Row Houses

The row house offers the advantage of both economical construction and potentially higher land use efficiency by attaching a series of units in a row with party walls on two sides. While attached and often narrower than a detached house, the row house still offers the visibility of an individual front door, an individual back yard, and no other family living above or below.

The rowhouse does eliminate the option of side windows except at end units, and therefore its depth is more limited than for detached or semi-detached units.

With some exception, the sales value of rowhouse and attached style ownership units is lower on a per bedroom or per square foot basis than for detached units, due primarily to market preferences for light and air on multiple sides, and misgivings about the potential for noise and pest transmission between units.

Additionally, technical and design attention must be given to the maintenance of common party walls and the draining of roofs to avoid conflicts among neighboring residents in row houses and attached units.

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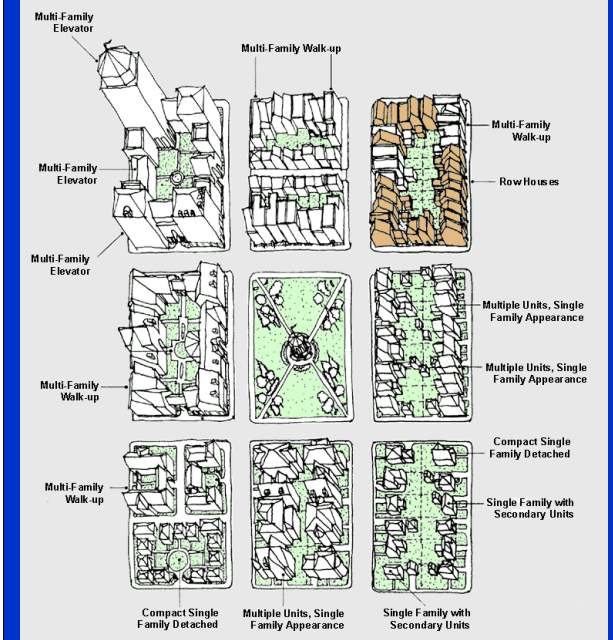
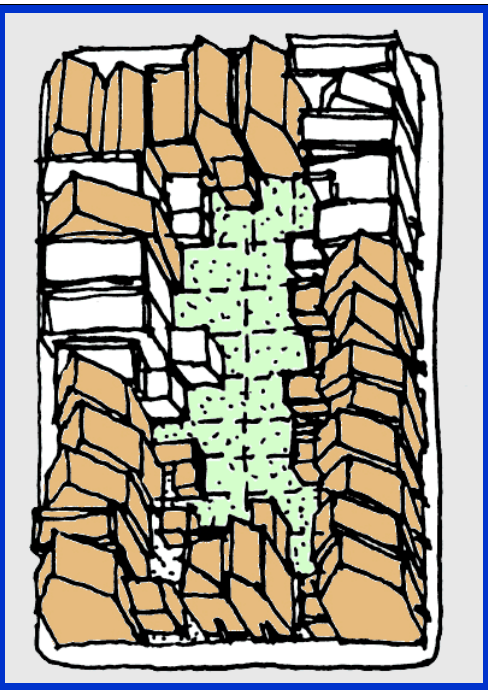

Multi-Family Elevator
Multi-Family Walk-up
Multi-Family Walk-up
Row Houses
Multi-Family Elevator
Multi-Family Elevator
Multiple Units, Single Family Appearance
Multiple Units, Single Family Appearance
Multi-Family Walk-up
Compact Single Family Detached
Multi-Family Walk-up
Single Family with Secondary Units
Compact Single Family Detached
Multiple Units, Single Family Appearance
Single Family with Secondary Units

Row Houses



Row Houses

Harriet Square, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Case Study 19A: Harriet Square Minneapolis 10 units per acre including rear parking court and small green

The Harriet Square development is in an older neighborhood with moderately sized older homes on large lots, featuring expansive front yards. To achieve greater density than the surrounding lot pattern would have allowed, these homes are attached as rowhouses. The traditional elements of the screened in front porch, steep pitched roofs, and elevated first floors have been followed, so that when viewed from the sidewalk the units look more like nearby closely spaced detached homes.

The traditional raising of the units allowed for a partial basement that also contains the garage. In place of the traditional narrow alley, the garages face a wide parking court that has a small green space in the middle, and serves as a recreation and play area. The row of homes is broken in a few places to define subclusters of houses, provide a small common side yard play area.

While the houses have no private back yard, the large screened porches provide private space.

Case Study 19B: Charleston Infill Housing, Charleston South Carolina 11 units per acre including ganged surface parking and community building

These row houses were the result of a scattered site infill development on deep, narrow lots in Charleson. The designers chose as a prototype the 18th century "single house", a familiar type in the historic district. Long and narrow, this house fits nicely on the lots, and, being one-room wide, provides cross-ventilation for the hot and humid climate. The duplexes have side porches, another climate-influenced feature of the side house. The architects added a false entry on the street side of the porch for privacy; the remaining street frontage is fenced for security and to strengthen the street edge.

The units have no front yard, as is the urban tradition, but have very deep back yard areas and porches.

Rancho Cucamonga Villas, Cucamonga, California

Case Study 20: Villas at Ranch Cucamonga, CA 12.5 units per acre

The sponsors and neighbors for this 120 unit development sought a townhouse instead of an apartment complex model for this rental development, one that looked more like the detached homes also nearby. The plan places townhouse style units at the permitted of the site, with alternating pedestrian courts and automobile courts giving access to additional units at the site interior. The high visibility of the site, across the street from a large public playing field, suggested the development of attached townhouse units that are massed and stepped up and down so as to create the impression of detached units. When seen while walking or traveling along the street, the units do not appear attached, an illusion that is heightened by varying the colors and window placements of the individual units, and setting portions of the units back further from the street.

Landscaped pedestrian entry courts off the main street provide access to the front porches and doors of 6-8 units each and provide a shared play area. Parking in a combination of garages and open lots is reached directly through the backdoors of the units. The parking required a significant part of the site, and limited the provision of private open space, but there is a large landscaped commons, barbeque and play area, community building, and child care building shared by all residents in the large midblock area of the site, reached by the series of pedestrian mews

Lavell Court, Sonoma County, California

Case Study 21: Lavell Court, Sonoma County CA, 12.5 units per acre

The density of Lavell Court is statistically identical to the Villas at Rancho Cucamonga, but the site plan feel more open for a variety of programmatic reasons.

Primarily, the open feeling comes from the smaller size of the units, which have an average of one less bedroom per unit, and the combining of a narrow parking zone around a wide commons at the center of the site, which is all visible from the main street that the development fronts.

Like Rancho Cucamonga, it is an inwardly focused site plan, there are only small private yards, and the architectural style used derives from local single family home styles and regional traditions.

The smaller average size of the Lavell Court development, and a lower parking requirement, both combined to require less building and parking footprint, and allow more open space than at the Villas.

Lavell Court, Sonoma County, California

The site plan mixes some more compact, two story stacked flats containing the two bedroom units with two and one story rowhouses. The townhomes are arranged on three sides around a large green commons and community building.

Instead of placing the parking behind the units, a u shaped parking “street” circles through the site, and no carports or garages were required. This pattern provided a large visual distance across the site, and recreated a familiar type of small town or village in the region, where a town green is surrounded by streets with head-in parking.

The location for the development is within a small unincorporated urban services area with few buildings and otherwise surrounded by rural farmlands and vineyards of Sonoma county. There is no townhouse tradition in most of the county, so n effort is made to highly differentiate the units, and provide breaks between them at regular intervals, to downplay their attached quality. The design therefore clusters no more than 4 units in a row, shifts the plane of the units forward and back, and uses different porch details, roof forms, and pint colors for each unit.

International Homes, Chicago, Illinois

International Homes, Chicago 14 units per acre

28 units in clusters of 2 to 6 on infill lots

Front yards and character of buildings match older row houses

Lot depths vary, with range of small and large rear yards but all have private outdoor space, plus full basements

Parking ganged in spaces off of existing city alley system

Main Street Park, Half Moon Bay, California

Case Study 22: Main Street Park, 14.9 units per acre

The 64 units at Main Street Park were required to include a semi-public park in the site plan, and respond to design guidelines oriented toward fitting new development into the rural character of the community. At the same time, the zoning and public policy promoted higher density, as a way to accommodate the rural workforce within existing city limits.

The site plan and building solution was to place the park on the front portion of the site, and to arrange clusters of townhouses around the edges of the park in a casual way so as to fit into the rural character of the community.

A community building that primarily serves residents, but can also used for the general public as part of park events, is made to look like one of the regions small agricultural structures.

Main Street Park, Half Moon Bay, California

One row of townhomes are oriented toward the main street, but as the buildings step back around the park, some of the units have their bedrooms on a third floor, and additional clusters of homes are reached by way of an internal lane. The ability to add some of the required building volume through third story elements helped off set the amount of land left for the park.

Traditional small scale elements such as picket fences, bracket eaves, and door canopies capture the style of older structures. The development uses just a few basic unit plans, but attached in many different ways and painted in different pastel colors.

In addition to the public park, clusters of 4 to six buildings are arranged around semiprivate play areas at the interior of the site. A double loaded open parking lot is at the back of the site and serves all units, providing 128 cars (2 cars per unit).

West Town II, Chicago, Illinois

West Town II, Chicago, Illinois, Average 17 Units per Acre

A series of 30 scattered sites in the West Town Neighborhood were used to accommodate 113 units of new infill townhomes. The typical lots of 25 by 100 feet with alley's behind many allowed for both small front yard and a very large rear yard, with a two story townhouse. Where multiple sites in a row were available, some variation was provided by creating new pedestrian mews from the street to the alley behind, and lining up some of the homes on the mews.

Willowbrook Green Apartments, Los Angeles, California

Willowbrook Green Apartments, Los Angeles 19 units per acre

Adjacent context large intuitional structures, including Drew University and M. L. King Medical Center next door, and elementary school across the street.

60 two story townhouses arranged around a single large open space

Units turn inward, away from surrounding areas due to high crime an no residential context

Entry to site left undeveloped for future childcare center

private lane leads from street past one side of the development to give access to rear parking lot with 113 cars

Southside Park, Sacramento, California

Southside Park Co-Housing, Sacramento CA 20 units per acre

This development uses the shapes and details of 1910-1920's nearby homes on narrow deep lots to create a development that looks very similar to them from the street. Shifts in the planes of units, changes in color, and different dormer forms all create a sense of detached homes.

Units are attached in short rows of two or three with space between that provides access to the central court.

The depth of the site from main street to alley allowed for a second row of units and a very large community house to back up to the alley, while creating a large common yard space within the block. The units all have large porches which serve as the only private open space. The program four the site called for most of the exterior space for common use, including a commons building with a space large enough to accommodate the entire community for dining.

Southside Park, Sacramento

Five of the units are sited on a parcel across the narrow alley, having no street frontage. The siting of the community building directly across from them, and the provision of a landscaped “alley cross” to link the se houses to the main area help keep them from feeling like second class units.

The surprising density of the development was facilitated in part by the presence of a public alley that all the parking spaces face, and the requirement for only one space per unit. These factors combined to leave a much greater proportion of the site available for housing, as no new drives and parking lots were needed.site benefited from the presence.

Jingletown Homes, Oakland, California

Jingletown Homes, Oakland 23 units per acre

53 units total

During the workshops, the participants choose to organize the larger homes with spaces available for future side garages, while the smaller homes have their autos clustered in three small lots, placed in front of the homes. The homes face onto auto/pedestrian courts, paved for pedestrian use, and lined with bollards without curbs to enhance the feeling of a pedestrian plaza. These courts are aligned with the rear vacant lot for future pedestrian connection. The child care center and community meeting room were placed at the corner of two access streets to allow their use by the larger neighborhood. Homes along the streets were placed so that their entrances address these streets to ensure their security and to relate to homes on the other side. A central walkway connects two major streets as a convenient shortcut to a shopping district for neighbors to the north of the site

Jingletown Homes, Oakland, California

Jingletown homes have a bonus first floor room at the front which can legally be used as a business office.

Waterside Green, Stamford, Connecticut

Waterside Green, Stamford 27 Units per acre

The 75 units were divided into four building clusters grouped around semi-private courtyards. Each cluster differs because of the shape of the lot, giving the housing an unregimented appearance. By designing the one-bedroom units as third floor walk-ups over three bedroom townhouses, architect Zane Yost succeeded in giving the buildings the character of large houses, helping them fit in well with the Victorian character of the late 19th Century neighborhood. Townhouses have front porches and yards with picket fences that give families secure, private outdoor space, which is rare in higher density housing.

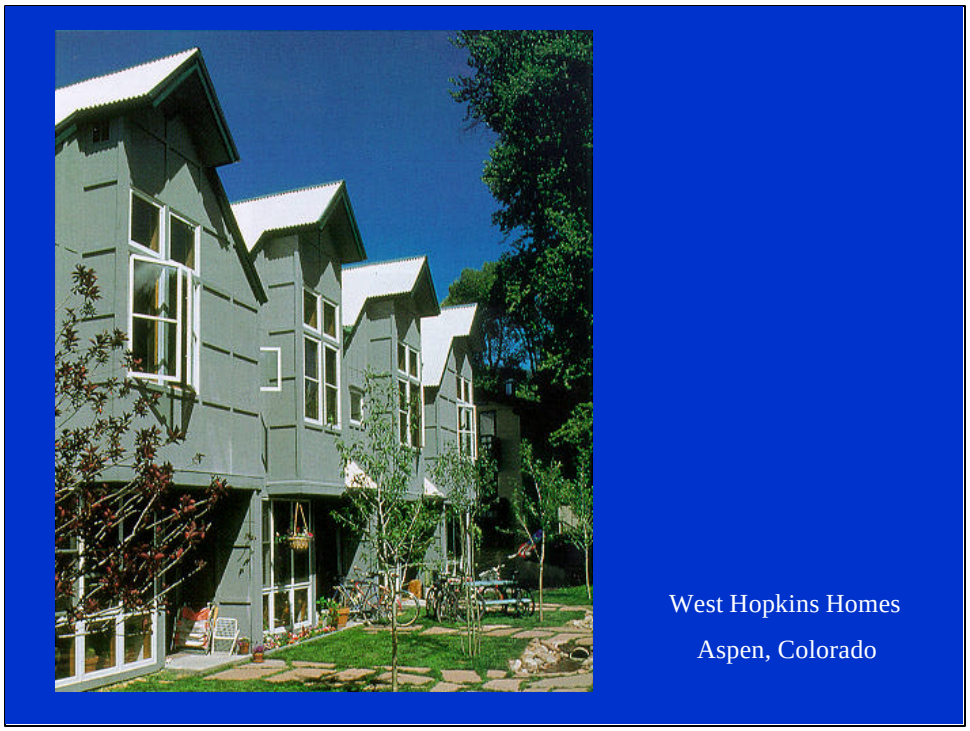
Southside Housing, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

South Side Housing: Fox Way Commons & New Birmingham, 29 units per acre

The development, a complex of new residential buildings and adaptive reuse buildings, is designed to fit seamlessly into the fabric of the neighborhood, while emphasizing the inherent differences in location and orientation, and diversity of dwelling types. The development is concentrated in high densities to capture public and private open space. Extending the existing pattern of houses that line the perimeter of a block, the townhouses front the street on all four sides of the block and define a continuous street wall. Urban squares are created by these solid building walls along the perimeter of the blocks. The interiors of the blocks are reserved for private informal use.

At a density of more than forty units per acre in the developed area of the site, these new townhouses are comparable to the surrounding blocks built more than seventy years ago; yet they also offer the amenities of a garage or parking space and a private yard for every unit.

The contemporary brick and metal-sided buildings re-interpret the traditional urban rowhouse of the South Side with a vocabulary that echoes nearby industrial buildings. Architectural features such as stoops and dormers, which are distinctive in the neighborhood, are incorporated into the simple expression of the exterior. Smaller units, modestly priced to attract young urbanites, are expanded visually with open interior spaces and private courtyards. The larger units have three bedrooms and den or family room. All together, there are twelve unit types on the site, which creates the possibility of a diversity of income and lifestyle on a single block.



West Hopkins Homes, Aspen 40 units per acre

The West Hopkins housing was a test infill development of only 11 units built on a vacant parcel of land. The scale and architectural character of the three groups of buildings are compatible with the existing context; the buildings are oriented to the street with the living spaces on the ground level to promote neighborhood interaction; they have an internal, semi-private open space. The required one space of parking per unit is on-site and accessed from an alley.

Developed by the Aspen-Pitkin County Housing Authority, architect Larry Yaw designed the units with steep metal roofs and board and batten siding to recall Colorado's turn-of-the-century miners cottages,. Higher density was achieved by placing smaller one bedroom "carriage houses" over garages off the rear drive