

KINSHIP COTTAGE COURT

SMALL HOMES. SHARED LIFE.

Kinship Cottage Court reimagines the traditional cottage court as a contemporary neighborhood where architecture fosters friendship, belonging, and everyday community. Four modest cottages surround a shared central green, balancing private retreat with collective life. The design demonstrates that thoughtful site planning—not larger homes—can create richer neighborhoods.

Affordability & Constructability

Affordability begins with simplicity. Four identical cottage homes utilize a repeatable construction system that reduces design complexity, streamlines construction, simplifies detailing, and improves cost predictability. At approximately 954 square feet each, the 2 bedroom | 1-bath homes provide comfortable living while using fewer materials and requiring less energy than conventional single-family houses. The site plan is equally efficient. The design is planned for a 24,000 SF (300'x80') lot. Parking is intentionally located at the perimeter rather than eliminated entirely. While middle housing reduces dependence on automobiles, many households continue to rely on personal vehicles for work, family, and recreation. Locating parking at the edges preserves the interior of the site as a safe, walkable commons where people - not cars - define daily life.

Sustainability & Resilience

Sustainability is achieved through efficient design rather than technological complexity. Compact homes reduce material consumption, embodied carbon, and operational energy use while preserving generous shared open space at the center of the site. The landscape supports tree canopy, permeability, and opportunities for community gardening while encouraging walking and outdoor recreation. The repeatable cottage prototype also creates long-term resilience by offering a practical model that can be adapted to neighborhoods throughout Bellingham and beyond.

Innovation & Creativity

The project's greatest innovation is social rather than technological. Instead of organizing homes around driveways and backyards, Kinship Cottage Court places a shared courtyard at the heart of the neighborhood. Front porches face inward, encouraging spontaneous conversations, children's play, shared meals, and the everyday interactions that strengthen communities. Private patios provide personal outdoor space while the central green offers a place for gathering, gardening, recreation, and relaxation. A small community building with a fitness room, sauna, and shared amenities further supports connection between neighbors. At its core, Kinship Cottage Court asks a simple question:

What if housing was designed to cultivate connection?

By combining modest homes, shared landscapes, and human-scaled design, Kinship Cottage Court demonstrates that middle housing can create neighborhoods where people naturally know, support, and care for one another.

Small homes. Shared life.