

DESIGN

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Photos: Kapolei Lofts

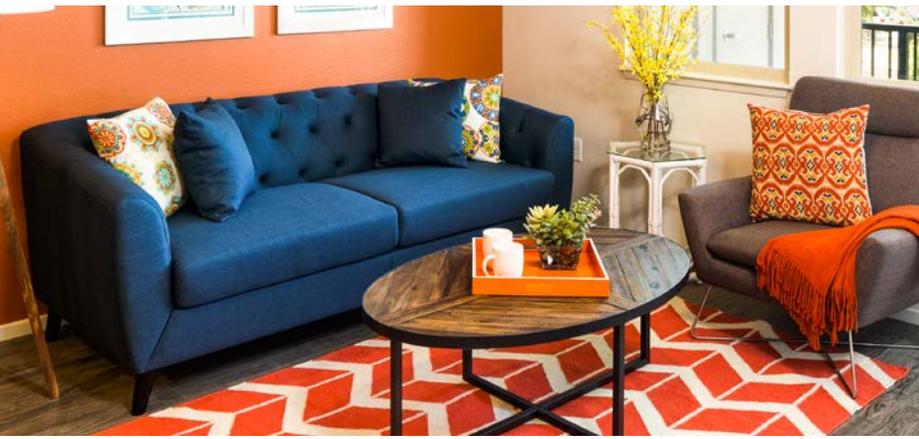


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KAPOLEI LOFTS

Sustainability enters the rental housing market

A sustainable lifestyle is based on the choices we make as consumers, community members and global citizens. Those choices can be limited depending on whether or not a person rents or owns a home. According to current U.S. Census Bureau data, 45 percent of O‘ahu residents are renters, which means that nearly half a million people do not have the opportunity to outfit their homes and apartments with high-impact sustainable upgrades such as solar hot water, photovoltaics, energy-efficient appliances, low-flow fixtures and EV charging infrastructure. With the high demand for rental properties on O‘ahu, homeowners know they will get their properties rented with or without these important components. Beyond recycling, opting for energy-efficient products like LED light bulbs and other basic sustainable practices, renters have no choice but to shoulder the high cost of fossil fuel-derived electricity.



Residential developer Forest City Hawaii is turning the “no need sustainability” rental model on its head, offering renters newly built one-, two- and three-bedroom homes at Kapolei Lofts, one of Hawai‘i’s largest rental development projects. “Factoring in sustainable elements into this master-planned community helps to reduce maintenance and utility costs significantly,” says Jon Wallenstrom, president of Forest City Hawaii. “Kapolei Lofts has more than a dozen sustainable features that work together for the benefit of our residents.”

Sustainability is at the heart of the project’s design. Electric vehicle charging stations, heat-reflecting low-E glass windows, Energy Star appliances, high-efficiency toilets, ceiling fans, direct-response water heaters and high-efficiency air conditioners are standard features in every home. Around the community, the sustainable features include recycled asphalt pavement, LED street lamps, a 2.5-megawatt solar system to power common areas and reclaimed water for irrigation. Kapolei Lofts is proof that there is a demand in the rental housing market for sustainable homes and communities. Hopefully, homeowners with existing rental properties will take note, do the right thing and install a solar hot water system for their tenants ASAP. —Kevin Whitton

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