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CASE STUDY



PROJECT DETAILS

Architect

Davis Architecture

Location

West Columbia, SC

Product

NichiPanel Smooth and Vintagewood™ Cedar Panels



Nichiha | Case Study

FOS Development

FLOW TOWNHOMES IN WEST COLUMBIA, SC

Wade Caughman has always had an eye for style. He was a model in his earlier years, working in New York, Milan and Athens, and then he sold Italian Ducati motorcycles for a while. By the time he became a residential developer, Caughman had a deep appreciation for good design along with a commitment to breathe new housing life into the community in which he grew up.

Caughman's love for contemporary housing design is fuelled by his love of Dwell magazine, and his newest development is a great example of that archetype. Developed by Caughman and his business partner, Bill Bradshaw, the 24-unit, nearly 60,000-square-foot FLOW Townhome complex sits on the Congaree River in South Carolina, with views of downtown Columbia. The three-story units feature modern style inside and out, with Nichiha Vintagewood Cedar and NichiPanels painted Sherwin Williams Urbane Bronze.

Caughman's focus has long been on contemporary architecture, and Nichiha lends itself well to that aesthetic. "I've always had a taste for sleek design and modern style," he said. "I've lived in other cities and abroad, and when I see contemporary housing in Seattle, Chicago, Germany or elsewhere, I ask myself, 'why not bring that to South Carolina?'"

FLOW features many unique design features, including doors from Germany with biometric finger scanning locks. "Style is always important, but particularly so when you're selling high-end real estate," said Caughman. "FLOW was designed for empty nesters and professionals, and these people are moving here from prominent but more traditional neighborhoods in Columbia. They've seen this type of architecture when they visited places like Los Angeles or New York, and now when they see it here, they love it."

Challenge

In order to get clean lines for a contemporary design, and to convey the level of quality needed for the high-end target market, FOS Development needed to make sure that all framing was true and window offsets were level. Otherwise, they would have unsightly gaps in the Nichiha panel installation.

Solution

The developer started by hiring an installer who was familiar with Nichiha; it was a decision that quickly paid off. Together, FOS Development and the siding installer communicated closely with the contractor to make sure framing crews understood the importance of having level, straight lines with tighter variance limits than the industry standard.

Results

With support from their local Nichiha rep, as well as advance collaboration with contractors, installation went smoothly, and FOS Development got the sleek exterior they wanted for FLOW Townhomes. Demand has been strong; they sold 11 of 12 units in Phase I almost immediately, and have already pre-sold several units for Phase II, scheduled for completion in 2017.



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Columbia is filled with historic buildings, mostly clad in brick, so Caughman said he wanted something that was clean and contemporary yet warm. "We originally planned to use cedar," he said. "We wanted it to look real and be world class. The Nichiha VintageWood panels were more expensive than real cedar, but the look, the quality and the easy maintenance all made the decision to use Nichiha an easy one. And because it looks like natural cedar, people here can relate to it."



The FLOW Townhome development was Caughman's first time using a Nichiha product, and he admits that his first impression was lukewarm. "I originally had a sample, but it was too small," he explained. "I couldn't appreciate the quality, and I couldn't take a chance of it not looking good; it had to be world class. But I'd seen 'the other siding' on other projects, and it looked like someone had tried to pair tennis shoes with an Armani suit. I wanted something better. So I did a Google search and once I saw photos of Nichiha on full projects, I knew it was right for FLOW."

Empty nesters flock to convenience; most people expect the siding in communities like FLOW to be maintenance-free, so durability was important. And since Caughman grew up in Columbia and still lives there, quality was also imperative. "There's very little to worry about once the Nichiha panels are installed," he said. "My goal is to make homeowners happy for the long-term."

High-end developers like Caughman face constant pressure; people expect quality materials but they also want things to be easy to maintain and affordable. Nichiha provides all three. And while his initial choice of Nichiha was based purely on style, he found that ease of installation, durability and other factors provided benefits he didn't expect.

"We will use Nichiha again, without question," Caughman said. "What I love most is that the possibilities are unlimited, which is important because we want all our projects to look unique. Nichiha offers so many styles and designs; you can mix and match and combine panels with different materials, but they all go together using the same system."

"And yes," he added, "this project looks like something that belongs in Dwell magazine, which is exactly what I wanted."

"WORKING WITH THE LOCAL NICHIBA REPRESENTATIVE WAS LIKE GETTING THE SAME GREAT SERVICE YOU GET WHEN YOU GO TO A LEXUS DEALERSHIP. THERE'S DEFINITELY A DIFFERENCE."
— WADE CAUGHMAN,
FOS Development

About Nichiha USA:

Nichiha U.S.A., Inc., a subsidiary of Nichiha Corporation, was established 1998 and is headquartered in Norcross, 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.NICHHA1 or visit nichiha.com



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