

case study: a closer look at BUCHANAN TOWNHOMES



213-Y & 53-DD Brick

key players:

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Buchanan Townhomes • Washington, DC

In the heart of Capitol Hill in Washington D.C., 32 new family-oriented townhomes were created as part of a more extensive block transformation, and brick seemed the logical material of choice to blend with the historical context and stand the test of time.

The townhomes front two significant streets as well as a new mid-block mews. The mews provide a pedestrian passage that breaks down the larger block scale and creates a meaningful visual connection with the pedestrian entrances to the adjacent school buildings.

From the street, the homes have a typical Capitol Hill 2 ½ story massing. A variety of façade types are arranged to continue the organic Capitol Hill pattern of small clusters of similar façades. The façade composition of the in-ground English basement with smaller windows and the elevated

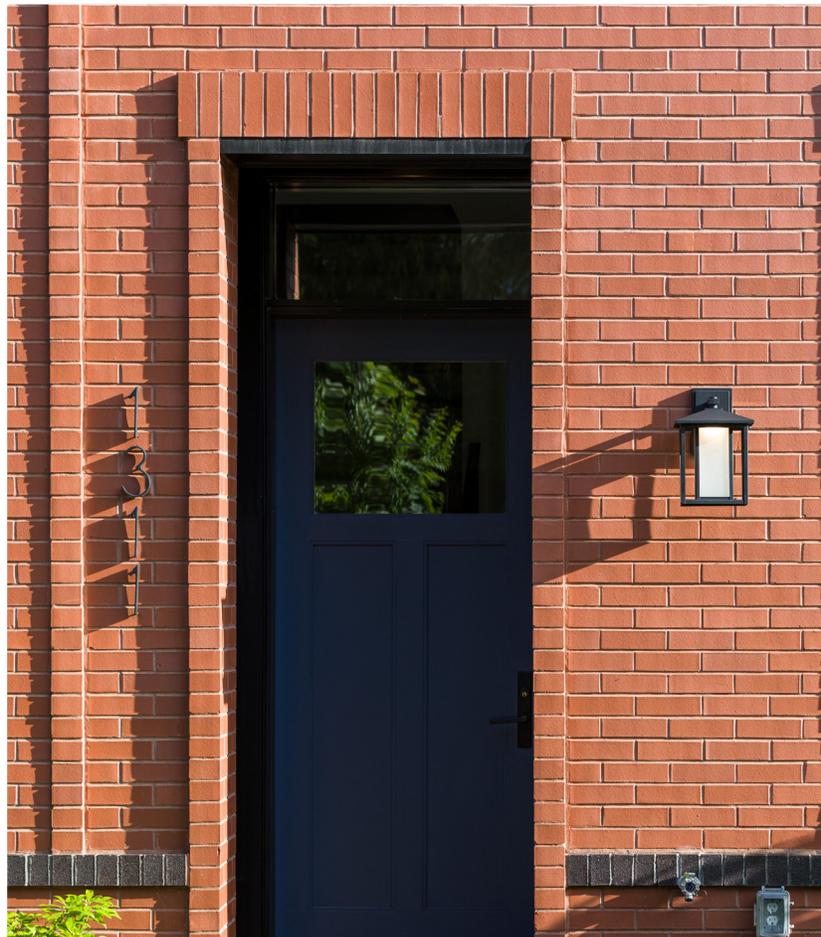
first floor with a brick stoop to the front door integrates well with the Capitol Hill fabric. Cast stone is used for window sills and front stoops, and structural cast stone lintels are alternated with projected brick window headers to provide variation. The facades feature aluminum-clad windows in punched openings with deep brick returns to provide depth and terminate in masonry or composite cornice at the top. Cast stone banding is used to break the brick colors that give the 'base' and upper townhome. The brick used at the basement level throughout the project provided the desired dark color but brought beautiful purple hues in sunlight that complimented the brick colors above. Cast iron brick vents are used at the basement level to add to the traditional, historic aesthetic.

As one moves from the primary streets to the interior



alley and mews, the brick material is still used, but the facades become more modern. Steel lintels are used at the garage doors, and larger spans of glazing appear at the kitchens. Drawing inspiration from a typical London mews, the alleys are designed to be both functional areas for vehicles and pleasant, informal outdoor spaces. The ground plane incorporates masonry as well, along with cobblestone and pervious asphalt.

As much as natural brick is celebrated with this project, something that appears quite a lot in the neighborhood is painted brick. The widespread use of new clay brick on all façades and the ground plane provides a sense of permanence and contextualism critical in this historic neighborhood.



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