Project Narrative

Project Title: The Core

"In a courtyard, space transcends itself—where the indoors and outdoors dissolve into a serene symphony of nature and architecture."
— Luis Barragán

Concept
We want to leverage the opportunities of multi-unit housing to create common spaces that are better than the sum of their parts. The spatial concept is to place inward facing dwelling units along the edge of the lot in a C-shape, creating a common space that is a collector for nature and community. Mirroring the development on an adjacent lot expands and enhances the possibilities.

Configuration
The U-shaped layout is (6) dwelling units on a 55' x 125' lot with a family-sized 3 bedroom unit and stacked flats on the ends with 3-story (3) bedroom townhouse units in the middle. At 38 du/ac, it achieves higher density than most missing middle typologies.

This configuration can easily expand or contract to accommodate different lot sizes and unit compositions. The end units are interchangeable and the repeating middle units allow the development to extend linearly. The central court grows with the development ensuring it is right sized for the residents.

Two small communal suites are discreetly designed into the end units, allowing potential for a guest bedroom suite or office space to be shared by all. This allows smaller units to live larger with families being able to accommodate guests and small business ventures.

Unit layouts
Bedrooms are focused toward the courtyard, so all spaces share views of the landscape. Kitchen and bathrooms are organized along the perimeter of units to allow for air and light to flow through the main living spaces.

In-between Spaces & Thresholds
There was careful consideration for the relationship between the individual and the common. Each unit has a carefully composed outdoor space that allows everyone a defined outdoor territory while still being connected to the larger courtyard space.

Affordability
The proposal creates an affordable solution to missing middle housing in its architectural configuration and site response. The repeated units allow for efficient construction. The common walls between units reduce exterior walls, creating a more affordable building shell. The primary visual and spatial interest lies in the courtyard, freeing the buildings from the need for over articulation.

Sustainability
The courtyard space enhances biodiversity, improves air quality, and promotes stormwater management. The vegetation cools the surrounding area in the summer and creates a natural buffer zone for natural light into the units in the winter. This green space also encourages community interaction and well-being, promoting a healthier lifestyle. This is further enhanced by the potential for a communal garden, creating healthy sustenance and opportunities for community building.

Planted roofs on the third floor not only layer the landscape of the development, but will also absorb the rainwater. The remaining stormwater is directed to a series of bioretention planters in the courtyard. The end units offer the opportunity for an extensive solar array.

Natural cross ventilation is created in the units through strategic window locations and utilizing the stairs on the entry side to draw air up through the units. The units are also stepped back in massing to maximize light to reach the units and common space throughout the year.

Community

This proposal posits that missing middle housing can not only be a solution for housing shortages and lack of density, but an opportunity to create new connections - to community in an increasingly divided age and to nature which is so often lacking in denser housing. The aim is to not only see missing middle housing as a solution to a problem, but a catalyst to reconnect to those things which we've lost, things which make us human and part of a greater whole.

By The Numbers

Lot size: 55' x 125'
Unit Count: (6) dwelling units
Unit Configuration: (3) 3 Bedroom Townhouse Units, (1) 2-Story 3 Bedroom Unit, (2) 1 Bedroom flats
Unit Density: 38 du/ac