



USA TODAY

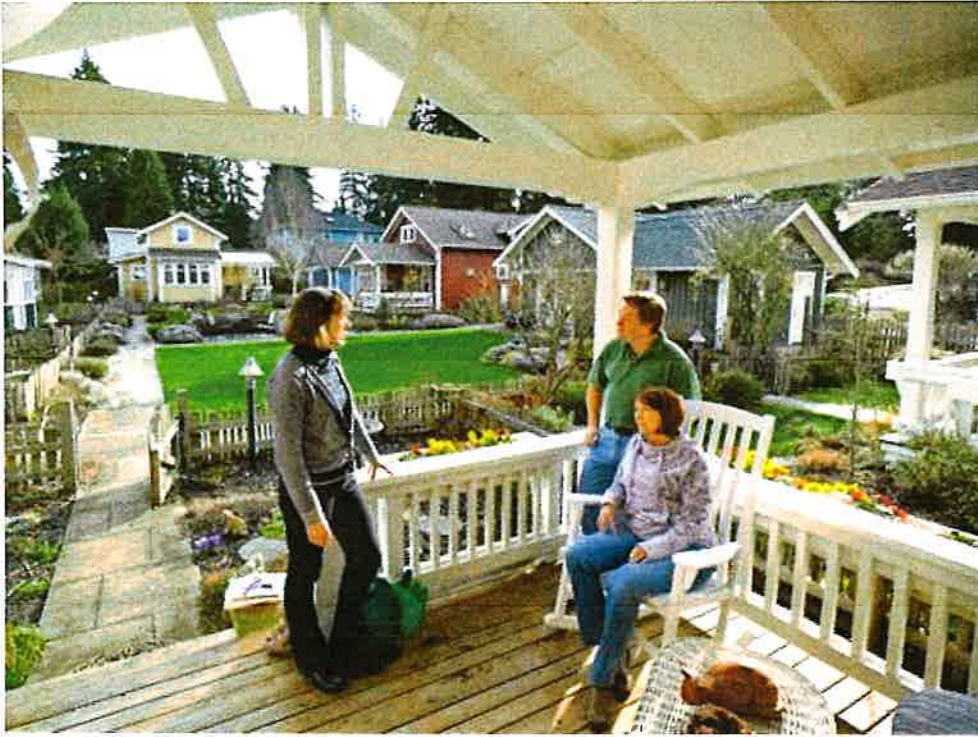
Cozy pocket neighborhoods have sprawl on the move

By Haya El Nasser, USA TODAY

Updated |

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When Brian and Colleen Ducey's two adult children moved out, their large empty home on a quiet dead-end street in Seattle suddenly lost its homey feel.



By Andy Rogers/Red Box Pictures, for USA TODAY

Brian and Colleen Ducey, right, chat with neighbor Eileen McMackin on their front porch in Shoreline, Wash., where eight bungalows share a yard, garden and commons building.

EnlargeClose

By Andy Rogers/Red Box Pictures, for USA TODAY

Brian and Colleen Ducey, right, chat with neighbor Eileen McMackin on their front porch in Shoreline, Wash., where eight bungalows share a yard, garden and commons building.

"We had a big, 2,500-square-foot home that we weren't using," says Brian, 58. "We had a very large yard. We felt tied to it every weekend trying to make it look halfway decent. ... It was a great house, but too big."

They looked for something smaller, but their only options were condominiums — until they saw an ad for an unusual new development just across city limits in Shoreline, Wash.: Eight cottages around a central garden. The first view from the access drive was the gable of a commons building and colorful rooftops jutting up behind it.

One look at the charming cluster of small homes (less than 1,000 square feet) and the Duceys put money down, sold their house and moved in five weeks later.

"It's like the ultimate for us," Brian says.

After decades of living large — mini-mansions in sprawling subdivisions the size of cities — some Americans are retrenching and showing a new appreciation for small, cozy and neighborly.

Architect Ross Chapin, who designed Greenwood Avenue Cottages, where the Duceys live, has coined a term for these new compact communities: pocket neighborhoods.

His new book — *Pocket Neighborhoods, Creating Small-Scale Community in a Large-Scale World*— documents a surprisingly broad array of such developments across the USA, from urban neighborhoods to suburban and rural areas.

- **BACKYARD COTTAGES:** [Seattle makes a dent in housing need](#)

Based in Langley, Wash., Chapin has developed 40 pocket neighborhoods across the country — many in partnership with Seattle developer Jim Soules of The Cottage Co. He is currently working on projects in Indiana, New Hampshire and [Massachusetts](#).

Cities in the Puget Sound area have adopted cottage housing ordinances that often allow twice the number of homes on a lot as long as they're small, limited in height and face a common area.

"Jurisdictions around the country are looking at these and adopting them," Chapin says. "The idea of a pocket neighborhood is that you have nearby neighbors coming together around a shared space. ... This really harkens back to the fact that we, as humans, are social. We want to be together."

Together but private. And that's what pocket neighborhoods may bring to a society that is increasingly aware of the need to save natural resources — no sprawl and less reliance on cars — yet still cherishes personal space.

Back to the basics

Changing demographics, including a large aging population fueled by the first of 77 million Baby Boomers turning 65 this year, also are reigniting a hunger for community.

"Having just gone through this era of the housing bubble and McMansions growing out of nowhere ... now we realize that a lot of that was phony," says Ben Brown, a consultant who specializes in "new urbanism," a planning principle that encourages compact, energy-efficient living and communities that foster walking over driving.

Big houses get families to put all their needs under one roof, often isolating them from neighbors, he says. Now that gas prices are soaring, large homes that need lots of energy to heat and cool are losing their appeal.

Homes in pocket neighborhoods may be small but are designed to feel big and airy. Many feature high ceilings and skylights. Parking spaces and garages are usually out of sight to encourage residents to walk home through the shared gardens.

'Perfect for my mother'

Developer Casey Land had always worked on large projects, such as shopping centers and multifamily units. Three years ago, partly inspired by Chapin's cottage industry, Land decided to build the Inglenook Neighborhood in Carmel, a suburb of Indianapolis.

"A couple of times I had printed off little pictures of (Chapin's) cottages," he says. "Everybody always said, 'That's perfect for my mother.' I had that comment more times than I can tell you."

Six two- and three-bedroom cottages, ranging from 1,100 to 1,800 square feet plus a basement, are under construction in the first phase. Price: \$200,000 to \$400,000.

Land Development & Building Co. is putting Inglenook on 27 acres surrounded by existing development.

"Our target market is an empty-nester, a single parent with a child or two," Land says. "It might be a single person, widowed or divorced, or somebody thinking of buying a condo but who doesn't want to live with shared walls and wants to have a garden for therapy."

Rosemary Sowler, 55, is single and childless and lives half a mile away. She and her longtime best friend, also single, talked for years about combining their households when they neared retirement. They were drawn to Inglenook's location and environmental standards.

"Once I heard about the plan not only for the common areas but for the green aspects, I got excited," says Sowler, a nurse who handles medical claims. "This is what we need to be doing in our homes. We need to build smarter and not larger."

Todd and Jeannette Staheli and their two children live in a 1,000-square-foot cottage at Greenwood Avenue in Shoreline. After four years in their previous home, built in 1923, they still didn't feel like part of a community.

They know their neighbors at Greenwood. Kids play in the common area. Weekly potluck dinners bring everyone together. Need someone to water the plants or feed the fish? Ask neighbors. Plus, their utility bills have dropped by half.

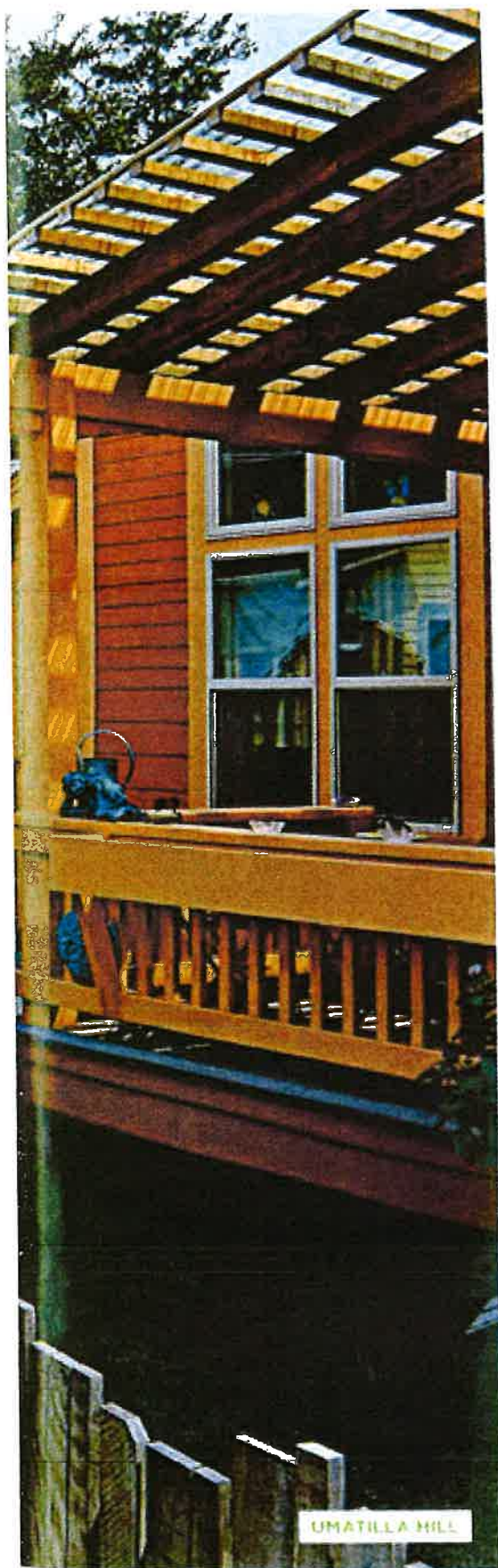
"We have less than the square footage of the typical American home," Todd Staheli says, "and I'm sure we have less than half the hassle."

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UMATILLA HILL

Smart pocket front porches bordering the curved pathway through Port Townsend's Umatilla Hill pocket neighborhood distinguish shared space from private yards.

A variety of ages and family types, from singles to empty nesters, enjoy the compact, open style encouraged by pocket neighborhoods.



“They’re made for the way people live”

Just outside Seattle, architect Ross Chapin's designs for cottage “pocket neighborhoods” show how crafting close-knit homes can create a sense of community

ROSS CHAPIN IS A TRUMPETER OF ARCHITECTURAL MODESTY and distinction in a sea of grandiose and vanilla. “I have a certain amount of save-the-world complex,” he says, and his method is to design and build small houses—650 to 1,600 square feet or so.

In 1998, Jim Soules, developer and founder of The Cottage Company, approached Ross about upping the ante from crafting homes to creating community. Together, they and other investors bought four 7,200-square-foot lots in a small town on the Puget Sound where a visionary zoning code was already in place. It allowed for double the density of housing units if the homes were limited to 975 square feet each, shared a common courtyard, and kept parking areas to the side. It was here that they devised their first pocket neighborhood: the Third Street Cottages. Jim describes pocket neighborhoods as “a group of homes that face and relate to one >



THIRD STREET COTTAGES



Third Street's cottages retained landscaping from the original orchard on the site. Some of them have Dutch front doors (above), enhancing both the private and communal features of the neighborhoods.

another around a landscaped common area the old bungalow court approach."

The Third Street Cottages' eight homes, all between 750 and 900 square feet, intimately hover around a lushly landscaped common courtyard (around the corner from Ross' own 1,250-square-foot house). Despite warnings from a few skeptics—"you're making a serious financial mistake," Ross recalls real estate agents saying— all eight cottages sold out immediately, and their value has increased dramatically in the 10 years since.

"When you design around the way people really live, the houses are a sensible size," he says. "We don't need a great room and a living room or a breakfast room and a dining room." His homes evoke a variety of housing types and

styles, from Victorian cottages to Craftsman bungalows, with front porches, built-in shelves, and loft areas, maximizing the minimal space. The cottages are lovingly rendered in soft olives and blues, warm terra-cottas, and buttery yellows. Residents remember Ross visiting daily to adjust the precise height of a table or tweak the colors to get what he calls "the sweet spot." "When it's just right, there's a resonance," Ross says. "It's what Goldilocks was searching for."

So successful were the Third Street Cottages that Ross and Jim set out—both together and separately—to re-create this model in other parts of the Puget Sound where a new zoning policy restricted development in wilderness areas. The pocket neighborhood model served to fulfill housing needs by increasing density >



Mira Jean Steimbacher says she loves knowing she can always call a neighbor to feed her dog, Luna, in a pinch.

“Neighborhood is not just an assembly of houses—it’s when people care about their surroundings and they’re engaging with one another.”

in an aesthetically pleasing, neighborhood-appropriate way. Soon new projects began: Conover Commons in Redmond, Washington; Greenwood Avenue Cottages in Shoreline, Washington; Danielson Grove in Kirkland, Washington; Umatilla (pronounced “you-matilla”) Hill in Port Townsend, Washington; and Salish Pond in Gresham, Oregon. More are on the way.

What makes them so popular is not just the cute factor—yes, they’re adorable—but also their effects: Smaller homes mean people spend more time outside; smaller yards mean they use the communal lawn. Detached parking forces people to pass one another on the path, as do detached mailboxes. Smaller houses and yards also require less maintenance, freeing up money and time for other things, such as kayaking or reading a book. Plus, having less space to fill

means you surround yourself only with things you use or really love. The No. 1 rule of living in a small house, declares Third Street resident Mira Jean Steimbacher, is “Something goes in, something comes out.”

While the design keeps utilities and other expenses down, it also inspires friendly feelings among the owners. “I’m working on the social dimension of architecture even as I’m working on the physical dimension,” says Ross. In spite of their close proximity to one another, residents report feeling safe, not exposed. Private spaces, such as bedrooms and baths, turn away from the commons; public areas, such as living rooms and kitchens, face them. Ross emphasizes shifts between public and private: A low fence, a narrow pathway, a border of perennials, a step, an eave, all distinguish one kind of territory from the next. “It’s not a physical barrier, it’s a

Pocket-Size Me!

How Third Street Cottages’ design fosters friendly feelings among neighbors, with a little help from the community.

- Pocket neighborhoods foster friendships among neighbors.
- They provide safe places for children to play, with short tailgates and uncies just beyond their front gate.
- Homes look out onto a park (not parking).
- Their placement contributes to the liveliness and walkability of the neighborhood.



DANIELSON GROVE



Going Public, Staying Private

In his designs for pocket neighborhoods, Ross tries to cultivate community by finding the right balance between public and private spaces.

Ross explains the outdoor pattern he often uses in his designs, starting from the parking area or street.

- Enter the neighborhood through a gate (or implied gate) into a shared courtyard edged with a low fence and perennial flower border.

- Pass through a gate into the private yard, which buffers the distance from the home to the commons.

- Provide a porch large enough to be used as a room, with easy access from the inside of the home and open to the shared public space.

- Provide a railing that's edged with flower boxes and low enough to still be friendly.

transition," explains Ross. "The security we're attempting to achieve is based upon neighborly relationships, knowing and caring about the people around you."

Know and care, they do. Even the animals get along—the three cats and five dogs living in Umatilla Hill frolic in harmony—and, of course, you don't need a ferocious guard dog. "You have heart in here; you can feel it," says Bob Poe, who moved from a larger, 3,600-square-foot house in Chicago to a Umatilla Hill cottage. "You have a feeling that you belong from the start."

At Third Street, they watch one another's pets and celebrate an annual illumination party where they line their homes with Christmas lights and flick them on at the same moment.

Not that living in a pocket neighborhood is

A well-designed porch, such as the one above right at Danielson Grove, becomes an extension of the house, in this case for after-school downtime. The pocket neighborhoods' design also allows the architect to be flexible with building placement, which helps preserve stands of mature trees.

always pure joy. Residents report scuffles over some of the shared chores and different needs—weekenders versus full-timers and people on fixed incomes versus those with disposable income. But that's part of community, too. "Diversity doesn't mean eternal bliss, but it adds liveliness," says Ross. "Neighborhood is not just an assembly of houses—it's when people care about their surroundings and they're engaging with one another. The physical space is the backdrop for our lives." ■

REAL ESTATE

The Allure Of Pocket Neighborhoods

Sheri Koones Contributor

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Jun 7, 2019, 02:35pm EDT

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Greenwood Avenue Cottages, designed by Ross Chapin Architects, was built by The Cottage Company in ...

[+] PHOTO COURTESY OF ROSS CHAPIN ARCHITECTS.

Today many people are feeling lost and disconnected. They don't need a great

Concord at
Riverwalk
Greenwich Blvd
East Greenwich
Castle Street
Cottages

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members lived close by, today family members are scattered in different cities and not near enough to allow for regular visits. In addition, many people want a place with green space so they don't see cars and traffic out of their windows. A wonderful solution to this dilemma is to live in a pocket neighborhood.



Many of the pocket communities have a central area to pick up mail so it creates an opportunity to ... [+]

PHOTO COURTESY OF ROSS CHAPIN ARCHITECTS

Pocket neighborhoods make up small clusters of houses in urban, suburban, or rural settings in which small-footprint homes are arranged around a shared common area. The closeness that is created in these communities encourages interaction among neighbors and is perfect for people who seek a stronger sense of community than is found in a conventional

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The Concord Riverwalk community is a pocket community in Concord MA made up of 13 cottages. The ... [+] PHOTO COURTESY OF NAT REA FOR PREFABULOUS WORLD, PUBLISHED BY ABRAMS

Although the houses are generally close together, they are designed to ensure privacy with the use of careful window placement and individual gates or gardens that designate private spaces. Parking is usually located away from the individual houses, so residents must walk through the common areas to get to their front doors, offering opportunities for a nod or chat with a neighbor. Some communities, where weather is a major factor, will have attached garages.

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This Grow pocket community was built on Bainbridge Island, WA. The houses were designed by architect ...

[+] PHOTO COURTESY OF ANTHONY RICH FOR PREFABULOUS WORLD, PUBLISHED BY ABRAMS

Ross Chapin, an architect in Langley, Washington, first coined the term, **pocket neighborhood**. With pressure in the City of Langley, Washington, for more housing, the town adopted a new zoning code, Cottage Housing Development, to allow for more dense development without sprawling new houses. This new zoning law allows for up to double the density of detached homes in all single-family zones — providing the ground floor area is less than 700 square feet and total area including the second floor is less than 975 square feet. The houses need to face a common landscaped area and have parking not visible from the street. These projects had to be reviewed by the town planning and review boards before

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developed across the United States and Canada, with dozens of new pocket neighborhoods established.



Greenwood Avenue Cottages has front porches, on each cottage, so residents can easily socialize, ... [+]

PHOTO COURTESY OF ROSS CHAPIN ARCHITECTS

Chapin designed the first community with his development partners Jim Soules and Linda Pruitt to take advantage of this new zoning law with the Third Street Cottages in 1996. It included eight cottages, each about 650 square feet and with lots up to 900

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garden and parking is detached from the houses.


According to Chapin, one of the positive aspects of these communities is that the homes can be smaller. “There is no need for every home to be designed to host a large party one or two times per year, when a large commons room is available. Shared guestrooms in a commons house lessen the need for additional bedrooms in every house.” In addition he notes that some communities have shared cars so every family does not need to have a second or third car.

These communities are ideal for people in many different stages of their life. They offer a connection for older people who might be otherwise lonesome and also for younger people with small families. “In a pocket neighborhood,” Ross says, “a child will find close-by playmates and shirt-tail grandmas, while the parent will be at ease knowing they are in a safe place.”



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Greenwood Avenue Cottages with the common areas in the center. These are an important aspect of this ...

[+] PHOTO COURTESY OF ROSS CHAPIN

However this close proximity can create social problems, therefore Ross encourages developers to include a line item in their budget for a community facilitator. This person can help establish a framework for a healthy and thriving community, assisting with marketing and filtering potential residents, and facilitate early meetings to help them launch and establish a healthy community culture.

Ross notes “there is an epidemic of loneliness in Western culture, due in part from the isolation stemming from living in environments that emphasize privacy and independence over connection. Pocket neighborhoods offer an antidote for people wanting to live in a place where relations among neighbors take place easily in the course of daily life.”

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The Ithaca Voice

Sustainability, community key in new “pocket neighborhood” coming to Ithaca



by **Brian Crandall**
December 23, 2015



ITHACA, NY – Coming soon to the town of Ithaca: a new housing development that will bring 30 new homes into the Ithaca market. With a couple of big twists.

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For one thing, the Amabel (AM-uh-bel) project isn't going to be a group of McMansions on a cul-de-sac. Developer Susan Cosantini of Ithaca's **New Earth Living LLC** says her homes will be far from that stereotype. "The houses are around a common courtyard, they're designed so that the relationship is to each other rather than the street. With courtyards and gardens, there are spaces to foster social capital and communication. The houses are in conversation to each other, rather than the road."

Another big difference from the traditional Faux-Chateau: They're net-zero energy, meaning they're designed to produce as much energy as they use."There is also a very small carbon footprint. The lots are smaller, they leave as much natural space as possible, they are net-zero energy, with adequate roof area for solar panels and high-efficiency utilities. We're hoping to put in an electric car station as well," says Cosentini.

The project even addresses the topic of food security. Each house will have its own garden plots, and residents will share use of a barn, orchard, and eventually a root cellar. The "pocket neighborhood" of 30 new homes and one existing home and barn was approved by the town of Ithaca for the land at 619 Five Mile Drive earlier this month, after three years and multiple design studies. Lots are expected to begin sale

after March, with 12 different home configurations sized from 1,250-2,100 square feet, and starting in the upper \$200k range.

While it's pretty well known that Ithaca has a dearth of housing, Cosentini, a native Ithacan, Cornell alum and 30-year veteran of the construction industry, thinks her firm's project will be successful for one simple reason. "People are lonely, I think."

"People want social connections, it brings meaning and purpose. We don't have enough of that, generally. At the same time, I'm trying to incorporate adequate privacy, and the more rural feeling will help with that. People want to have closer relationships." Cosentini says that a potential buyer survey New Earth Living posted on its Amabel webpage drew 130 responses, of which about 60% were from the Ithaca area, and 15% from outside New York State.

"People want somebody to have a glass of wine with and shoot the breeze, process life. It's a lot more valuable than a stupid internet connection."

Cosentini says the buyer experience goes beyond a home lot and standard Home Owners' Association. "The homes are proactively designed – we'll host "Amabel connections", where people will engage in conversation with each other online through forums as they grow interested and decide whether or not to live at Amabel. Everybody has the opportunity to look at each others profiles, ask evocative thought questions, and engaging in social capital-building."

Once 20 people are committed, Cosentini says work will begin on infrastructure, like sewer and road improvements, a cost she estimates at over a million dollars. The site, one mile from Ithaca city's State Street corridor, will use town water and sewer. "[Amabel]'s more of an antidote to sprawl, rather than sprawl. The site is a perfect location. Hopefully it does diminish random rural lot development, and reduce environmental impact."

For Cosentini, the construction of Amabel will be a major life achievement. "I got into the trades thanks to a boyfriend I had at the time, and because it was outside and I love being outside. I was terrible at it at first, I didn't even know the names of tools, but I persevered! Community and construction are big passions for me."

[do_widget id= text-61]



BRIAN CRANDALL

Brian Crandall reports on housing and development for the Ithaca Voice. He can be reached at bcrandall@ithacavoice.com. [More by Brian Crandall](#)

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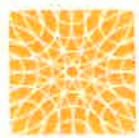
The award-winning team behind Emerson Green has created some of the most innovative residential communities in New England.

The Team

NOW Communities

NOW Communities

Under the direction of veteran developer Dan Gainsboro, NOW Communities creates community-focused neighborhoods that emphasize sustainability and energy efficiency. The firm's first major residential development, Concord Riverwalk, was an immense success – earning acclaim from planners, architects, and environmentalists alike, and generating tremendous demand for its cottage-style units. NOW Communities has been recognized with some of the architecture and urban development industry's most prestigious awards, including Builder Magazine's Project of the Year, the National Association of Homebuilder's Community of the Year, and the American Institute of Architects' New England Design Honor Award.



UNION STUDIO

ARCHITECTS

Union Studio

Union Studio (formerly Donald Powers Architects) was founded in 2001 with the goal of making an impactful civic contribution to communities of all types through exemplary architecture and urban design. The firm served as the architects on the Concord Riverwalk project and received an Honorable Mention from the New England Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) for their work on the project. The Union team embraces a traditional, pedestrian-friendly approach to design featuring vibrant, beautiful spaces that help to enrich our communal and civic life.



Ajax Partners

Ajax Partners is a team of dedicated and experienced real estate professionals assembled for the purpose of investing in and developing a multi-sector real estate portfolio. The team has extensive real estate experience accumulated through hundreds of project transactions with a value in excess of \$10 billion. Ajax is committed to developing and managing assets in a sustainable way, and their team approaches sustainability with respect to the relationship between the economic, environmental, and social factors that affect a site, its occupants, and the surrounding community. The firm has been involved in numerous residential projects in the Boston metropolitan area as well as ventures in New York and Philadelphia. Previous local projects include Brookside Mill, a 40,000-SF mill building in Westford, Mass., which was converted into luxury loft condominiums.



Dan Gainsboro

NOW COMMUNITIES



Donald Powers

UNION STUDIO

Our Communities

The team behind Emerson Green has created some of the most innovative residential communities in New England. As recognized experts in the creation of new traditional communities, NOW Communities and Union Studio have won a combined total of over 25 national awards including the National Association of Homebuilders' "Community of the Year," Builder Magazine's "Project of the Year," and Professional Builder Magazine's "Project of the Year." [Click here to see Emerson Green featured on This Old House.](#)

Communities Designed by Union Studio and Now Communities.



CONCORD RIVERWALK, CONCORD, MA

Riverwalk is a compact "pocket neighborhood" of 13 Net Zero possible homes, carefully designed with details and systems that enable energy-conscious residents to have all of their daily energy needs met by renewable, on-site solar collection. The market-rate cottages each feature 2 or 3 bedroom layouts and range from 1,340 to 1,760 sf. Building upon a site plan concept developed by celebrated cottage neighborhood planner Ross Chapin, Union was asked by the client to refine and expand the initial masterplan while developing the aesthetic and details for the Net Zero cottages themselves.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

[See Other Communities Designed by Union Studio.](#)



HERITAGE SANDS, DENNISPORT, MA

Designed in the tradition of a New England seaside cottage colony, this new community exemplifies casual coastal summer living on Cape Cod, MA. The 65 modestly-sized, 1-3 bedroom seasonal cottages are designed to maximize privacy while bringing the outdoors inside. They offer exterior spaces that function as outdoor rooms and create common areas to connect the community to itself and the seaside. Walking paths, community parks and pavilions connect the cottages to each other and offer settings from which to enjoy ocean views, while a community pool and recreational building create additional places for gatherings and celebrations.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)


COTTAGES ON GREENE, EAST GREENWICH, RI

Located in the waterfront, "main street" town of East Greenwich on a .85 acre lot, fifteen units of mixed-income condominiums have been organized into a compact cottage court development. These 2-bedroom, 1,000 SF "cottages" are a mix of building types consisting of free-standing single units, duplexes, and a 3-unit townhouse structure. Despite nine of the units being attached, the overall neighborhood appears as a cluster of 1 ½ story free-standing cottages organized around a linear court and gardens. Bio-swales and rain gardens have been used not only as stormwater management, but as the landscape theme of the neighborhood: small bridges and boardwalks cross and re-cross the spillways and ponds creating a defining image of the landscape. The common spaces are anchored by community gardens, well contained behind white picket fences, and a more formal sod linear court which provides a setting for neighborhood gatherings as well as a fittingly formal address on the public street.

The front porch community offers a unique alternative for home buyers looking for a safe, walkable neighborhood with shared upkeep.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)


WARWICK GROVE, WARWICK, NY

As members of the masterplanning team led by Duany Plater-Zyberk, Union worked with a private developer to design homes and architecture that would fit seamlessly with the traditional upper Hudson River community of Warwick, NY. Building on the forms and materials found within the existing community, Union developed award-winning housing design that recalls the past while providing amenities of modern living.

Union designed all of the single-family housing prototypes for this 215 unit traditional neighborhood, in addition to designing the community building, pool and gym — which form the physical and communal heart of Warwick Grove.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

LUDLOW COVE COTTAGES, PORT LUDLOW, WA

Following on the heels of our work in Anacortes, WA, Union Studio has been commissioned to design a new prototype neighborhood of 42 cottages at the Resort of Port Ludlow in Washington State. Located on the eastern side of the Olympic Peninsula, this new neighborhood will offer a selection of woodland, park-front and waterfront homes.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



SAN JUAN PASSAGE, ANACORTES, WA

This unique neighborhood of 100 homes has been designed in its entirety by Union Studio to be the first LEED rated neighborhood of its type in the region. Situated on 24 acres overlooking the San Juan Islands in Anacortes Washington, this neighborhood has succeeded in providing an alternative for small sustainable design that represents the state of the art in sustainable

technology, while preserving the traditional character of coastal architecture that is so important to the region.

Thorough energy modeling and careful administration of the LEED certification process was instrumental in the early design phases – effort that has been more than recouped in payback to the environment and the overall quality of this remarkable place.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



SANDYWOODS FARM, TIVERTON, RI

Sandywoods Farm is a unique arts and agricultural community designed to combine affordable rental and market-rate housing with a working farm, mixed-use/retail as well as studio, gallery, and performance space for artists, taking a multi-use approach that fosters a strong community identity. Sandywoods includes 50 affordable cottages for rent and a future phase of 24 single-family homes for ownership. In addition, the project preserves 147 acres of land for a working farm, open space, community gardens. Due to the compact planning of the neighborhood, the remaining site has been donated to The Nature Conservancy. A community "Grange Hall" – and other community space within the development — features theater performances, potlucks, cooking classes, and other group events. Power will be provided for nearly all of Sandywoods residents by a 250 kW wind turbine on site.

Working with a local nonprofit developer to bring the project to fruition, Union Studio created the masterplan and designed all of the buildings that populate this agri-arts community.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

In approaching the master planning process, Union Studio endeavors to connect, connect, and connect; to knit seamlessly with the community and to create walkable neighborhoods of residents, services, and institutions.

Awards

Union Studio's team of designers have been nationally recognized for their unique approach to community planning and residential architecture.



+ [Pacific Coast Builder's Conference "Grand Award"](#)



+ [Professional Builder: "Project of The Year" and "Platinum: New Community"](#)



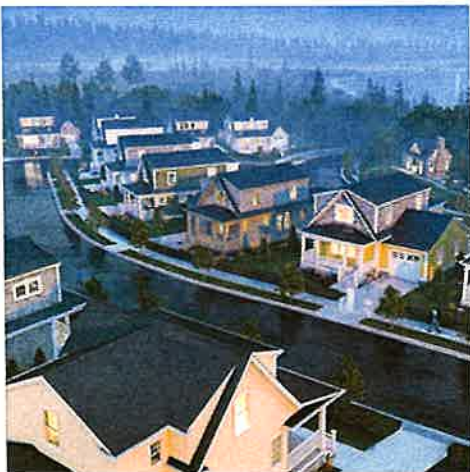
+ [National Association of Homebuilders: Green Community Platinum Award](#)



+ [Grow Smart RI: Outstanding Smart Growth Project Award](#)



+ [APA RI Chapter: Outstanding Neighborhood Planning Award](#)



+ [Builder Magazine: Grand Award, Production Home under 2,000 sf](#)



+ [Grow Smart RI: Outstanding Smart Growth Project Award](#)



+ [Builder Magazine: "Project of The Year"](#)



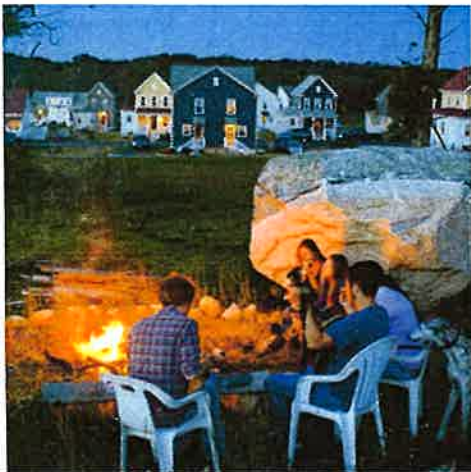
+ [AIA Rhode Island: Honor Award for Sustainable Design](#)



+ Multifamily Executive: Merit Award for "Best Re-Use of Land"



+ APA RI Chapter: Award for Mixed-Use



+ CNU New England Chapter: Urbanism Award



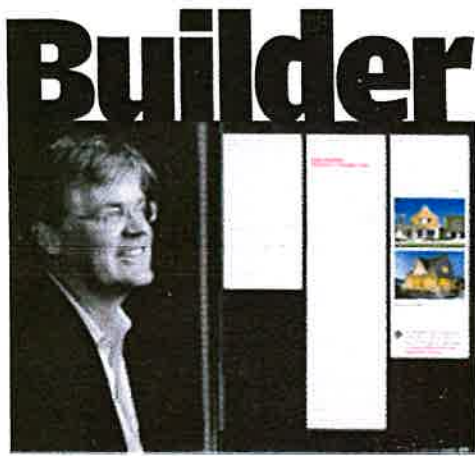
+ National Housing & Rehab Assoc: J. Timothy Anderson Award



+ National Association of Homebuilders: "Community of The Year" Award



+ AIA RI Chapter: Merit Award in Urban Design



+ [BUILDER Magazine: Wm S Marvin "Hall of Fame" for Design Excellence](#)



+ [APA MA Chapter: Project Planning Award](#)



+ [CNU National Charter Award: Honorable Mention](#)

CASTLE STREET COTTAGES

POCKET NEIGHBORHOOD

EAST GREENWICH, RI



Aerial Rendering © Union Studio

AWARDS

2020 Best in America Living
Awards: Platinum Award for
Community of the Year

The Castle Street Cottages were born of their context. Situated on a hill looking out to the harbor and up to the main street to the west, the cottages draw their inspiration from both the workers' cottages and the grander homes of this "Hill and Harbor District". They represent an appropriate, but creative solution to the challenge of situating a multi-unit project in an historic neighborhood of single-family cottages. Added to the intrinsic efficiency of compact units, and a relatively high density, the inclusion of 2 units deed-restricted to people with low and moderate incomes ensures this is affordable to many.

Because much of the site was elevated from Castle Street, the most prominent theme of the site design are the grand steps which lead up to the shared courtyard. These steps solve the grade issue while providing a fitting and impressive "address" on Castle Street for this pocket neighborhood. Contrasted with the monumental scale of the steps is the intimate scale of both the cottages themselves and the beautiful courtyard they share. Taken together the outdoor kitchen, perfectly-scaled gathering spaces, and front porches of the highly efficient homes themselves, make a place where neighborliness is not taken for granted.



UNION STUDIO
ARCHITECTURE & COMMUNITY DESIGN

140 Union Street Providence, Rhode Island 02903 401.272.4724 unionstudioarch.com

CASTLE STREET COTTAGES

PROJECT DATA

USE
Private Single Family Homes

SIZE
11,000 SF

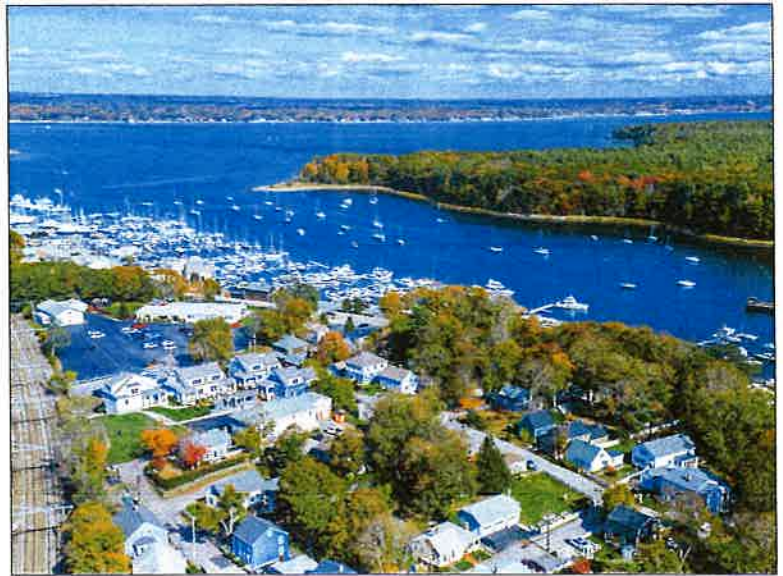
DATE
Completed in 2020

COST
Held at Owner's request

CLIENT TYPE
Private Developer

REFERENCE
Jerry Zarrella, President
East Greenwich Cove Builders
(401)884-9900

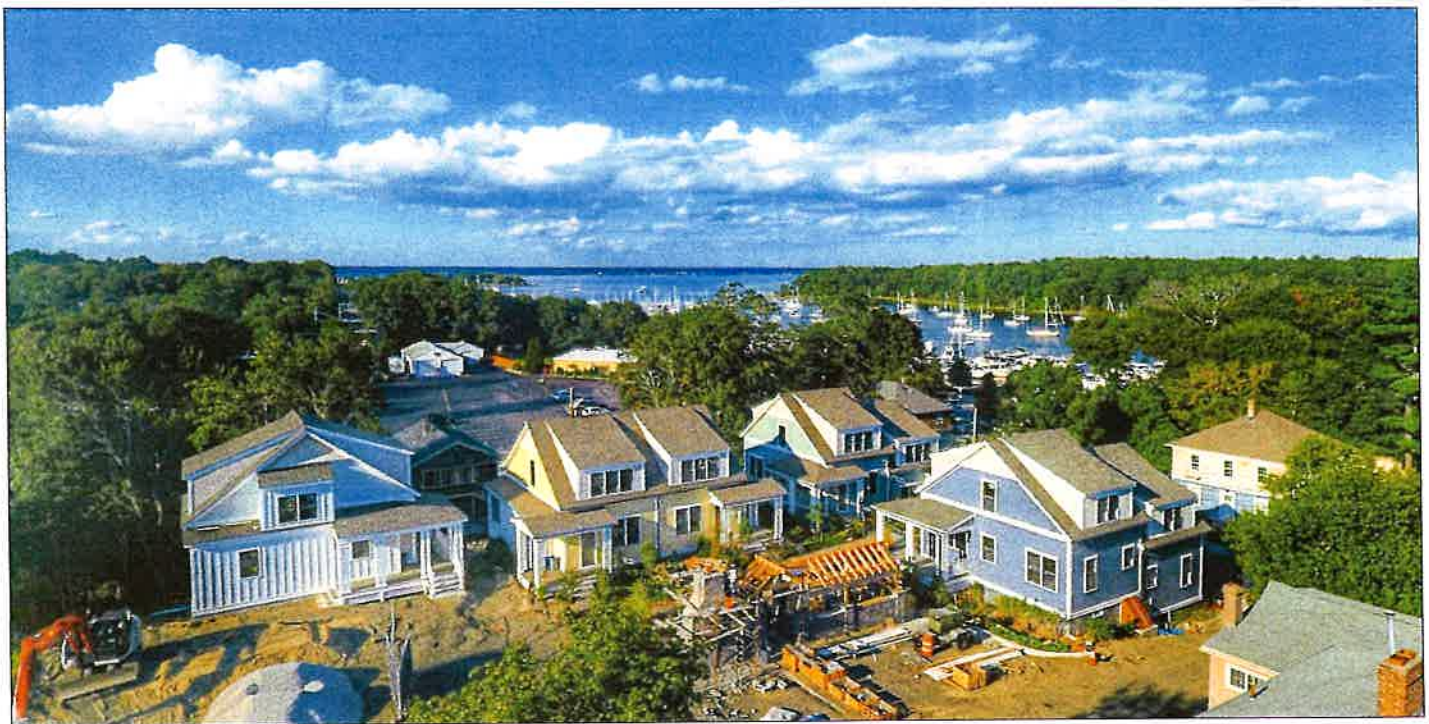
UNION STUDIO SCOPE OF WORK
Master Planning, Regulatory Approvals, Architectural
Design and Construction Administration



Aerial views showing area of Castle Street Pocket Neighborhood



Exterior and Interior details of this Single-Family Community



Aerial views showing area of Castle Street Pocket Neighborhood



+ [Professional Builder Magazine: Best in American Living Award](#)

A conversation with Dan Gainsboro and Donald Powers



Don Powers and Dan Gainsboro, the leaders of the design and development team, sat down with Boston Globe reporter Kevin Dupont to discuss what makes their communities unique.

Let's start by discussing your approach to creating a neighborhood

× [See discussion](#)

DON: There's a full-on New Urbanist movement based upon creating, placemaking, and fighting against the conventional way of building which has been broadly termed "sprawl." Sprawl is what you all recognize as cul-de-sacs, house farms, faux colonials on an acre-and-a-half with no sidewalks and huge garages. New Urbanists are reintegrating communities and bringing in not only a mix of uses, but a mix of housing types, so we get people of different demographics living together with the idea that a well-designed community with a wide array of people is going to be a much more enjoyable and economically resilient kind of community.

DAN: Resilient in what sense?

DON: In the sense that the different housing types have the ability for one type to succeed while others are slowing down. There is a term that New Urbanists have borrowed from science that the suburbs that we have created are "mono-cultures." Mono-cultures are where the whole development is targeted at a specific price range, say between \$350k-\$400k, with all the same type of house, so if that market collapses the

whole thing collapses. That has other ramifications in the social structure of a neighborhood, like the ability to age in place. You come in as a young couple, you rent the apartment, then get a little money together and buy one of the duplexes. After you have kids the duplex isn't big enough so you buy a single family home across the street. You do all of this in the same neighborhood so as to build lifelong connections. Some of this is idealistic; clearly it doesn't always happen like that. But even if people aren't asking or say they are not interested in all that, they will become interested once they enter the fold and they see this internal migration going on.

DAN: Doesn't that speak to a sort of a yearning?

DON: I believe people yearn to be a part of a true community

DAN: This is exactly what happened at Concord Riverwalk. When most of the people started to explore what their next move was, it was not like they could plug into a Google search for something that would yield "Riverwalk." I'm always struggling with how we make people aware. I think the yearning is very real and very tangible. And the question is how do you then start to make more people aware that this actually exists as an opportunity?

DON: The avenue is finding people who are open to a set of ideas; they are not shopping for a commodity. They are looking for more than a house and know that they want something different.

DAN: How do you build, how do you design congeniality?

DON: Interestingly it is not as mystical as it would seem. You can't create a "faux community," but you can create the structure that would facilitate community. What new urbanism does is try to cultivate the best chance of community happening by balancing private and public space — by doing very particular things, like putting a house closer to the street because it's in "conversational distance" from the sidewalk. Part of the reason you are sitting on the front porch is because you want to say hello to your neighbor. And if you don't, you go to your patio in the back.

DAN: You don't need a megaphone from the porch.

DON: You design the homes closer together to create a sense of enclosure on the street so that street is an "outdoor room." It is not just a way to get the car to the garage, it's the primary public space of a neighborhood. The primary effort is to create a sense that the architecture is cooperating to create a public realm. Often, the normal attitude of real estate development is "it's all about the house." We are going to give you all the square footage, the beautiful granite countertops, the media center, the backyard with the huge patio and the barbeque. This is the commodity context, where the value is all about the private realm and prioritizing the house as an object: there is no real thought given to the public realm. The primary value that a neighborhood like Emerson Green is trying to create is that sense of community. What you give up in terms of a private backyard that is big enough to play touch football is a front yard that looks out on a common green where you have a block party. You want to create two things, one you want to create an environment that is enjoyable to walk in and two, you want to create some destinations that are worth walking to.

There is probably a small market at this point who are looking for net zero, right? That's their entry point.

+ [See discussion](#)

Did she tell you why she was in love?

+ [See discussion](#)

I think some of this strikes me as what's old is new again. Because, from my own aspect, I grew up in a town center so many of the elements that you've incorporated here are just what we had in a town center--this is passé now, but you'd walk to the meat market, the general grocer, the hardware store and the cobbler.

+ [See discussion](#)

It's a yearning.

+ [See discussion](#)

Yeah, the lead architectural building was the garage.

× [See discussion](#)

DON: I've always recognized that what we were building in our normal subdivision was deficient. We've lived with it so long now that most people can't conceive of anything else. Especially the level of the planning board, you go to present a traditional neighborhood and they think it's a radical, it's dangerous. And you say your highest priced neighborhood in your town a mile away is planned with these exact dimensions

— and everyone wants to be there — and you think it's a radical thing. I think that once buyers compares these walkable neighborhoods to the conventional suburban stuff, they understand the difference and what a difference they can make on their quality of life.

But I think that placemaking runs through the whole thing. Everything from the placement of the street trees—we worked very hard to put the street trees closer to the street—to setting the sidewalk behind a ribbon of grass instead of having the sidewalk right on the road. All of these things communicate a certain character – one that you don't often get in newer developments.

DAN: So, it's also self-selecting.

DON: That's true.

It is, and I wanted to touch on that too. So it must be a challenge for you folks in terms of designing that you can't target one market. So you've got to build these with the idea that it's going to be some single professionals, it's going to be some young married couples, it's going to see couples with two kids and the dog, it's going to be on the verge of empty nesters and beyond, correct?

→ [See discussion](#)

What about the idea of not having enough privacy? Of a neighborhood being too social?

x [See discussion](#)

DON: I've always said that if you really want to encourage community, give people their own space first. All of the housing projects of the 60's and 70's that had this social utopian where you walk out into this common space never work. People retreat. They don't like to be in that no man's land. In some ways the porch is literally the buffer between the public and private. If you don't have that porch, you step out of the front door and you're suddenly unsafe in a metaphorical way.

Exposed

x [See discussion](#)

DON: Robert Frost said, "Good fences make good neighbors." I think is the truth. On a front porch the presence of that railing and grade change create that ability for a person to go up to the edge and talk to their neighbor.

DAN: These homes do serve very well for a retreat

DON: They'll be quiet and comfortable.

DAN: Absolutely, the homes are designed to be both. We are going to offer folks the opportunity to get to a net zero possible platform energy which means the homes will have the ability to produce enough energy as they use over the course of a year. In our efforts to get to net zero possible, the homes need to be air tight. Leaking energy, whether it's hot or cold air, is a big source of energy loss.

DAN: I'd be interested in talking about the idea of placemaking and its role in this project.

DON: Yeah, I think that plan is about creating at least three different kinds of places, four maybe at Emerson Green. One is the sort of the perfect street in phase one where the houses face each other across a road that's as narrow as we were allowed to make it. Another is the formal green that is faced by townhouses and the multi-family and that has a different aspect and character to it where you might imagine that there's a block party or ultimate Frisbee game. The third is the crescent which is off to the far left and that is deliberately, in geometry and every other way, more casual so the houses are set further back and there's a big lawn that is not as formal and that creates a different kind of place where the homes presumably will feel a little more expansive. And then you have kind of a rural street on the back. The point of all of that is to give every fragment of the overall plan its own character and sense of identity. These are a series of neighborhoods within the neighborhood where someone feels like they belong to that particular little neighborhood. We've created collections of 15 or 18 homes that have their own character.

But I think that placemaking runs through the whole thing. Everything from the placement of the street trees,—we worked very hard to put the street trees closer to the street—to setting the sidewalk behind a ribbon of grass instead of having the sidewalk right on the road. All of these things communicate a certain character – one that you don't often get in newer developments.

DAN: I think what's cool about that, maybe it's just because of my background in architecture and interest in design, is that I can imagine on a week night or a weekend just sort of walking around to these different places and experiencing the richness and uniqueness of each one of them. It's all within a relatively tight area. I can imagine that being appealing to people.

How do you handle the interior space of a smaller home?

Cottage Housing in Your Community

A Guide to Drafting a Cottage Housing Ordinance

Introduction

Cottage housing is receiving increased attention as a way to meet the needs of a significant and growing share of the housing market. A number of successful examples in the region provide useful lessons.

With the high price of multi-family zoned land, cottage development is really only practical in single family zones. Several jurisdictions in the Puget Sound area have adopted, or are considering adoption of ordinances to allow construction of cottage housing in those zones.

It should be emphasized that cottage housing does not represent a completely new type of zoning, but rather an alternative use of land with an existing underlying zoning. In some respects cottage housing is similar to single family housing and some respects it is more like multi-family housing.

Approaches to allowing cottage housing will vary by jurisdiction, existing land uses and market conditions. What works well in one area will not necessarily be appropriate in another. This report provides guidance to those looking for an approach that will both encourage cottage construction and ensure that the developments fit well into existing neighborhoods.

General considerations

When drafting a cottage housing ordinance the following should be kept in mind:

Entitlement. Most cottage projects will be built on infill sites in established single family neighborhoods, so jurisdictions will need some process to determine if a proposed cottage development is appropriate. This process should not be so cumbersome and uncertain that it scares away potential cottage developers and results in conventional single family development on parcels of land that would work well for cottages. An administrative conditional use permit seems to strike a good balance between developer certainty and community input.

Making cottage development pay. Because of the high price of land in multi-family zones, infill cottage development is, for the most part, only practical in single family zones. But for builders to want to undertake cottage development, as opposed to building single family houses as the zoning would allow, cottage development has to be at least an equal, if not a better business proposition than single family. A cottage ordinance and its accompanying processes must not be so restrictive that they tend to make single family construction a better option.

Cottage housing does not represent a completely new type of zoning, but rather an alternative use of land with an existing underlying zoning.

For builders to want to undertake cottage development, as opposed to building single family houses as the zoning would allow, cottage development has to be at least an equal, if not a better business proposition than single family

Most jurisdictions measure allowable densities by units-per-acre or by minimum lot sizes. But all units are not created equal, and such measures foster a misperception of cottage housing

Cottages allow empty-nesters, seniors, the newly-single to get the equity out of their large house but still have a detached home in a comfortable setting near friends and family

Re-defining density. Most jurisdictions measure allowable densities by units-per-acre or by minimum lot sizes. But all units are not created equal, and such measures foster a misperception of cottage housing. For cottages it is more helpful to think of:

Floor area ratio (FAR). By measuring the total floor area of a cottage development against the parcel size, cottages will likely have a smaller impact than the single family homes that would be allowed in the zone.

Population. A cottage development will likely have the same, or fewer people than the single family homes that could be built on the site.

Cars and traffic. A cottage development that attracts a mix of singles and couples will have no more cars than a group of houses, especially those with teenagers.

Another way to think about cottage housing is to measure *intensity of use* rather than counting the number of structures.

What is the market? Cottage developments built to-date have attracted large numbers of buyers who are single. Some developments have attracted young or empty-nester couples. Children are rarely seen in cottage housing built thus far. A somewhat larger cottage could work for families with children, but parking may become an issue as those children get to driving age.

Planning decisions can affect the ability of builders to target certain market segments. Holding cottages to too small a size limit may eliminate couples or small families (single parent with one child, for example) from the market. Zoning that makes a single floor possible will make cottages attractive to seniors who want to avoid stairs. Parking requirements (either minimums or maximums) will strongly influence marketability.

Meeting a neighborhood need. Cottage housing provides a way for people to give up their large house but stay in their neighborhood. The reason that many people hold onto large single family houses long after they need all the bedrooms and the big yard is simply that they want to stay in an area they are familiar with. Cottages allow empty-nesters, seniors, the newly-single to get the equity out of their large house but still have a detached home in a comfortable setting near friends and family.

Affordability. Although cottages are small, they are not necessarily inexpensive to build. A cottage includes all of the most expensive rooms of a house (kitchen, bathrooms) as well as heating, ventilation and other systems. Moreover, it can be expensive to do construction work in the tight spaces of a cottage cluster.

Nevertheless, cottages and small lot houses have been built to sell at modest prices and have introduced some affordability into desirable neighborhoods. Some requirements, however, will affect costs and the ability of a developer to build an affordable cottage cluster. For instance, full two-story framing is less expensive than story-and-a-half framing, so, ironically, height restrictions can drive up construction costs. Excessive setbacks, separations and parking requirements can use land that could otherwise accommodate

Rather than codifying all parameters of cottage development, jurisdictions should consider a more informal approach of design guidelines and design review

A two-for-one cottage ordinance can work where land is relatively inexpensive. In high demand areas . . . an increase in the number of cottages allowed may tip the economic scales in favor of a cottage housing development

more cottages or common buildings. If impact fees, permit fees and utility hook-up fees are based on single family housing, they may be unreasonably high.

Utilities. The treatment of public utilities is not a land use issue, but it needs attention. Because most cottages are sold in condominium ownership, the water utility can provide a single water meter and leave it up to the owners association to install sub-meters and collect water and sewer fees from residents. Where sewer rates are tied to water use, offset meters should be allowed to account for water used in site irrigation. The stormwater run-off from cottages will be about the same as the equivalent single family development and should be treated the same.

Design guidelines and review. Rather than codifying all parameters of cottage development, jurisdictions should consider a more informal approach of design guidelines and design review. These processes, which should be handled administratively, allow a developer and city to work together to craft a development that meets community needs and works well with the site and the target market.

Parameters for Cottage Housing

Following are descriptions of the key parameters that make up a cottage housing ordinance, as well as some possible approaches. For illustration, the application of each parameter within three cottage developments is shown. (descriptions of these projects are at the back of the report). Comments address both market and neighborhood factors.

Cottage Units Allowed

One way to determine the number of cottages that can be built on a site is to work through the underlying zoning. Cottage ordinances adopted thus far in the region allow up to two cottages in place of each single family house that would otherwise be built on the site. Where the zoning is more dense and/or the cottages are larger, this might be reduced to something like 1.75 cottages per house.

Ravenna	Greenwood Avenue	Poulsbo Place
3 for 1, not counting carriage units; 4.5 to 1 counting carriage units.	2 for 1	Part of a planned unit development. Cottages are 12 units/acre on land zoned up to 22 units/acre.

Comments: A two-for-one cottage ordinance can work where land is relatively inexpensive. In high demand areas a developer could easily find that building one large house is easier and more profitable than building two cottages. In that case, an increase in the number of cottages allowed may tip the economic scales in favor of a cottage housing development.

Creating a sense of community requires at least four cottages around a common open space. If a cottage cluster gets too big it begins to lose the sense of intimacy

The size of a cottage will play a large part in determining what market segments find it appealing. . . . A cottage cluster could have several different sized cottages, giving buyers a variety of choices and encouraging some diversity of household sizes and make-ups.

Cluster Size

The clustering of cottages is an important design feature. Creating a sense of community requires at least four cottages around a common open space. If a cottage cluster gets too big -- more than a dozen units -- it begins to lose the sense of intimacy. A masterplanned community may have as many units as space will allow and the market will absorb. These units should, however, be arranged in their own smaller clusters.

Ravenna	Greenwood Avenue	Poulsbo Place
Six cottages and three carriage units in one cluster	Eight cottages and one common building in one cluster	Six clusters with between five and ten cottages per cluster

Comments: The cluster and its central open space is meant to provide a quasi-public space for residents, with a presumption of a certain amount of sociability. Planning and design guidelines, however, should not try to force this too much. Experience and site-specific considerations will be the best guide to what configurations and features will work best.

Total Floor Area per Cottage

To be defined as a "cottage," some upper limit may be placed on total floor area. The examples top out at 1265 square feet, but it is suggested that a cottage could be larger.

Ravenna	Greenwood Avenue	Poulsbo Place
850 sf	768 to 998 sf	870 to 1265 sf

Comments: The size of a cottage will play a large part in determining what market segments find it appealing. Smaller cottages -- under 1000 square feet or so -- will attract mostly single buyers with some couples, whereas larger cottages work well for couples or even small families. A cottage cluster could have several different sized cottages, giving buyers a variety of choices and encouraging some diversity of household sizes and make-ups.

The option of a larger cottage will be attractive to developers since the additional space, such as an extra bedroom, is less expensive to build, but may increase the value of the building significantly. If larger cottages are part of a development, however, provision must be made for some additional parking that would be needed for teenagers with cars.

Main and Second Level Floor Areas

Regulating the main floor area controls the footprint and scale of each cottage. Some jurisdictions have then imposed a maximum for the second floor as a percentage of the first floor area, in order to minimize mass and bulk. These parameters can vary within the cluster.

Another consideration comes from viewing cottages as senior housing. Many seniors will look for a one-story home so they do not have to worry about stairs as they become older.

Ravenna	Greenwood Avenue	Poulsbo Place
425 sf main floor, 425 sf upper floor	648 to 798 sf main floor. 118 to 203 sf upper floor	805 sf main floor, 460 sf upper floor in two-story cottage. 870 sf main floor in rambler.

Comment: Instituting complex formulas for floor areas can give neighbors some assurance that the cottage development will not overwhelm its surroundings. At the same time, rigid formulas will complicate the design process and may foreclose options that would work well on a given site (for example, a daylight basement on a steep site).

Another consideration comes from viewing cottages as senior housing. Many seniors will look for a one-story home so they do not have to worry about stairs as they become older.

Height Limit

A number of factors determine appropriate height limits for cottage development. The underlying zoning will have a height maximum. Additional height can be granted for steeply pitched roofs (greater than 6:12, for example).

Ravenna	Greenwood Avenue	Poulsbo Place
28 feet max	22 feet max	20 feet max.

Comments: The architectural styles favored in cottage developments built thus far tend to include lower plate heights on the second floor, placing part of the living space in the roof. This building style is common in most neighborhoods, so cottages built this way will fit in. But because this style uses dormers and results in complicated interior and exterior angles, it is a more expensive style of construction, as compared to a full two-story building with an attic. Going to a full two stories must be approached with great care, however, due to concerns about "skinny houses."

Another architectural feature that will affect height is the desire to raise cottages off the ground. When cottages are clustered close together, a few steps up to a porch allows for a visual separation between community space and private space.

Common Open Space

Cottage developments generally cluster around some common open space. The size of this space will be determined by the overall density of the project, the footprints of the cottages as well as the setbacks and separations.

Ravenna	Greenwood Avenue	Poulsbo Place
200 square feet per unit	575 square feet per unit	Common space in clusters ranges from 259 sf to 780 sf per unit. 370 sf average.

Another architectural feature that will affect height is the desire to raise cottages off the ground. When cottages are clustered close together, a few steps up to a porch allows for a visual separation between community space and private space.

Building codes specify a minimum of six feet between structures for fire safety, and this may be sufficient in many developments.

Comments: More dense projects on expensive land will, naturally, have less open space, so it is important to maximize the common space by minimizing space in setbacks and separations.

Distance between Structures

The buyer of a cottage home is presumed to be more concerned with ownership of four walls and the simple fact of detachment, than with the distance from the neighbors. Building codes specify a minimum of six feet between structures for fire safety, and this may be sufficient in many developments.

Ravenna	Greenwood Avenue	Poulsbo Place
Six feet	10 feet minimum	Six feet

Comments: For projects with high land cost, the site plan will need to emphasize the maximum footprint of the cottages for economic reasons, and put as much of the remaining space as possible into the common areas. Such a site plan will need to have minimal separations. Careful design can preserve privacy.

Setbacks

Front, side and rear yard setbacks will likely begin with those in the underlying zoning. An averaging of setbacks around the side and rear yards can provide design flexibility while not overwhelming the neighbors.

Ravenna	Greenwood Avenue	Poulsbo Place
10 feet front, five feet side, two feet along alley	Average of 10 feet side and rear. Front setback N/A	Three feet side and rear, 10 feet front.

Comments: Setbacks from the street and from adjacent property represent land that cannot be used very productively in a cottage cluster. Because the emphasis of a cottage development is on common central open space, peripheral areas should not be expected to have much utility. Therefore, setbacks should be minimized so the central common space can be maximized. If setback averaging is used, the cottages closest to the property line may be those with the least bulk.

Setbacks from the street and from adjacent property represent land that cannot be used very productively in a cottage cluster. Because the emphasis of a cottage development is on common central open space, peripheral areas should not be expected to have much utility.

Parking

Parking is perhaps the most significant factor in the economics of cottage housing. The space needed to maneuver and park a car is nearly the same as the footprint of a small cottage. Moreover, clustering does not generally allow parking immediately adjacent to each cottage. Cottage projects must have enough land to provide a separate parking area, preferably out of view of the street. The presence of an alley can eliminate the need for a driveway and turn-around space.

The number of spaces required per unit will be determined primarily by the market segment the development is targeting. Smaller cottages (under 1000 square feet) will typically be owned by single adults, who will probably own just one car. Larger cottages are suitable for couples who may own two cars

One way to recoup the cost of providing parking is to build carriage houses over the parking area. . . . A likely configuration would be one unit over three or four spaces

and even a third if they have teenagers. If there is no on-street parking for guests, additional spaces will be needed on-site. Parking requirements may be lowered if good transit service is nearby.

One way to recoup the cost of providing parking is to build carriage houses over the parking area. Although it is possible to build one carriage unit over two parking spaces, a more likely configuration would be one unit over three or four spaces.

Ravenna	Greenwood Avenue	Poulsbo Place
One enclosed space per unit. Three carriage units on top of nine-car parking structure. On-street parking available	One enclosed space per unit and seven uncovered spaces. No on-street parking.	One enclosed space per unit. Some attached to unit. On-street parking available.

An evolutionary process

Although the region has seen several successful cottage developments, both new and old, the concept is still evolving. Developers continue to learn what designs and configurations work best for various market segments. Communities continue to learn how to make cottages fit well into existing neighborhoods.

Cottage ordinances should recognize the continuing evolution of cottage housing and be written with enough flexibility so that builders and communities can work together to create great projects. Jurisdictions should anticipate fine-tuning their approach to cottage housing after some projects are on the ground.

Cottage ordinances should recognize the continuing evolution of cottage housing and be written with enough flexibility so that builders and communities can work together to create great projects.

SECTION 0.00.000 COTTAGE HOUSING

- A. Cottage Housing is permitted in all residential zones by administrative Conditional Use Permit or Site Plan Approval.
- B. General development standards are listed in Table 0.00.000(A) and in this chapter.

TABLE 0.00.000(A)

Existing Single Family Zone - DU/Acre or SF/DU				
	R-4 or R-10,000	R-6 or R-7,200	R-8 or R-5,000	
Total Floor Area per Cottage	1,000 to 1,400 SF	975 to 1,200 SF	950 to 1,100 SF	
Main Level Max Floor Area:				
Min. Percentage of Cottages	700 to 800 SF	675 to 750 SF	650 to 700 SF	
All others	800 to 900 SF	800 to 850 SF	700 to 800 SF	
Cottage Units Allowed in Place of Each SFR Allowed by Zone:				
Main floor < 701 to 751 SF	2.00	2.00	2.00	
Main Floor > 750 SF	2.00	1.75	1.75	
Cluster Size -- Min and Max	4 and 12	4 and 12	4 and 12	
Height Limit -- Average	18 feet	18 feet	20 feet	
Additional Height if >6:12 pitch	25 to 28 feet	25 to 28 feet	25 to 28 feet	
Min. Common Open Space/Cottage	400 to 500 SF	250 to 350 SF	200 to 300 SF	
Min. Distance between Structures	10 to 15 feet	6 to 10 feet	6 feet	
Parking space per Cottage* (See also 0.00.000(C))	1.5 to 2.0	1.0 to 1.5	1.0 to 1.5	
Main Floor < 701 SF	2.0	1.0 to 2.0	1.0 to 2.0	
Main Floor > 700 SF				
Interior Setbacks from Adjacent Property:				
Average	15 to 20 feet	7 to 10 feet	7 feet	
Not less than	15 to 20 feet	5 to 7 feet	5 feet	
Setback from Public Street				
Average	15 to 20 feet	10 to 15 feet	7 to 12 feet	
Not Less than	10 feet	7 to 10 feet	5 to 10 feet	

C. Additional parking requirements and methods of modification.

1. 50 % of adjacent street parking spaces may count towards meeting minimum parking space requirements; however, at least 1.0 space per cottage must be provided on site.
 2. Parking may be reduced by 25% if there is bus service within 500 feet walking distance; however, there must still be at least 1.0 parking space per cottage on site.
 3. Parking spaces that are provided on site shall be clustered to the side or rear of the development unless the site is accessed directly from an alley and the parking is screened from the public streets and adjacent properties.
- D. Cottage orientation and application of current lot size requirements.
1. Cottages shall be oriented around the common open space.
 2. Cottages may be developed as multiple cottages per parcel. Minimum lot sizes per unit do not apply. *(Note: An exception for cottage housing should be noted in the code where minimum lot sizes for residential zones are prescribed).*

E. Additional restrictions.

(Additional possible restrictions include covered porches; pitched roofs; private yards; some parking with direct back-out into the street.)

NOTES ON FORM OF MODEL ORDINANCE

This model ordinance is not intended for adoption as is. The ordinance must be tailored to the needs of each individual jurisdiction. Also, the current code must be reviewed to ensure that the new cottage housing ordinance is consistent with all other code provisions. If amendments to other code language is necessary this can not be done by mere reference in this ordinance but requires a specific amendment. Each jurisdiction will have their own preferred form of adoption which will include such as things as a valid enacting clause, an effective date, a severability clause, and signatures of the appropriate officials.

Cottage Housing Examples

Ravenna Cottages

The Ravenna Cottages is a nine-unit project in Seattle's Ravenna/Greenlake neighborhood. Threshold Housing developed the project and all units have been sold to individual buyers at market prices. The project consists of six cottages facing each other across a central courtyard, and three carriage units that sit above a nine-car above-ground parking structure accessed from the alley. The Ravenna Cottages were built under the Seattle design demonstration program, which allows projects to be built that would not otherwise conform with existing zoning.

Parcel Size	10,500 sf. 0.25 acres
Number of Units	Nine
Density	37 units/acre net (no on-site right of way)
Type/Size of Units	Six detached cottages 850 sf. Three carriage units 830 sf
Building Height	Lowest point on site to highest point of a structure is 40 feet. Tallest structure is 30 feet.
Set-backs	Fifteen feet front yard, Five feet side yard. Zero along alley.
Site Coverage	Structures cover 55 percent of lot.
Open Space	Courtyard of approx. 1800 sf.
Parking	Nine covered stalls
Year built	2000/2001
Ownership	Condominium
Sales price.	Cottages \$288,000 to 308,000. Carriage units \$258,000 to 268,000
Buyer profile	Single professionals, retirees

Cottages at Poulsbo Place

Poulsbo Place is a planned unit development (PUD) just north of downtown Poulsbo, in Kitsap County. It is being developed by Security Properties. The 17.3 acre development was the former site of military housing. Four types of homes are being built, ranging from 870 square feet to 2250 square feet. The project includes a 3.7 acre section with 45 cottages arranged in clusters around common yards. Some front on the street while others front on walkways. Some have attached garages.

Parcel Size	Overall development is 17.3 acres. Cottage portion covers 3.7 acres.
Number of Units	45 cottages in six clusters within the larger development
Density	12.2 units/acre, gross (including private roads)
Type/Size of Units	Cottages. 870 to 1265 sf.
Building Height	Up to 20 feet
Set-backs	3 feet side and rear, 10 feet front
Site Coverage	33.3 percent
Open Space	Courtyards within each cluster vary in size.
Parking	One covered space per unit. Some detached, some attached.
Year built	1999-2001
Ownership	Fee simple
Sales price	\$149,000 to 180,000
Buyer profile	Empty nester, retirees

Greenwood Avenue Cottage Homes

This cluster of eight cottages is being built in Shoreline, under its cottage zoning ordinance which permits cottages as a conditional use. The 35,000 square foot parcel sits behind two single family homes fronting on the street. The cottages in the rear are accessed by a driveway between the houses. The cluster employs six different designs, with two models repeated. They surround a lawn and pea patch garden and share a common building and storage shed.

Parcel Size	34,755 sf. 0.8 acres
Number of Units	Eight
Density	10 units/acre gross (includes drive and parking area)
Type/Size of Units	Cottages. Between 968 sf. and 998 sf.
Building Height	18-22 sf
Set-backs	Average of 10 feet on side and rear. Parking structure is five feet on front. Closest cottage 30 feet on front.
Open Space	575 sf per cottage
Parking	Eight covered spaces, seven uncovered.
Year built	2001
Ownership	Condominium
Sales price	\$220,000 to 250,000
Buyer profile	Single professionals, women, empty nesters



Chapter 18.52 COTTAGE HOUSING

Sections:

- 18.52.010 Findings.**
- 18.52.020 Process.**
- 18.52.030 Neighborhood meeting.**
- 18.52.040 Definitions.**
- 18.52.050 Cottage housing developments.**
- 18.52.060 Applicability.**
- 18.52.070 Cottage housing development size.**
- 18.52.080 Special site requirements for cottage housing developments.**

18.52.010 Findings.

(1) The purpose of this chapter is to allow development of cottage housing developments that exhibit housing choices not currently available in Normandy Park's neighborhoods.

(2) The goals of cottage housing are to:

- (a) Foster a strong sense of community by design;
- (b) Allow a choice of alternatives for smaller households in ways that are compatible with existing single-family neighborhoods;
- (c) Provide incentives for building smaller, lower-impact houses; and
- (d) Encourage long-time Normandy Park residents to stay in the community by providing smaller homes and lots that require less maintenance. (Ord. 785 § 1, 2006).

18.52.020 Process.

(1) The applicant shall prepare a preliminary site plan and shall attend a pre-application meeting with the planning manager.

(2) When the planning manager determines that the preliminary plan meets the intent of this chapter, the applicant, in cooperation with the city, shall hold a neighborhood meeting. Notice shall be given to all property owners or residents within 300 feet of the proposed cottage housing development site. The applicant shall present and explain the plan to the attendees and seek input from those in attendance.

(3) A formal application shall be made to the city, in accordance with the requirements of Chapter [17.20](#) NPMC and the current fee ordinance.

(4) The planning commission shall hold a public hearing regarding the proposed cottage housing development, and make a recommendation to city council.

(5) The city council shall review the proposal in a public meeting and act on the application. (Ord. 785 § 2, 2006).

18.52.030 Neighborhood meeting.

(1) Intent. The purpose of having neighborhood meetings is to provide opportunities for nearby residents to obtain information about the proposal and provide comment on the overall cottage housing development design and concept before an applicant expends significant time and resources in developing the specific site and development features of the proposal. Applicants shall provide initial lot layouts and design. Designs shall be in accordance with the Normandy Park design guidelines.

(2) Requirements.

(a) The applicant for a cottage housing development is required to hold a minimum of one neighborhood meeting. The meeting shall be held after the pre-application meeting and before formal application.

(b) Notification of the meeting shall be mailed to property owners within 300 feet of the proposal and a sign will be posted on-site, according to the requirements of NPMC [17.12.040](#), Application – Notice posting.

(c) The city manager or designee shall participate in neighborhood meetings. (Ord. 785 § 3, 2006).

18.52.040 Definitions.

(1) Cottage.

(a) A cottage is a one- or one-and-one-half-story, detached, single-family dwelling unit, no less than 500 square feet and no larger than 1,050 square feet in total floor area.

(b) A one-and-one-half-story dwelling is defined as a structure in which at least 80 percent of the second floor height is wholly concealed beneath the primary roof, with the exception of gable end walls and dormers. Dormers may occupy up to 50 percent of the primary roof length. No portion of any dormer roof may project above the primary roof ridgeline.

(2) Cottage Housing Development. Cottage housing development is an alternative type of detached small single-family residences clustered around a common open space with parking located away from the houses and screened from the street. (Ord. 785 § 4, 2006).

18.52.050 Cottage housing developments.

(1) Purpose. The purpose of this chapter is to:

(a) Provide a housing type that responds to changing household sizes and ages (e.g., retirees, small families, single person households);

(b) Provide opportunities for ownership of small, detached dwelling units within a single-family environment;

(c) Encourage creation of more usable open space for residents of the development through flexibility in density and lot standards;

(d) Support the growth management goal of more efficient use of urban residential land; and

(e) Provide guidelines to ensure compatibility with surrounding land uses. (Ord. 785 § 5, 2006).

18.52.060 Applicability.

A cottage housing development is allowed in all single-family residential zones of the city within 300 feet of First Avenue South between 178th Street Southwest and 200th Street Southwest and all mixed use zones;

the map is shown in Attachment A to the ordinance codified in this chapter. All parent parcels shall be served by a public right-of-way. (Ord. 888 § 2 (Exh. A), 2012; Ord. 785 § 6, 2006).

18.52.070 Cottage housing development size.

Cottage housing developments shall contain a minimum of four and a maximum of 12 cottages located in a cluster or clusters to encourage a sense of community among the residents. (Ord. 785 § 7, 2006).

18.52.080 Special site requirements for cottage housing developments.

(1) Density, Lot Coverage, Height, Setback and Parking Requirements.

(a) Intent. The site requirements chart establishes the basic dimensional requirements for cottages. Development standards are intended to define design parameters of cottages to achieve compatibility with adjacent single-family residential uses.

(b) Requirements – Cottage Housing Developments Site Requirements Chart.

	Site Requirement
Cottages Allowed in Place of Each Standard Single-Family Home Allowed by the Density of the Zone ¹	2
Minimum Lot Frontage (in feet)	40 feet
Setbacks for All Structures from Adjacent Property Lines Along the Perimeter of the Site (except front or any public street setback) ^{2, 3}	10 feet
Front or Any Public Street Setback ⁴	20 feet
Minimum Distance Between Structures (including accessory structures)	10 feet
Maximum Lot Coverage for Structures	40 percent
Maximum Impervious Surface Area	60 percent
Minimum Common Open Space	400 square feet per cottage
Maximum Height for One-Story Cottages and Accessory Structures	18 feet
Maximum Height for 1-1/2-story Cottages ⁵	21 feet
Parking Spaces per Cottage ⁶	1.5 (less than 2 BR) 2.0 (2 BR or more)

Footnotes:

1. For the purpose of this calculation, fractional values shall be rounded to the nearest whole number (0.5 and above, round up; below 0.5, round down). In no case shall the number of cottages allowed in place of each standard sized house (as permitted by Normandy Park zoning code) exceed two.
2. When vehicular access to a cottage housing development is from an alley or access corridor, a five-foot minimum rear setback is allowed if it meets height requirements as outlined in NPMC [18.32.100\(7\)\(b\)](#).
3. Except eaves up to 18 inches.
4. Front orientation for purposes of lot setback requirements shall be the side or sides that address a public street or access corridor.

5. Except gable end walls, all parts of the structure above 12 feet, as defined in the height limitation below, shall be roofs pitched no less than 4:12 and no greater than 16:12, except shed roofs on dormers, which may be pitched at a minimum of 2:12. The maximum height of any portion of the roof, except chimneys or cupolas, shall not exceed 20 feet above finished first floor level. Height limitation: For the purposes of this chapter, the limitation is 18 feet for single story units and 21 feet for one-and-one-half-story units, as measured from the lowest point of finished grade at the perimeter of the finished structure. Landscaping structures (i.e., retaining walls, raised planting beds, steep slopes) which would effectively increase the total apparent height beyond the height limit are not permitted within 10 feet of any cottage.
6. The planning commission may reduce parking requirements based on the applicant's demonstration of site-specific factors that justify a lower standard, such as opportunities for transit service or anticipated number of residents.

(2) Cottage Floor Area.

(a) Intent.

- (i) Scale of Development. To ensure that the overall size, including bulk and mass of cottage structures and cottage housing developments, remains smaller and incur less visual impact than standard sized single-family dwellings, particularly given the allowed intensity of cottage dwellings.
- (ii) Variety. To provide variety in cottage housing structures through a mixture of building sizes and building footprints.

(b) Requirements.

- (i) The total floor area of each cottage shall not exceed either 1.5 times the area of the main floor or 1,050 square feet, whichever is less. Attached garages or carports shall be included in the calculation of total floor area.
- (ii) For the purposes of this calculation, floor area shall be measured to the exterior walls.
- (iii) Cottage areas that do not count toward the total floor area calculation are:
 - (A) Unheated storage spaces six feet or less in height located under the main floor of the cottage.
 - (B) Architectural projections, such as bay windows, fireplaces or utility closets not greater than 18 inches in depth or six feet in width.
 - (C) Attached roofed porches.
 - (D) Detached garages or carports.
 - (E) Spaces with a ceiling height of six feet or less.
 - (F) The city manager or designee may approve other exemptions similar in nature provided the intent of this section is met.
- (iv) The maximum main floor area for cottages is 800 square feet. For the purposes of this calculation, the area of interior stairway may be allocated between floors served.

(v) A minimum of 40 percent of the cottages and not more than 60 percent shall have main floors of 700 square feet or less. For example: in a five-cottage development, two of the cottages would need to have main floors of 700 square feet or less and the other three cottages could have main floors of up to 800 square feet. For fractional numbers 0.5 and above, round up; below 0.5, round down.

(vi) The total square foot area of a cottage dwelling unit may not be increased beyond the requirements of this code. A note shall be placed on the title to the property for the purpose of notifying future property owners that increasing the total square footage of the structures, or any subsequent structures, is prohibited.

(c) Required Minimum Open Space.

(i) Intent. The minimum open space requirements are intended to provide a sense of openness and visual relief in cottage housing developments. The calculations for common open space shall provide a centrally located, focal area for the cottage housing development. The common area shall not include wet stormwater ponds, wetlands, streams, lakes, sensitive area buffers, other setbacks required as pursuant to this chapter, and shall be on slopes of 20 percent or less and developed and maintained so it is usable for active or passive recreation activities. Private open space shall provide a private area around the individual dwellings to enable diversity in landscape design.

(ii) Requirements. Common open space shall:

(A) Be a minimum of 400 square feet per cottage.

(B) Abut at least 50 percent of the cottages in a cottage housing development.

(C) Have cottages abutting on at least two sides.

(d) Cottages shall:

(i) Be oriented around and have the main entry from the common open space.

(ii) Be within 60 feet walking distance of the common open space.

(e) Private open space shall:

(i) Be a minimum of 300 square feet of private, contiguous, usable open space adjacent to each dwelling unit, for the exclusive use of the cottage resident. It shall be oriented toward the common open space as much as possible, with no dimension less than 10 feet.

(ii) Additionally, cottages shall have a roofed entry porch at least 80 square feet in size with a minimum dimension of eight feet on any side. The porch shall be visually open to the commons. This porch shall not be enclosed.

(3) Parking Location and Screening.

(a) Intent. To ensure minimal visual impact from vehicular use and storage areas for residents of the cottage housing development as well as adjacent properties, and to maintain a single-family character along public streets.

(b) Requirements. Parking shall be:

- (i) Located on the cottage housing development property.
 - (ii) Screened from public streets and adjacent residential uses by landscaping or architectural screening.
 - (iii) Located in clusters of not more than six adjoining spaces.
 - (iv) Prohibited in the front yard setback area. (See Footnote 6, Cottage Housing Developments Site Requirements Chart.)
 - (v) Prohibited within 40 feet of a public street, except: single-loaded parking is allowed in a maximum 50-foot-wide area when set back a minimum of 15 feet from a public street. (See Figure 1.)
 - (vi) Allowed between or adjacent to structures only when it is located toward the rear of the principal structure and is served by an alley or private driveway.
 - (vii) A pitched roof design is required for all parking structures. If a parking structure is attached to a cottage unit, it must be served by an alley or private driveway, not accessible from the common area.
 - (viii) The planning manager may approve other methods provided the intent of this section is met.
- (c) Requirements for Individual Garages.
- (i) Vehicular access for garages and parking may not be from the entry/porch elevations of the cottages.
 - (ii) A detached garage serving an individual unit shall be limited to a total gross floor area of 312 square feet, with length or width not to exceed 24 feet, and height not to exceed 16 feet, or the ridgeline height of the unit it serves, whichever is less.
 - (iii) Garages may be “bundled” together in pairs with a common wall provided the restrictions listed in subsection (3)(c)(ii) of this section are met with respect to the individual unit the garage serves.

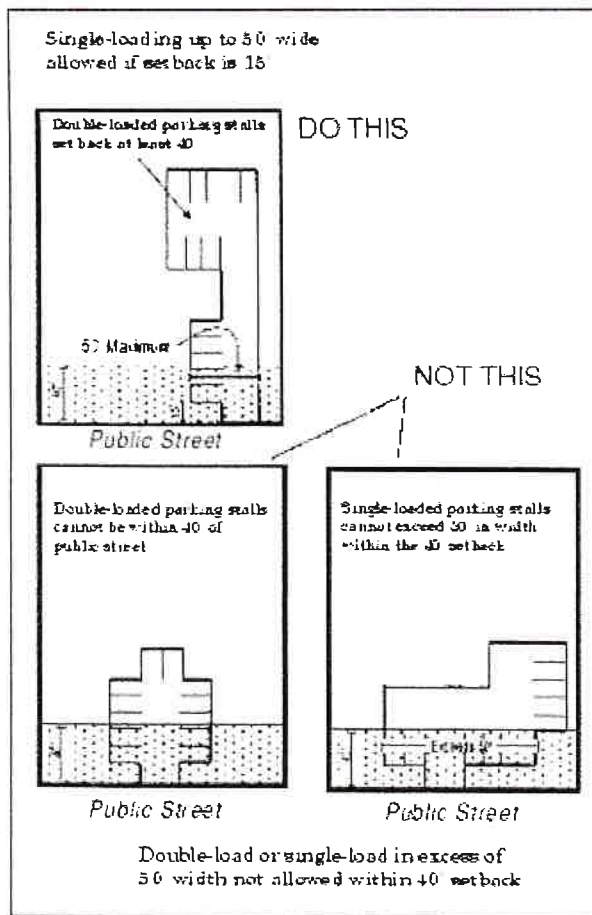


Figure 1. Cottage Housing Parking Requirements

(4) Community Buildings. The cottage housing development shall contain community building(s) that are clearly incidental in use and size and related to the dwelling units. Such community buildings shall be located on the same site as the cottage housing development and be commonly owned by the residents.

(5) Existing Dwellings. One existing detached or attached single-family dwelling that is incorporated into a cottage housing development as a residence and is nonconforming with respect to the standards of this section shall be permitted to remain on a site of six or more cottages used for a cottage housing development. However, the extent of the noncompliance may not be increased unless the proposed change is determined by the planning manager to be consistent in character, scale and design with the cottage housing development. The existing dwelling may be counted as a cottage in the density calculation for the site. (Ord. 785 § 8, 2006).

[Mobile Version](#)

Cottage Housing in Your Community

A guide to drafting a cottage housing ordinance

June, 2001

The Housing Partnership
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The Housing Partnership is a non-profit organization (officially known as the King County Housing Alliance) dedicated to increasing the supply of affordable housing in King County. This is achieved, in part, through policies of local government that foster increased housing development while preserving affordability and neighborhood character. The Partnership pursues these goals by: (a) building public awareness of housing affordability issues; (b) promoting design and regulatory solutions; and (c) acting as a convener of public, private and community leaders concerned about housing. The Partnership's officers for 2000 are: **Rich Bennlon**, HomeStreet Bank, Chair; **Paige Miller**, Port of Seattle, Vice Chair; **Gary Ackerman**, Foster Pepper & Shefelman, Secretary; **Tom Witte**, Bank of America, Chair, Finance Committee; **J. Tayloe Washburn**, Foster Pepper & Shefelman, Chair, Land Use Committee.

POCKET NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ZONING ORDINANCE

DRAFT 1505 © 2015 Ross Chapin, FAIA

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This model zoning ordinance is intended to offer a strategy for residential development of larger sites that builds on patterns of sociability and privacy among nearby neighbors.

For more information on Pocket Neighborhoods, go to www.pocket-neighborhoods.com

Definitions

“Pocket Neighborhood Cluster”. A clustered group of 4-12 dwellings oriented around a common open space.

“Pocket Neighborhood Community Development”. Multiple pocket neighborhood clusters and porch-fronted dwellings amalgamated into a larger, coherent pedestrian-oriented development.

“Common Open Space”. The central space used by all occupants of a pocket neighborhood cluster. The common area shall be outside of ponds, wetlands, streams, and sensitive area buffers and on slopes of 10 percent or less and developed and maintained so it is usable for active or passive recreation activities.

“Carriage Unit”. A single-family dwelling unit, not to exceed 850 square feet in gross floor area, located above a garage structure.

“Live/Work Unit”. A single unit (e.g., studio, loft, or one bedroom), not to exceed 1200 square feet gross floor area, consisting of both a commercial studio/office and a residential component that is occupied by the same resident. The live/work unit shall be the primary dwelling of the occupant. Refer to ¹Live/work Provisions below for more criteria.

A. Purpose

1. The purpose of Pocket Neighborhood Community Development design is to:
 - a. Encourage a stronger sense of community and security among nearby neighbors, while preserving personal privacy;
 - b. Promote a variety of housing choices to meet the needs of a population diverse in age, income, household composition and individual needs; especially small households (one to three-person households);
 - c. Encourage affordability, innovation and variety in housing design and site development while ensuring compatibility with surrounding land uses;
 - d. Encourage the creation of more usable open space for residents of the development through flexibility in density and lot standards;
 - e. Maximize resident- and pedestrian-oriented outdoor spaces, and minimize impact of automobile traffic and parking.

B. Development Configuration

1. The primary development configuration of a Pocket Neighborhood Community Development shall be Pocket Neighborhood Clusters.
2. Secondary configurations may be street-oriented porch-front dwellings with access alleyway parking, and carriage and live-work dwellings along access alleyways. Where there is no reasonable alternative, dwellings may have driveways located off of streets, provided all conditions of this amendment are met.

C. Allowed Uses

1. The allowed uses within a Pocket Neighborhood Community Development shall be: single family detached dwellings, twin dwellings, rowhouses/townhouses, carriage houses¹, live/work units², community buildings, temporary real estate sales office/model home, and vehicle parking lots and garages. Each of these uses shall be permitted by right, if the requirements for a Pocket Neighborhood Community Development are met.

- a. A maximum of 10 percent of the dwelling units may be carriage house units.
- b. A maximum of 10 percent of the dwelling units may be live/work units, in compliance with xxx.xx. (note: see below for live/work provisions)

Note: on some sites a neighborhood commercial use may be appropriate – such as a café or coffee shop, child care center, and home office. These would need to meet requirements for parking, noise, etc. Refer to the website www.missingmiddlehousing.com for reasoning and exploration of appropriate mixes of building types and uses.

D. Site Requirements Chart

Density & Use

Note: Densities of 7-12 units per acre will likely result when the buildings are single family + some townhouses. Given the requirements of open space, parking and these house types, the density will find its maximum. This code is also applicable for higher densities using a higher proportion of attached townhouses or stacked apartments. Given this, setbacks and height restrictions listed below may need to change.

Pocket Neighborhood Cluster size

Minimum 4 dwellings; maximum 12 dwellings per cluster. No limit to number of clusters.

Minimum Setbacks

Property adjacent to development site

10'

Adjacent Buildings

10', except setbacks from garages may be 5', provided fire separation requirements are met.

Front Yard

5' to porches;
5' to buildings of maximum of 18 feet in width;
10' to portions of buildings wider than 18 feet.

In a pocket neighborhood cluster, the front yard shall be the side to the common open space. Where a dwelling in a cluster also has a face to the street, it shall be considered as a front yard.

Side Yard

5', except setbacks for attached dwellings may be zero feet, provided fire separation requirements are met. For corner lot locations, one side may be designated as a side yard.

Rear Yard

10', or 5' provided that privacy between dwellings (see above) is maintained.

Access Alleyway

3', provided that adequate turning radius into garages can be demonstrated.

Maximum Height

25' to eave, 30' measure to average roof height. (note: review as appropriate for setting, and slope conditions)

Maximum Coverage for

All Impervious Surfaces	No maximum, provided that stormwater engineering and all other requirements are met.
Maximum Dwelling Size	2000 square feet, and 3 bedrooms <i>Note: review this dimension; what about the lower level walkout? And how it is size measured – exterior or interior? Scale must be appropriate to the setting, and to encouraging neighborliness.</i>

E. Design Parameters

1. **Pocket Neighborhood Size.** Each cluster shall contain a minimum of four and a maximum of twelve dwellings to encourage a sense of community, located on no less than one-half acre.
2. **Common Open Space in Pocket Neighborhood Clusters**
 - a. **Intent.** Open space that is commonly owned and managed by all residents of a pocket neighborhood is a key feature in fostering community. It is intended that it be adequately sized and centrally located with individual dwelling entrances oriented towards the open space.
 - i. **Size.** A minimum of 400 square feet per dwelling unit of common open space is required in each pocket neighborhood cluster. Buildings serving all residents in a pocket neighborhood cluster main be included in the required area. Parking areas, yard setbacks, spaces between buildings of 15 feet or less in width, private open space, and driveways do not qualify as common open space.
 - ii. **Proximity to Common Open Space.** At least 75 percent of the dwelling units of a pocket neighborhood shall abut a common open space; and all of the dwelling units shall be within 60 feet walking distance measured from the nearest entrance of the dwelling along the shortest safe walking route to the nearest point of the common open space. The common open space shall have dwellings abutting at least two sides.
3. **Private Open Space.**
 - a. **Intent.** A sense of community requires the right balance of personal privacy. Private open space is an essential component of this balance. A 'front' yard creates a buffer between public and private spaces, while a 'side' or 'back' yard offers increased seclusion.
 - b. **Location.** Private open space shall separate the main entrance to the dwelling from the common open space or street by a hedge or fence not to exceed 36 inches in height. Private open space may be located in the side and rear yards as well.
 - c. **Size.** Each residential unit shall be provided with a minimum of 200 square feet of usable private open space, with no dimension less than 10 feet. Such open space requirements may be met with a combination of front, side or rear yard locations.
 - i. **Carriage and Live-Work Units** may be omitted from this requirement, provided they meet the requirements for Front Porch, below.
4. **Front Porch.**
 - a. **Intent.** A covered front porch is a key element in fostering neighborly connections, providing a human scale to a dwelling, and offering surveillance of public space. Its placement, size, relation to interior and public spaces, and the height of railings are all factors in achieving these intents.
 - b. **Location.** Every dwelling shall have a covered entry porch oriented toward the common open space or street. This porch shall be open on at least two sides, and shall not be enclosed.

- i. Exception: Live-work units may have covered entry porches located off of an access alley lane.
 - c. Size. The covered porch shall be greater than 70 square feet in area, with a minimum of dimension of 6 feet.
 - i. Exception: Dwellings less than 700 square feet in size may have a porch greater than 50 square feet in area and 5 feet minimum dimension.
 - d. Use. Front Porches are intended as supplementary living space, not storage space, as well as shelter from the weather for entering and exiting the dwelling; therefore, overnight storage of bicycles, tricycles shall not be allowed.
5. Eyes on Public Space.
- a. Intent. The first line of defense for personal and community security is a strong network of neighbors who know and care for one another. When the active dwelling spaces look onto public space, a stranger is noticed. As well, nearby neighbors can see if daily patterns are askew next door or be called upon in an emergency.
 - b. Common Open Spaces, Streets and Access Alley Lanes shall have a minimum of one residential dwelling window providing clear surveillance of public and semi-public space.
6. Street-Facing Facades.
- a. Intent. The facades of buildings facing the street contribute to the neighborhood by including attractive design details such as windows, front doors and porches, siding and trim.
 - b. All street-facing facades of dwellings shall avoid blank walls or appear to “turn their backs” to the street. Such facades shall include one or more of the following:
 - i. Porches;
 - ii. Windows, including bay windows;
 - iii. Dormers;
 - iv. Changes in exterior siding material or paint color;
 - v. Building modulation with a depth measuring at least one foot.
7. Privacy Between Dwellings.
- a. Intent. Having a next-door house or apartment peering into your own can be uncomfortable and claustrophobic; therefore, arrange openings to preserve privacy.
 - b. Dwellings shall be designed so that no window peers into the living space of adjacent dwellings closer than 30 feet apart. This may be accomplished by:
 - i. ‘Nesting’ dwellings with open and closed sides: the open side may have windows facing its own side or rear yard, while the closed side may have high windows, translucent windows, or skylights to bring in ample light while preserving privacy;
 - ii. Zero lot line dwellings (duplex or rowhouses) with no side windows;
 - c. The side yard of a dwelling may be fully usable to the face of the neighboring building through landscape easements or other means.
8. Community Buildings and Elements.
- a. Intent. Common buildings and shared elements are direct amenities of living in a pocket neighborhood. Beyond these benefits, these common facilities foster connections among neighbors and strengthen their sense of community.

- b. Every Pocket Neighborhood Cluster shall contain at least two of the following elements shared and managed by residents of that cluster:
 - i. Barbeque, pizza oven, campfire circle, or outdoor terrace;
 - ii. Picnic shelter;
 - iii. Tool and general storage shed;
 - iii. Heated commons building, with optional bathroom and kitchenette, for meetings, card games, movie nights, potlucks, exercise, etc.
 - iv. Kitchen garden or flower garden.
- c. The larger Pocket Neighborhood Community may include more significant common buildings or elements for the benefit of all the residents of the community, including those listed above, and/or such facilities as:
 - i. woodworking shop;
 - iii. community kitchen/dining room, living room, library;
 - ii. child care room and/or playground;
 - iv. community garden.

9. Parking.

- a. Intent. Nearly everyone has a car; but cars do not need to dominate our pedestrian spaces. Parking areas should be located so their visual presence is minimized, and associated noise or other impacts do not intrude into public spaces.
- b. Parking requirements:
 - i. Dwellings under 900 square feet: 1 space per unit
 - ii. Dwellings between 901 – 1,500 square feet: 1.5 spaces per unit
 - iii. Dwellings over 1,500 square feet: 2 spaces per unit.
- c. Parking requirements shall be considered on the scale of the overall development, rather than on lot-by-lot basis. Parking requirements may be met onsite on residential lots, along access alleyways, and along streets as parallel parking.
 - i. Required parking for each dwelling shall be located within 150 feet of the entry door.
- d. Each dwelling shall have one designated parking space; additional required parking spaces shall be undesignated to allow for flexible use, and located on access alleyways and/or streets within or adjacent to the development.
- e. The primary strategy for designated parking shall be along access alleyways. Driveways off of streets are discouraged; where there is no reasonable alternative, such driveways shall be minimized.
 - i. Detached garages serving multiple dwellings shall be located off of an access alleyway, and limited to five single-car bays with doors up to 10 feet wide.
 - ii. In a Pocket Neighborhood cluster, consider locating parking so that residents and guests walk through the shared open space rather than entering the dwelling through an attached garage. This arrangement increases the opportunities for neighbor-to-neighbor contacts.
 - iii. Where dwellings must have garages located off of a street, such garages must be set back from the front façade of the dwelling by a minimum of one foot, and have a maximum of one garage door up to 10 foot wide.

- h. Storage of items within a garage that precludes the use of vehicle parking is prohibited.
- i. Head-in surface parking areas for more than two cars shall be:
 - i. prohibited in the front yard setback area;
 - ii screened from public streets and adjacent residential uses by landscaping or architectural screening.

10. Storage.

- a. Intent. Every household has storage needs for items such as bicycles, camping gear, hand tools, snow tires, suit cases and the like. When there is inadequate space, these items move to the porch or the garage.
- b. Every dwelling shall have a minimum of 40 square feet of covered storage space outside the heated living area. This space may be located in a garage if it does not preclude vehicle parking, or in a storage shed.

11. Refuse & Recycling.

- a. Intent. Garbage and recycling is a necessary element in residential living. Storage of these containers shall be located so their visual and odorous impact on adjacent properties is minimized.
- b. Refuse and recycling containers shall be screened from view by landscaping or architectural screening, and shall not be located in the front setback area, or where smells may be offensive to adjacent properties.

12. Fences.

- a. Intent. Fences can define and express personal space, and add to the quality of public space; but fences can also be offensive barriers.
- b. Fence height requirements:
 - i. Front yard: maximum 36 inch; 24 inch recommended;
 - ii. Side yard: maximum 36 inches from property line to face of dwelling, and maximum 72 inches behind the face of dwelling;
 - iii. Rear yard: maximum 72 inches

13. Pedestrian Network.

- a. Intent. The quality of life in residential neighborhoods is often reported to be high where there is a network of walkable pedestrian ways.
- b. Pocket Neighborhood Community Developments shall provide a network of pedestrian pathways, including sidewalks along at least one side of streets, mid-block walkways, and shared local streets and access alleyways. Connections to the wider neighborhood shall be made where appropriate and allowed. All such pathways shall be accessible by the general public, except that walkways into and through the Pocket Neighborhood clusters may be limited to residents and their guests.

14. Maintenance.

- a. The applicant shall prove to the City, based upon review by the City Solicitor's Office, that there will be a suitable legally-binding system in place, such as homeowner association agreements, to ensure proper maintenance and funding of shared facilities, such as shared parking areas, common open spaces, alleys and other improvements.

F. Administrative

The Planning Director may approve other methods provided the intent of this section is met.

¹ Live/work provisions

1. The commercial component of live/work units are intended for use by the following occupations: accountants; architects; artists and artisans; attorneys, computer software and multimedia related professionals; consultants; engineers; fashion, graphic, interior and other designers; hair stylists; home-based office workers, insurance, real estate and travel agents; one-on-one instructors; photographers, and similar occupations;
2. In addition to the permitted uses above, the planning director may authorize other uses using reasonable discretion, as long as such other uses are not otherwise precluded by law;
3. The residential and the commercial space must be occupied by the same tenant, and no portion of the live/work unit may be rented or sold separately;
4. Residential areas are permitted above the commercial component, to the side or in back of the business component;
5. The residential component as designated on the floor plan approved through the special development permit shall remain residential and cannot be converted to commercial use;
6. The commercial component shall be restricted to the unit and shall not be conducted in the yard, garage or any accessory structure;
7. The commercial component shall not detract from, or otherwise be a nuisance to, the residential character or appearance of the dwelling units;
8. Signage intended to promote on-site commercial uses shall be restricted to two square foot signs permanently affixed to door or wall of the business component;
9. Access to the commercial component of each live/work unit shall be clearly separate from the common walkways or entrances to the other residential units within the development;
10. The commercial use shall not generate vehicular traffic, in excess of normal residential traffic, which will interfere with residential traffic circulation or shall not cause more than three vehicles including vehicles used by customers, vendors, or delivery services to visit the premises per day;
11. No more than one employee (excluding residents of the dwelling unit) shall work or report to work on the premises;
12. The commercial use shall not generate external noise, odor, glare, vibration or electrical interference detectable to the normal sensory perception by adjacent neighbors;
13. No explosive, toxic, combustible or flammable materials in excess of what would be allowed incidental to normal residential use shall be stored or used on the premises.

Example 1



Example 2



Example 3



Example 4



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Codes for Courtyards



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Cottage Housing

Cottage Housing Ordinance Adopted

On December 21, 2016, the Snohomish County Council adopted a cottage housing Ordinance No. 19-0733. The adopted ordinance was amended to:

- Increase the maximum dwelling size for cottage housing dwellings.
- Make a technical correction to the definition of the term "unit lot".
- Address a typographical error; and
- Eliminate a reduction in parking ratios.

The adopted cottage housing ordinance will do the following:

- Establish revised site layout, building orientation, open space and amenity and architectural and design standards.
- Provide a density bonus for cottage housing development equal to twice the underlying zone.

Cottage Courtyard developments are becoming enticing alternatives to prevailing single-family and condo development patterns. But how and where can they get built? What zoning allows for them? Are there specific codes to enable cottage courtyard development?

While many cities have planned unit development (PUD) permitting tracks that allow such development, cottage courtyard codes can address their particular issues, their fit within an existing neighborhood, and can be tools to incentivize finer-grain infill development.

This post offers background and links that should be helpful for those pursuing such codes. The links provide more background and detail than described here, so check those out. For a start, visit the [codes section](#) on this website.



Bowen Court (1910) in Pasadena, California, introduced a new pattern of residential development with Craftsman bungalows arranged around a central garden courtyard.

Historically, multi-household courtyards were used in 12th c. Chinese *tulou* settlements, Dutch *hofje* almshouses in the 15th c., and in [summer church revival encampments](#) in the mid-1800s. [Bungalow Courts](#) came on the scene around 1910 in Pasadena, CA, to provide affordable housing and immediate sense of community to throngs of immigrants arriving from the east.

This pattern morphed into

apartment courts and motor courts ([motels](#)) throughout America. In 1920s, Clarence Stein and Henry Wright introduced a courtyard/cul-de-sac pattern of suburban development in [Radburn, NJ](#).

"Cottage Housing Development" was the term used by the City of Seattle in their draft of a courtyard code in the early 1990s. It attempted to codify the historic-but-illegal worker housing court development pattern from the



The development pattern introduced in Radburn has homes accessed off of cul-de-sacs and opening onto shared greens. The clusters are linked by pathways and to a central park, school and shops.

courtyard ordinance to be enacted in the country. Langley's CHD code ordinance offers an incentive of allowing twice the density of homes in all residential zones — IF cottages are limited in size (<1000 SF), oriented around shared commons, and parking is shielded from the street. There are more particular requirements, but these are the essentials.

A year later in Langley, I teamed with Jim Soules and Linda Pruitt to launch The Cottage Company to develop the Third Street Cottages utilizing the new code.



Third Street Cottages in Langley, WA, has 8 houses arranged around a garden courtyard on 4 city lots — .66 acres at a density of 12 units/acre.

neighborhood is a social cluster of households. Cottages are not the crucial component. Nor is a classic courtyard pattern. A pocket neighborhood may also have clustered homes along a greenwalk or woonerf lane, or be a multi-family apartment court. The essential factor is its social dimension: having a small group of households oriented around a shared open space with ways to ensure privacy. In writing codes, I believe this is the factor to keep in focus.

After our first cottage courtyard project in Langley, towns across Washington and then across the country began incorporating versions of the code. The Housing Partnership created a guide for drafting these codes. The Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC) has helpful resources on cottage codes here.

1910s. Unfortunately, the code was never adopted.

In 1995, Jack Lynch, the city planner for Langley, WA (population 950) used Seattle's draft code as the basis for an innovative code for this small town. The intention of the code was to counter the pressures of subdivision sprawl development and widen the range of affordability by incentivizing infill development. It is believed to be the first contemporary cottage

As an aside, the term "pocket neighborhood" came to me while building the Third Street Cottages. As the small cottages took form, they seemed like little jewels tucked away from the busy world outside. I began calling it a *pocket neighborhood*, and the word stuck.

In my definition, a pocket



Danielson Grove, Kirkland, WA

Cottages are appropriate for many locations, but small houses limit the range of household sizes and types. To widen the options, I worked with Jim and Linda in the early 2000s to propose a new code for Kirkland, WA, giving an incentive of 1.5x density with house size limited to <1500 SF. It was part of the city's [Innovative Housing Demonstration Project](#) to solicit new ideas for codes from developers and designers. Through this project we developed [Danielson Grove](#) to test our code. After third-party evaluation, the code was adopted city-wide.

Codes for cottage courtyards are covered well in an excellent resource paper, ["Character-Compatible, Space-Efficient Housing Options for Single-Dwelling Neighborhoods"](#), by State of Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. The housing types covered include not only cottage courtyards, but also corner duplexes and accessory dwelling units (ADUs), both attached and detached. These should be in every city's toolbox to support higher densities and increased housing options in single family neighborhoods in ways that maintain character.

Cottage Court codes work well on infill sites less than one acre in size — an ideal size for the [Missing Middle](#) toolbox. What happens when your site is more than an acre? Or 10, 20 or more acres?

For larger sites, I wrote a model [Pocket Neighborhood Community Development Zoning Ordinance](#) that addresses sociability within its DNA. This code primarily uses courtyard clusters to encourage a stronger sense of community and security among nearby neighbors, while also preserving personal privacy. Secondary configurations in the code are street-oriented porch-fronted dwellings with rear-access lane parking — a traditional development pattern promoted in the [Lexicon of New Urbanism](#). We've done a number of site plans for larger sites using the model code as the basis, and will post a link to those soon.



Codes for larger sites can promote sociability among small groupings of neighbors with a variety of cluster types and street-oriented porch-fronted houses.

While many courtyard codes are written for detached cottages, codes have also be written for attached buildings, of which there are many terrific built projects. If you have links to codes that enabled them, or info on courtyard codes you're working on, let us know.

—Ross Chapin

3 Responses to *Codes for Courtyards*

Tess says:

April 11, 2018 at 7:36 pm

Thank you for the wonderful resources you provide on your website and offered your book (which I hope to purchase soon).

[Reply](#)