



With an iconic facade, the new mixed-use, affordable housing development celebrates the history of the African diaspora in Seattle, while anchoring its future.









An inclusive engagement process identified community priorities and the importance of a home for the larger pan-African and black community, with the significance of “Plaza” in the name of the project expressing a connection between people and place.





The rapid pace of gentrification and displacement in the Central District has reduced the once majority-black neighborhood to less than 10% of the population. Increased housing density provides a way to stay in the neighborhood.





Inspired by Afrocentric forms, the undulating facade of weathering steel evokes the trunk of a stately tree whose roots extend down curving columns and wind through the plaza.





The columns root metaphor is visually extended into plaza paving patterns, which reach out to the surrounding neighborhood in a welcoming gesture.





The south streetscape fosters sociable interaction between residents and the community, with ground-floor terraces, raised garden beds, and seating areas.





The plaza builds in flexibility for large and small community events and celebrations, which also invite former residents back to the neighborhood with cultural programming that keeps them connected to the past and future of the Central District.





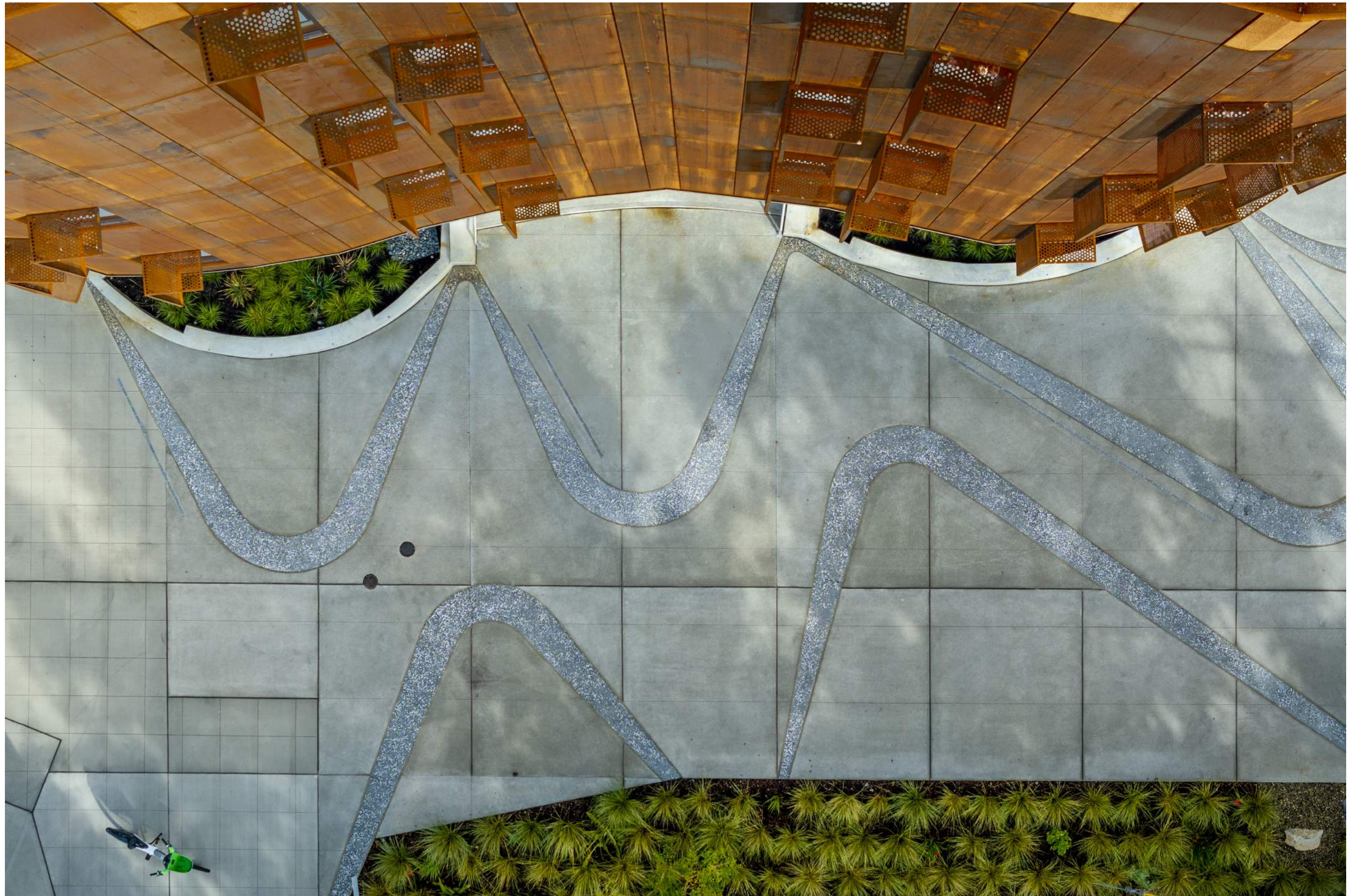
The streetscape deliberately blurs the boundary between public right of way and private property to create a welcoming interface with the surrounding neighborhood.





The plaza was designed to optimize flexibility for a wide variety of events, incorporating a stage, informal seat edges, and opportunities to spill into both indoor spaces and the streetscape.





The integration of building architecture with the landscape is reinforced in the plaza with rustic terrazzo paving bands that spread rootlike from the iconic building form into the right-of-way.





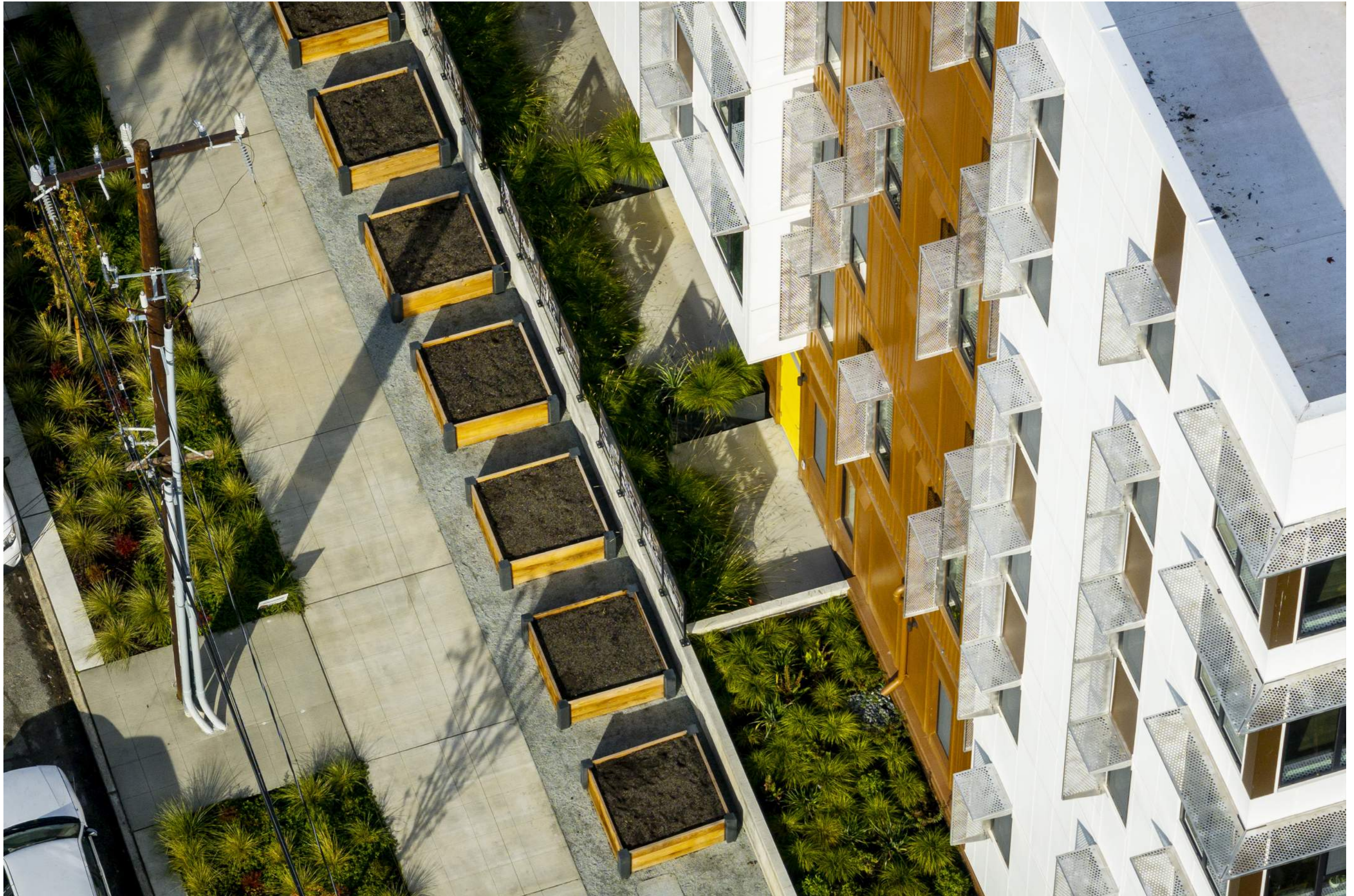
A welcoming interface with the surrounding community, the south-facing streetscape features comfortable and inviting places to pause, sit, and socialize with neighbors.





Designed by local black artists, integrated artwork doubles as a screen for groundfloor residents and a backdrop for the community garden beds.





Communal garden beds along the street frontage highlight the importance of food security and the central role that food plays in community celebrations.





The project's commitment to sustainable development includes stormwater capture from the roof into bioretention planters that wrap the residential oriented corner of the property.





Celebrating the African diaspora, a variety of hardy plants native to Africa mix with species native to the Pacific Northwest. Species include colorful forbs such as *Kniphofia caulescens* pictured here.