

## **C<sup>3</sup> – Bellingham**

(Cozy Cottage Community- for 80' wide x 300' deep lot in Birchwood, Edgemoor, Whatcom Falls, East Cornwall Park & East Happy Valley - Option 1, Large Lot)

### **Overview:**

A small neighborhood of six, one and a half and two story cottages on a large, deep lot contains multiple units of housing and shared amenities. Thoughtful site design provides both privacy and opportunities to engage with neighbors and with nature. Variety of unit sizes and layouts welcome different household sizes and types. Homes are designed to comfortably meet people's needs: kitchens are open to larger living spaces and extra bedrooms in some units could be used as dens or private offices as needed. Generously sized outdoor rooms expand the home's modest footprints. Smaller buildings leave plenty of open space for gardening, trees, stormwater management and for outdoor recreation and relaxation.

### **Affordability and Constructability:**

This project uses traditional Pacific Northwest residential building means and standards, wood framing on poured concrete foundations. Outside dimensions are on 8', 4' or 2' modules to maximize efficiency and minimize construction waste. To reduce costs, the number of corners in the structures are limited. Interest is in the arrangement of buildings rather than the complexity of the individual structures. Half of the buildings are designed for roof trusses, the largest truss spans are 24'. The structures that are designed to have stick framed roofs have maximum spans of 16'. One of the cottages is one level and designed for a person who uses a wheelchair and all but one of the units have downstairs bedrooms and bathrooms which could be easily converted for use by someone with mobility challenges.

### **Sustainability and Resilience:**

Buildings are small and design is efficient. By keeping square footage low, costs to build and also to maintain and to heat and cool houses are reduced. Windows are in locations that bring in light and views and allow for emergency exiting, but there are no large expanses of glazing, minimizing heat loss and gain. Energy trusses can be used and houses can be well insulated using standard means. Mini-split heat pumps would work well for heating and cooling. Houses are designed for high efficiency electric heat pump water heaters. All appliances would be energy star rated.

Because the buildings have small footprints – the site is about 60% open space - there is plenty of room for features like water retention ponds, rain barrels, trees and gardens. All paving on the project can be semi-permeable to further reduce water run-off. Solar panels are not shown but could be easily added to roofs. There is space allocated for garbage, recycling and yard waste bins and space in the community garden for composting.

### Innovation and Creativity:

Care has been taken to balance privacy and community. The project contains one garage space intended to be communal – everyone living in the community can share garden, household and bike tools and there is no need for everyone to have, and store, their own collection of “garage stuff”. The other garage space may also be shared, possibly divided into small individual storage units or it could belong exclusively to someone in the community who uses it to do something, like woodworking or pottery, which they would not have space for in their own dwellings. The garage might also be used for band practice or to start the next great Pacific Northwest business.

A lot of thought has also been devoted to making spaces flexible – suiting the needs of different household types. Some people may need home offices. Generations might want to live together in the same home. Houses and outdoor spaces can be easily adapted to be used in different ways to meet different needs. Units in the project are attractive to both nuclear families and to less conventional household arrangements. The variety of unit types and the different ways they can be used means that the neighborhood can be made of people in various phases of life – giving people the chance to live near and get to know each other.

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#### **Additional Writing Opportunity:**

Offer feedback on how land use codes limit designs

It is wonderful not to have to provide off-street parking - really frees things up to use the site for things that provide more value than storing cars! Project features a large paved (with semi permeable materials) play area that could be used for motor vehicles to load and unload and for emergency vehicles. Emergency vehicle access was not addressed in the design guidelines and I am not sure if the arrangement in the project would satisfy city fire codes, but it would work in an emergency, so I feel it should be allowed.

I am not sure if the competition guidelines limit the site to six units of housing because of zoning, but if so, this is a shame. Particularly when accommodating smaller households and wanting to have smaller homes, this large lot could have housed more people. The space over the community garage in building F is designated in the project as a shared amenity and not as a separate unit, but if more units were allowed, this could be a "studio" dwelling. The other building with a garage, building E, is designated as one unit with two bedrooms and two bathrooms, but if more units were allowed, it could have been two one-bedroom units. As designed, this project could be easily adapted to be eight units rather than six. I would have made different design choices if more units were allowed. I am certain that I could have provided more units on this large lot without getting anywhere close to the maximum F.A.R. or having any problems meeting the height, setback and open space requirements.