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OPEN CONCEPTS



RESIDENCES IN VANCOUVER, TORONTO, CHILE
AND MORE THAT HOME IN ON BIG IDEAS

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Spotlight

Bedroom

_Interno Marche Hotel _Beds and Nightstands _Clothes Storage

EDITOR _Kendra Jackson



Modern Amenities

IN MONTREAL, LE WITHIN STUDENT DORMS BY SID LEE ARCHITECTURE MAKE THE MOST OF MODULARITY

STORY _Sophie Sobol

PHOTOS _Alex Lesage

OPPOSITE: It should come as no surprise that Le Within boasts such a clear colour story — coming as it does from an architecture firm with strong ties to graphic design — or that all the signage and brand identity were also expertly realized by the team at Sid Lee.

BELOW: Behind the historic facade of the Shaughnessy Village building, Le Within offers students an all-inclusive and connected way of life.



ABOVE AND TOP RIGHT: Far from the cramped and uninspiring dorms of the past, the student lofts are considered and adaptable to support a variety of individual needs. Custom furnishings — like the beds, desks and kitchen cabinets — are sleek and durable, while matte black Ginestra 300 pendants from Astro add graphic punctuation.

When they first enter their dormitory bedrooms, fledgling university students often have low expectations. While it may be their first taste of freedom — a new home away from home — too many tales of cramped, cell-like spaces and roommate horror stories tend to quell any confidence that their experience will be different. Enter Le Within. Led by [Sid Lee Architecture](#) and Canora Real Estate Agency, the student-housing project in Montreal reimagines a common reality: adaptable interiors that support everyday needs while inspiring personal and academic growth.

Located in a historic Shaughnessy Village building, the student lofts are defined by four design pillars: duality, immersion, urbanity and modularity. The scheme explores contrast through rich colours and textured materials, while frame-within-a-frame interior compositions and the repetition of certain elements create a visual connection between the various functions of the residence. To link the 1926 building's heritage roots to its modern-day urban sensibility, Sid Lee Architecture devised a considered palette that includes bold red (a nod to the [brick-clad homes](#) typical of the Milton-Parc neighbourhood) and deep green (the nearby verdant Mont Royal) — even hits of salmon and cream point to the toppings of the city's famous

bagels. "Le Within reflects the idea of a microcosm mirroring its surroundings, inviting students to find inspiration, comfort, and a sense of belonging within the residence. It is an encounter with the city within its own walls," says Marie-Elaine Benoit, executive design director at Sid Lee.

But more than anything, Le Within champions [modularity](#). Two room types are available (private lofts and three- or four-bedroom co-living apartments), and both offer versatile storage and surfaces optimized for functionality. The kitchen counter can be used for meal prep, and when it's time to study, it doubles as a workstation. Generous cubbies built into the single beds' planked oak laminate frames and open shelving throughout help keep things organized and within arm's reach. "Le Within addresses evolving student needs by focusing on well-being, community and adaptability, and fosters social connectivity through versatile communal spaces," explains Jean Pelland, architect and principal partner at Sid Lee Architecture.

[Student housing](#) projects like Le Within are refreshing, and they signal that it is finally time to abandon the old, unyielding dorm model for something more modern — and to dispel those prison cell comparisons once and for all. **az**