

FALL 2019
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New Heights The Annual AIA | DC Awards Issue



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Entry façade of the Triumph.

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Washingtonian Residential Design Award/
Citation for Urban Catalyst

The Triumph—Community-Based Short-Term Family Housing

Washington, DC

DLR Group/Sorg

Landscape Architects: Carvalho and Good, PLLC

Structural Engineers: Silman

MEP Engineers: Setty & Associates International, PLLC

Civil Engineers: A. Morton Thomas & Associates

Geotechnical Engineers: ECS Capitol Services

Cost Consultants: TCT Cost Consultants

LEED Green Rater: Pando Alliance, LLC

General Contractor: MCN Build

Close to the Maryland border, at 4225 6th Street, SE, in the Highlands neighborhood, is The Triumph—a project whose name isn't an act of hubris by its designer, **DLR Group**, but rather an honor bestowed on the project by its surrounding community. The six-story, 36,000-square-foot building, which includes 50 residential units and supporting amenity spaces, provides short-term housing for families from across Washington as part of the city's plan to replace the dilapidated central emergency shelter at DC General Hospital with a collection of smaller-scale, service-enriched, community-based shelters located in each of the city's eight wards. The Triumph is

Ward 8's contribution to that strategy. Like other new projects for addressing homelessness that have been featured in these pages, The Triumph's smart-looking design could easily be mistaken for that of a market-rate apartment building.

The Triumph "provides residents with extensive views of the city, natural light, play, and gathering space in a parklike setting," according to the architects. "Tucked away from the street and into the surrounding hillside, the building relates to the residential context with an articulated volumetric facade to create residential units of human scale." The building "symbolizes an integrated, dignified approach to living in a holistic, healthy environment, with on-site stormwater quality control, an energy-efficient building envelope, and high-efficiency mechanical systems." The project meets Gold-level certification for the LEED for Homes rating system.

A key design challenge "was how to sensitively accommodate the full programmatic requirements, including a [city-established] maximum unit count of ten per floor, on a steeply-sloping site surrounded by low-rise residential buildings along 6th Street, SE, to the east, and taller, four-to-five story structures to the north and west," the firm said. To address that challenge, "the building has been shifted westward, away from the street and toward the back of the lot, which helps integrate the new facility with its context by visually strengthening its connection to its larger-scale neighbors while also providing an opportunity for a large, landscaped forecourt to act as an attractive green buffer between the street and the building."

Landscape terracing and "a façade composed of a series of setbacks combine to break down the massing of the residential housing block," the firm said. "The façade's volumetric use of



Family unit at the Triumph.

Photo © Kevin Reeves Photography

projecting and retreating bays of glass frames views from inside to outside that are unparalleled in scope and distance.”

The five residential floors each include, in addition to their residential units, a group of common spaces located off the elevator lobby, within view of the reception desk. Each floor is treated as its own neighborhood, with floor-specific finish palettes helping to reinforce their separate identities.

The ground floor, which acts as the community floor for all the residents, includes a multipurpose room, a dining room, a computer lab, and a health clinic, as well as operational and case-management offices. The spaces, the firm said, provide “the wrap-around services needed to stabilize the residents and help them find more permanent housing.”

Maximizing natural light “was an important design goal as this can help relieve stress for those going through homelessness while also decreasing energy usage,” the architects said, adding that “the finish palette includes warm, natural elements and colors” that help to deinstitutionalize the building.

The Triumph “provides families with a beautiful, inspiring, and dignified environment along with in-house support services to help families re-join their communities within a shorter time frame,” the architects said. With reduced levels of stress, “the residents are better able to address other needs and progress to a more permanent housing solution. By creating a safe, secure and dignified facility, the design seeks to transform a difficult site into a positive for the entire community and play an important part in integrating a marginalized group of the District’s citizens back into the city.”



Residential lounge.

Photo © Kevin Reeves Photography



Communal spaces.

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