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THE MAGAZINE
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Builder



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Four proven strategies to
compete with the nationals

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On the Cover Construction at Brambleton in Loudoun County, Va. Photo: Chris Usher

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PROJECT OF THE MONTH

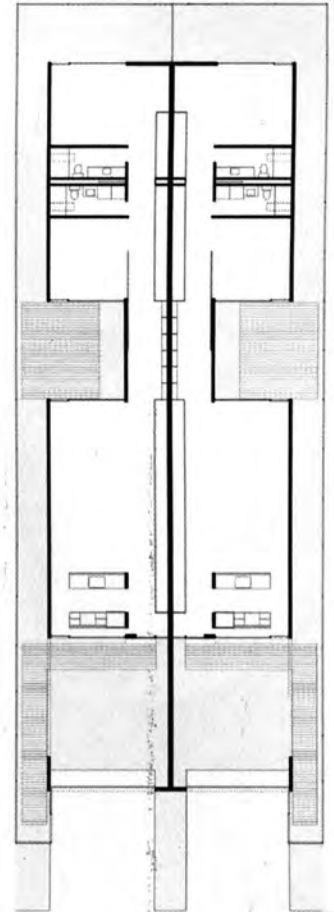
Courting the Suburbs

Ancient courtyard housing ideas applied to suburban lot layouts maximize land use for density, affordability, and privacy

"I'm interested in housing not houses," declares Edward M. Baum. The well-respected architect and professor backs up his statement with a growing cache of infill housing that is designed to fit suburban lots anywhere in the country. When Baum was looking for a place to live while teaching in Dallas, he found very few options that gave *(see page 22)*

Craig Kuhner

Foundations



him a good location for a decent price. What he did find were two adjacent lots in a close suburb. Baum purchased the lots and designed four one-story, single-family houses for his site that also can be duplicated in a variety of places.

The architect created a housing model to fit typical lots and work within existing codes that can be built using only components found at major home supply retailers. Using a duplex designation yields more flexible codes and allows for higher density without sacrificing single family amenities like ample outdoor space. It also drastically cuts costs because two houses share a single foundation and roofing system. In addition, Baum's use of a courtyard plan offsets lack of daylight from the party wall.

The lots Baum purchased measure 50 feet wide by 150 feet deep and run from street to alley. Most people wouldn't envision a courtyard house fitting such a linear site, but Baum feels the technique creates an infill prototype

that can be built anywhere. "The idea of a courtyard house is so old both for privacy and security reasons," he explains. "By making the outdoor space internal, it becomes the safest part of the house and you don't have to depend on the surroundings for views."

A central courtyard flanked by window walls, which are the only custom products, floods interior spaces with natural light. Open living/dining spaces sit to one side of the courtyard with a secondary bedroom/home office on the other. The same window wall system caps each end of a gallery-like plan, so the kitchen and master bedroom also enjoy copious sunlight. A continuous circulation spine runs along the party wall carrying daylight into every room. Built-in storage fills that entire shared wall further enhancing sound abatement.

Standard setbacks actually benefit the courtyard layout. The front setback of 20 feet provides enough space for a shallow driveway and a two-car garage that doubles as an enter-

Project Throckmorton Housing, Dallas

Architect Edward M. Baum, FAIA, Architect, Dallas

Builder/ Developer Diane Cheatham, CCM Group and Urban Edge Developers, Dallas

Project Size 1,660 square feet per unit

Site Size 0.34 acre

Resources: Garage Doors: Clopay Building Products; Exterior Siding: Jimmy's Cypress

tainment court. (Read more about this detail on page 28.) A 10-foot-deep backyard setback yields a secluded outdoor space adjacent to the master suite. Five feet along each side makes room for crushed rock walkways and French drains that catch runoff from the metal roof and direct water toward vines planted along 8-foot-tall chain link fences enclosing each property. "These side easements also connect outdoor spaces," Baum adds, "so no one has to drag plants or a lawnmower through the house." — SHELLEY D. HUTCHINS

Q Visit go.hw.net/bol1213-courting-the-suburbs for additional photos.

Craig Kuhner

Foundations

DETAILS

Garage Party

In true suburban style, this garage is designed to do double duty as public outdoor space

A 20-foot setback becomes an amenity in the deft hands of Edward M. Baum. For a small infill development near Dallas, the architect fit a two-car driveway and matching carport within the footprint of the required setback. The strategy allows for a private interior courtyard (see more on page 21), but also in true suburban style, the garage is designed to do double duty as an outdoor space.

Saving money was big for Baum, who lived in one of the duplexes and sold the rest. He made a profit, but even more important, he provided high-quality houses at a reasonable cost. For the garage cum party space, a parasol roof floats above reclaimed cypress walls—a common material in the south.

“We used doubled-up 2x12s to support the standard commercial insulated metal roof,” Baum explains. “The connective incline beams are just 2x6s with plywood and electrical conduit that we flattened by hand as the braces.”

With the garage door open, the home’s façade is transformed into a bright entry court ideal for entertaining or socializing with neighbors. The walkway winds around to the side of the garage, which has a protective soffit but no wall, and then leads to a transparent entry.

Simple crushed rock ground cover offered big savings; plus it’s a permeable surface that hides spills or drips. The use of mostly outdoor materials along with leaving the space partially open provides occupants with a sense of the outdoors—even if it rains and the door remains closed. “But when the garage door is open,” Baum notes, “you can see the street from almost every room in the house.” — SHELLEY D. HUTCHINS



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