



Best in Atlanta Real Estate: Trilith

Editor's note: This story is part of our coverage of the 2024 Best in Atlanta Real Estate Awards.

Shelly Brown and Tela Kayne are rarities in the Town of Trilith. They grew up in Fayette County unlike many of the new residents who moved there for the film business.

Town of Trilith is part of Trilith, a \$1 billion development that includes one of Georgia's largest film studios and a hub for Marvel Studios. Trilith also serves as the new headquarters of U.S. Soccer Federation.

Trilith has risen on farmland, some of it once owned by Brown and Kayne's fourth-grade teacher. Today, they live where they once took field trips.

Brown, Kayne and Carmen Coe, another Trilith resident, opened Scholar & Scribe Bookshop in the first week of March because "every great main street has one," Brown said. Brown separately owns clothing store Curator in Trilith.

The bookstore and other retail shopping and dining are within steps of where residents live, meeting the goal of a walkable, new-urbanist community reminiscent of the small towns of yore.

"I don't have to leave the neighborhood a lot," said Keri Maletto who has lived in Trilith since 2022.

Rob Parker, president of Trilith Development, said retail is halfway to being fully built and the existing retail is fully occupied. There are multiple restaurants, shopping, a market, a yoga studio and more.

None are national retailers. The only regional retailers are independently owned franchises, Parker said.

The studio started as Pinewood Studios and the master-planned town was Pinewood Forest in 2013 in a joint venture with billionaire Dan Cathy, Chick-fil-A's chairman, and the Cathy family's foundation.

Georgia's film tax credits were a big factor in setting up the studio.

Pinewood sold its shares to Cathy in 2019. Pinewood Studios and Pinewood Forest were renamed to Trilith the following year. Since opening, the studio has been a feeder for the Marvel Studios franchise. Top-grossing films "Avengers: End Game," "Avengers: Infinity War" and "Spider-Man: No Way Home" have been produced at Trilith.

"It's a big deal that built out in a relative short period on what was once a wheat field," Parker said.

Trilith Guesthouse opened in January with 191 hotel rooms carrying the theme of its creative surroundings. Oliver's Twist Bar & View, giving a nod toward the classic Charles Dickens novel, is on the rooftop.

The boutique hotel is part of Marriott International's Tribute Portfolio. A partnership that includes Development Ventures Group Inc. and Mainsail Lodging & Development and Trilith Development built the hotel.

Trilith Live, an 850,000-square-foot entertainment complex, is underway. It includes two live audience television studios, an 1,800-seat auditorium, a 140,000-square-foot creative office building, a cinema and retail space.

Minnesota-based Nelson Worldwide was the architect for Trilith Live and Trilith Guesthouse.

Some 1,500 residential units are planned for the Town at Trilith. Cathy envisions 5,000 people eventually living there.

Trilith has attracted residents from the film industry, such as Maletto and her husband Chris Giles. Maletto is an actor and a host on the Home Shopping Network. Giles is a sound mixer nominated for an Emmy in 2021 for his work on WandaVision, a mini-series streamed on Disney+ and produced at Trilith Studios.

Before Trilith, they lived in North Druid Hills where they moved from Florida for the film industry. "When incentives died in Florida, we were going to move to L.A.," Maletto said.

But friends had convinced them to check out Georgia. The move to Trilith helped Giles cut his commute to work that could be one to two hours depending on traffic and studio location.

Shellane Brown is a different story. She and her husband Daniel opened Woodstone Bakery & Café in 2021 and lived in an apartment above the store. They then bought a house in Trilith last year.

While Brown isn't an actor, she's a celebrity in her own right. She won the Food Channel's Halloween Wars baking contest in season 11 and created a life size cake of Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson for the networks Cakealikes show.

She closed her Apple-Butter Bakery in Stone Mountain for the Trilith location.

Brown and her husband had seen Trilith's vision in 2017. For them, it didn't matter what industry was driving the town development. Their interest was more about the master-planned town and how it was shaping up as a live, work, play community.

"My husband and I love the concept of new urbanism," she said. "We took a risk but it was a very calculated risk."

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