026 FIFA World Cup Bid; Jake Reid, President of Sporting Kansas City; and Jeff Sittner, Practice Leader for Sports, Performance

and Event Studio at Burns and McDonnell. Pillars heard about who was involved in the highly collaborative World Cup bid, the process for preparing, submitting, and fielding the bid, the other cities that submitted bids throughout North America, and what assessments of Kansas City's existing sports facility, hospitality, and transportation infrastructures had to be done. There were also discussions on the modifications that would need to be made to the 1970's-built GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium, where the Kansas City Chiefs play, to prepare it for soccer pitch functions and the World Cup games.

The session concluded with a highly competitive game of kickball between current Pillars and Pillars alums.



Panel discussion on World Cup 2026 bidding and preparations







Annual Kickball Social

FALL SOCIAL EVENTS

The Pillars Fall Social was hosted by the Social Committee in early October at the downtown Made in KC Cafe + Bar and included an evening of relaxed conversation and local beverages among current Pillars and their Steering Committee members.

To round out the end of the October Pillars Session, current Pillars and Alums gathered at Penn Valley Park to compete in the Annual Kickball Social. The Alums squarely defeated the current Pillars in a very competitive game involving a few bloopers, a lot of laughs, some good-natured heckling, and even a home run.



Fall Social at Made in KC Cafe + Bar



Annual Kickball Social