



NICHIHA CASE STUDY

Architect Clads Home with Nichiha Following Use on Client Project

Seeking Style and Endurance

Architects are often the arbiters of styles and trends in the building and construction industry. In their designs, they have a unique opportunity to specify a multitude of materials that push the boundaries of design and performance.

To achieve—and often exceed—a client’s design expectations, an architect must remain familiar with available products that will deliver the sought-after look, particularly with materials that last. Compromise is seldom an option. Pushing for the best end result is what led one architect to their own [a-ha moment](#) with Nichiha. Antonio Alonso, vice president of [AV Architects + Builders](#), first discovered Nichiha after designing and building “Hill House” in McLean, VA.

Impressing Tastemakers

As the name implies, Hill House is built into a hillside in McLean, VA, just miles away from Washington D.C. The home employs clean lines and strategic minimalism to create a breathtaking home that is as functional as it is beautiful. It is a look that AV Architects + Builders calls “Mid-Atlantic Modern.”

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PROJECT DETAILS

ARCHITECT

AV Architects + Builders

LOCATION

McLean, Virginia

PRODUCTS

[VintageWood](#) - Cedar

[Illumination](#) - Custom Color

TYPE

Residential

CHALLENGE

Specify a cladding solution that is highly elegant and meets the demands of a client who is seeking a truly one-of-a-kind luxury home. Ensure that the cladding is resilient against harsh climate extremes.

SOLUTION

Create a unique façade that blends the looks of traditional building materials while also offering the protection of a long-lasting rainscreen for the homeowner and their family.

RESULTS

Nichiha VintageWood in Cedar and Illumination in custom colors delivered a high-end aesthetic. Mindful installation hardware and consistent materials ensured swift installation without the need for specialized labor or materials.

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ANTONIO ALONSO, VICE PRESIDENT OF AV ARCHITECTS + BUILDERS

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On the inside, open concept interior spaces, top-end details, and a luxury feel were all planned design hallmarks. Outside, the home would face unique considerations, given the climate challenges presented by the Mid-Atlantic region.

“[The region] has all the climate issues—all four seasons,” said Antonio. “It’s hot, cold, wet, humid, everything. The product had to deal with all that.”

And with that criteria, Nichiha’s fiber cement cladding lineup quickly became a top choice, particularly because the firm is characterized as an architect-builder, meaning they not only design and specify projects, but they also construct them.

True Four-Season Cladding

Virginia’s climate runs the gamut. Summers can be akin to those of southern states with intense heat and high humidity. Likewise, winters can run parallel to those states north, with freezing temperatures and large amounts of snow. Only those building materials that can meet the demands of both extremes would be an option for [Hill House](#). Such is where fiber cement cladding is the most ideal, economical choice.

“I was looking for a cladding system that looked more modern, yet something that would be easy to maintain, last a long time, and give us the modern look we wanted—something unique and modern,” added Antonio. “It had to meet all those criteria.”

At 5/8" thick, Nichiha’s architectural wood panels (AWP) withstand moisture, wind, temperature, and even fire better than traditional cladding options. In locales with high temperatures and humidity, the fiber cement panels



resist warping, rotting, pests, and fungi. Even in sub-zero temperatures, panels are highly resilient to cracking or buckling in freeze-thaw cycles. In either environment, cladding can tolerate winds up to 130 mph or higher and, in the event of a fire, will not combust, complying with even the industry’s strictest safety codes.

These performance points dovetail flawlessly with the medium’s high acuity for mimicking traditional building materials like wood, concrete, brick, stucco, and more. This imitation equated to boundless design choices for Antonio and his team.

“It achieved the look we wanted,” said Antonio. “There’s that variety of textures and colors we could use, which was a big deal. We could vary the product and use it in different ways to get different looks. There are simple moves you can make with the Nichiha panels.”

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In the end, Hill House utilized two Nichiha products: [VintageWood](#) AWP in Cedar and custom-colored [Illumination](#) in greige. Some of the panels are even installed in vertical and horizontal orientations, an option for specific Nichiha panels. And because Nichiha’s [custom color](#) offerings for certain panels are available at no additional cost or minimum quantities, the flexibility afforded to designers and architects is truly unparalleled.

An Architect’s Personal Home Choice

Following the completion of Hill House, Antonio and his wife Francisca were so impressed with the cladding, they were inspired to fit the cladding to their personal home. For an architect to specify a product for their own home speaks volumes to the product’s rank among similar cladding options.

Not only were the AV Architect builders able to easily install the panels thanks to the [Ultimate Clip System](#), but they closely matched the looks sought by the couple.

“Nichiha was the only one who had the panel look we wanted,” said Antonio. “No other fiber cement company had that look.”

In the end, the Alonso family home used the same color palette as Hill House: a natural-look mix of VintageWood in Cedar and a custom-colored Illumination. The look was one that stood out from the region’s uniform home look.

“We hear from our audience that they’re just a little saturated with craftsman and colonial styles,” said Francisca Alonso. “People come here from all over the world, generally for work. But they’re coming from all over the world and they’re so disappointed that the architecture [here] is very uniformed and, mainly colonial.”

With the couple’s use of Nichiha AWP for these two products, stylish modern looks are paired with long-lasting durability. Along with the product’s numerous other benefits, the homes designed and built by AV Architects that utilize Nichiha AWP ensure that the firm’s cutting-edge designs will endure for decades.



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Nichiha USA, Inc., a subsidiary of Nichiha Corporation, was established 1998 and is headquartered in Johns Creek, GA. Nichiha Corporation, an international leader in fiber cement technology for more than 35 years, has 13 plants worldwide and markets distinct patterns of fiber cement siding products in the U.S. In 2007, Nichiha opened its first U.S. manufacturing plant in Macon, GA, responding to an increase in demand for fiber cement products in the Southeast market. For more information, call 1.86.NICHIIHA1 or visit www.nichiha.com.

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