

Wasipi Townhomes

is a four-unit project designed to accommodate families of different sizes and needs. Two units focus on “Multigenerational Families,” with accessibility features, while the other two units, called “The First Nest Homes,” are intended for smaller families. The project features a dynamic design with flexible use of spaces and efficient construction methods, demonstrating a commitment to affordable and innovative solutions for housing needs.

The design concept comes literally from the idea of “Middle House”, where we take a single-family home and effectively split it in a half to create more housing options that gather a diverse community in the project.

The chosen lot size of 125 * 55 sqft. serves a compact but functional design, maximizing 70% of the land use in construction and incorporating a welcoming design addition to the urban profile of Sehome and South hill Bellingham neighborhoods. The lot size also helps to have a balance between density and livability.

To enhance constructability, the project was designed by modular building techniques that streamline the construction process, reduce material waste and lower labor costs. This method also facilitates quicker assembly on-site and reduces unnecessary footage.

The design incorporates universal design standards, ensuring accessibility in 2 units that are equipped with a bedroom on the first floor and an ADA bathroom, accessible transitions between spaces to promote inclusivity which is key for creating welcoming communities.

Sustainability is a core principle in the design of Wasipi Townhomes, featuring high-performance insulation, energy-efficient windows, and integrated renewable energy sources, such as solar panels, to significantly reduce heating, cooling, and energy costs for residents. Additionally, each unit includes a Heat Recovery Ventilation (HRV) system, which not only improves indoor air quality and comfort but also recycles energy, further lowering electrical bills.

Water efficiency is achieved through low-flow fixtures, and the roof is strategically sloped to capture rainwater for irrigating the project’s landscaped gardens.

Additionally, the use of lighter exterior colors reduces light absorption, enhancing energy efficiency and lowering cooling costs. These lighter shades also required less maintained overtime, further supporting the long-term sustainability.

Design-wise, Wasipi has efficient spatial solutions. Each unit features flexible living spaces that can adapt to changing needs, such as multifunctional rooms that services as office areas or guest rooms. Something that definitely makes a difference is the creative storage solutions, including

built-in shelving and under stairs storage, maximizing the utility of every square foot, addressing a common oversight in affordable housing.

Including a first-floor bedroom with an ADA-compliant bathroom in the multigenerational unit promotes aging in place by allowing residents to stay in their community as their needs change.

This design supports community stability, reducing the need for residents to relocate in search of accessible housing as they age. By helping residents stay in familiar surroundings, the project not only benefits individual households but also strengthens the neighborhood, fostering a cohesive community where people can live safely and comfortably over the long term.

Wasipi means “in Home” in Quechua, because at the end of the day, each project that embraces diversity, creativeness and affordability are the framing, the walls and the roof where a family would create memories for their rest of their life. Everybody deserves a place that we can call home.