

FALL 2021
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ARCHITECTURE **DC**

Bravo!

The AIA|DC Design Awards
for 2021

Inside:

AC Hotel Brings European Flair to DC
US Army Gets a Shimmering New Museum
Arlington Expands its Community Amenities
Psychiatric Facility Transformed into Modern Housing



Shared living/dining/kitchen space in one of the co-living units.

Washingtonian Residential Design Award

The Aldea

Washington, DC

Bonstra | Haresign ARCHITECTS

Structural Engineer: Simpson Gumpertz & Heger

MEP Engineer: Capitol Engineering Group, LLC

Civil Engineer: KEA, LLC

General Contractor: Harbor Builders

A short distance from Linden Flats, standing roughly across H Street from the Atlas Performing Arts Center, is the Aldea, a small mixed-use project with retail space on the ground floor and three, full-floor co-living apartments above, designed by Bonstra | Haresign ARCHITECTS. Each co-living unit consists of a large, shared living/dining/kitchen space spanning the entire width of the street façade, plus five bedroom/bathroom suites flanking a double-loaded corridor running perpendicular to the main living area, creating a clear separation between private and communal spaces. Each bedroom has its own balcony, and there is a spacious roof deck with an outdoor kitchen accessible to all tenants.

The building is distinguished by its simple yet bold composition, coupled with some striking material choices. The ground floor on the main façade is lined with gray iron-spot brick, which introduces a subtle pattern and visual texture while alluding to the weathered brick on nearby historic structures. Intersecting that gray brick zone is a vertical panel of green glazed tile framed in steel plate with inset windows on the residential floors. The rest of the façade is clad in stucco punctuated by steel-framed windows with asymmetrical vertical bands of green glazed brick that complement the larger green panel.

The rear of the building has a more industrial character thanks to its pre-colored gray fiber-cement cladding and the angled steel rods that help to support the bedroom balconies while preventing uplift in windy conditions. The alley façade



Rear and side of the Aldea.

is marked by an exterior egress stair—reminiscent of the fire escapes on urban apartment buildings of yore—and a shiny stainless steel grease flue, which was installed in anticipation of a restaurant occupying the ground floor and cellar level.

The co-housing concept, in which unrelated individuals rent their own bedroom suites but share living, dining, and kitchen areas, is generating growing interest among both developers and prospective tenants in cities with a high cost of living. In contrast to most group houses, where tenants often struggle to find privacy and compete for bathroom time, custom-designed co-housing seeks to strike a thoughtful, practical balance between private and shared space. The Aldea is one of several such projects that have received AIA|DC awards in recent years, suggesting that this building type may be entering its heyday.