The Future of Really Small Dwellings

... Or at least Moderately Sized Dwellings

21st RMLUI Conference
Denver, March 1, 2012

Don Elliott, FAICP, Clarion Associates
Outline

Other Types of Small Dwellings

What are They?
How to Planners Treat Them?

- Katrina Cottages
- Small Movables
- New Style Boarding Houses
But First, Some Fun
But First, Some Fun
But it’s Good to be Prepared
But it’s Good to be Prepared
Katrina Cottages

- Proposed as solution to post-hurricane housing shortage ... but not much used for that purpose
- An alternative to $70,000 per FEMA trailer unit cost
- “The mission of the Katrina Cottage movement has been refined and expanded several times since Hurricane Katrina”
Katrina Cottages

Original design from Duany Plater-Zyberk

Now several firms, designs . . . and available as house plans for sale

From 544 to 1,200 sf

With plans to expand from 308 to 1,800 sf
Katrina Cottages

About the plans

The Katrina Cottage Series is NOW AVAILABLE at HOUSEPLANS.com.

Coming Soon:
KC 308
# Katrina Cottages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KC 697</th>
<th>KC 888</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>About the plans</strong></td>
<td><strong>About the plans</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designer: Eric Moser</td>
<td>Designer: W.A. Lawrence, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedrooms: 1.5</td>
<td>Bedrooms: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathrooms: 1</td>
<td>Bathrooms: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceiling height: Various</td>
<td>Ceiling height: 9 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditioned living area: 687 sq ft.</td>
<td>Conditioned living area: 888 sq ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall dimensions (including porch): 35'-0&quot; long x 24'-0&quot; wide</td>
<td>Overall dimensions: 52'-0&quot; long x 25'-0&quot; wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes: A vaulted ceiling in the living room and sleeping area define the open feeling of this plan, which is ideal for a starter house or vacation cabin.</td>
<td>Notes: Designed with generously sized rooms, this quaint Victorian-style plan includes two bedrooms, each with its own bathroom. An optional bedroom with full bath may be added to a 1,113-sq-ft. 3-bedroom/2-bathroom house. The KC 888 extends into the KC 1112.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Coming Soon:
- KC 308
- KC 418
- KC 612
- KC 1080
- KC 1185
- KC 1807

## Coming Soon:
- KC 308
- KC 416
- KC 612
- KC 1080
- KC 1186
- KC 1807
Katrina Cottages

How to Accommodate Them in a Politically Acceptable Way?

Require entire developments so that no one is surprised by the result?

WHOA ! ! !

Slum-on-a-Grid?
Katrina Cottages

How to Accommodate Them in a Politically Acceptable Way?

Not a whole lot better in a Design With Nature layout
Katrina Cottages

“Many infill projects use versatile Katrina Cottages”
New Urban News – September 2011

Buena Vista, CO
South Main Development
Katrina Cottages

**Issues:**

**Narrow lots**
- Work better in groups, but too many in one place can be oppressive
- Often requires different subdivision standards – like mobile home park standards

**Surrounding character**
- Can they be located on 50 or 70 foot wide lots?
- Most cities would not prevent that
- If you do, design standards can set minimum building widths – as for manufactured homes
  - Market will probably respond with wider but shallower homes

**DON’T** set minimum house size or minimum depth AND width standards – if you do you’ve missed the point
Tiny Houses
Tiny Houses

**Box Bungalows**

Zinn:
99 sf
Assembled Price: $14,000

**Tiny Houses**

Fencl:
130 sf
Assembled Price: $50,000
Kit Price: $24,000

http://www.tumbleweedhouses.com
Tiny Houses

**What is it?**
- Clearly a Trailer – they’re built on utility trailer frames

**Could it be put on a residential lot?**
- Not in most cities – which (if they address it) would treat it as a mobile home and either limit it to mobile home parks or allow it into residential zone districts if it met design standards (that it cannot meet).

**Could it be put in a mobile home park?**

**Could it be put in a campground and lived in?**

**Could it be installed as an accessory dwelling unit?**
- Depends on your zoning, subdivision, building codes.

**The more interesting question**
- **SHOULD** these be accepted as a new form of living quarters?
New Rooming Houses

Rooming House Redux

There’s a market for small, simple housing for young singles

Planning Magazine – Nov 2011
New Rooming Houses

“They spend time at coffee bars, in clubs, in parks and plazas, and at jobs (often long hours). They are basically looking for a safe place to sleep that has a private bath and is located reasonably close to all the other places the go.”
New Rooming Houses

“Rooming House” label used to avoid higher parking requirements applicable to apartments

◦ Of course, you could just lower the parking requirements

While “Rooming Houses” do not have to have individual kitchens, some zoning codes do not prohibit them

◦ But if they do have individual kitchens, it does raise the question “what’s the difference between a rooming house and an apartment?”

Sizes can get very small

◦ Videre (Seattle): 90 to 168 sf
◦ Tree House (Palo Alto): 350 to 400 sf
New Rooming Houses

“Apodments”?  

Shared kitchens  
- 1 per 8 units
New Rooming Houses

Triple Bottom Lofts
(Not yet built)

36 units on ¼ acre
400-500 sf
Individual kitchens
In-house coffee bar
18 parking spaces
Secured bike parking
Rooftop chicken coop?
Wind turbine?
New Rooming Houses

What is it?

- Either an apartment or a rooming house (or maybe an SRO) depending on your code

Could be blocked by:

- Minimum unit size requirements (Denver removed in 2010);
- Minimum lot size per unit requirements (pretty common);
- Minimum on-site parking requirements; or
- Maximum lot coverage/minimum on-site open space standards.

Make sure you are not unintentionally banning them based on outdated ideas of what they are.
The Small Condo

The 182 sf Condo (also in Seattle)
Questions and Discussion