

HOUSE REVIEW (/HOUSE-REVIEW)

Missing Middle Designs

Living large with great efficiency, these designs find a fit in single-family's sweet spot

By Larry W. Garnett, FAIBD, House Review Lead Designer | February 27, 2019



Attached Cottages | Photo: DTJ Design

If you're a single-family builder (<https://www.probuilder.com/builders>) or developer, you know the challenges of delivering a lower-priced home these days. In addition to rising labor (<https://www.probuilder.com/labor>) and material costs, finding affordable building sites has become almost impossible in many areas due to increasing land costs and impact fees. As a result, many potential buyers are faced with either delaying a home purchase until they've saved more money, renting a large multifamily unit, or moving in with relatives. The situation is especially dire for young couples wanting to put down roots near desirable schools and amenities. This growing void between entry-level and luxury homes was labeled the "missing middle" by architect Daniel Parolek (<https://www.probuilder.com/house-review-filling-missing-middle>) in *Professional Builder's* November 2017 issue, and is just now being addressed in a few single-family zoning ordinances (<https://www.probuilder.com/zoning>), ideally paving the way for duplexes, courtyard apartments, and cluster housing that can offer a pleasing variety and affordable options. But these modest-size multifamily housing types must maintain the scale and form of the neighboring single-family detached homes (<https://www.probuilder.com/single-family-homes>). Take a look at our design team's concepts, which include fourplexes, townhomes, and a unique triplex by DTJ Design that closely resembles three detached cottages.

River's Bend

DESIGNER: Larry Garnett, FAIBD, larrygarnett@larrygarnettdesigns.com (<mailto:larrygarnett@larrygarnettdesigns.com>), 254.205.2597

PLAN SIZE: Width: 52 feet, 4 inches; Depth: 37 feet, 4 inches; Living area: A - 810 sf, B - 945 sf

This economical fourplex design was created for an infill project (<https://www.probuilder.com/new-construction-projects>) on the edge of an existing single-family neighborhood. The exterior materials (<https://www.probuilder.com/building-materials>) and proportions mimic the neighboring one- and two-story homes. Parking is accessed along a rear lane; the "A" plans have one space and the "B" plans each have two spaces, for a total of six autos. Guest parking is along the front street.

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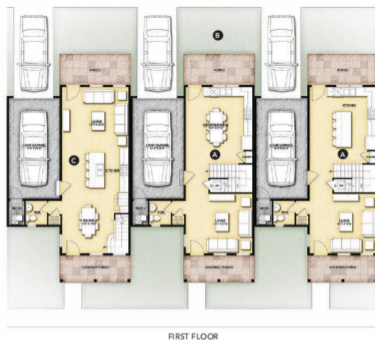
- ① Each "A" plan features an open living, dining, and kitchen area
- ② The "B" plan offers a similar open floor plan with additional living area
- ③ The "B" plans include a study that could also serve as a guest bedroom
- ④ The exterior design combines stone and vertical siding; the small-scale footprint is similar in size and proportion to adjacent single-family homes

Attached Cottages

DESIGNER: DTJ Design (<https://www.dtjdesign.com>), Seth Hart, shart@dtjdesign.com (mailto:shart@dtjdesign.com), 303.443.7533

PLAN SIZE: Width: 28 feet; Depth: 38 feet; Living area: 1,220 sf

These homes were designed with complete flexibility in mind. As shown, these attached homes create a feeling of detached single-family living (<https://www.probuilder.com/single-family-homes>) with the party wall situated along the garage and mechanical room. The units could also be arranged in several other configurations, depending on site planning strategies. They could be separated if detached residential is desired, or the garages could be detached, with dwelling units clustered together and arranged as a bungalow court. The floor plans (<https://www.probuilder.com/floor-plans>) also offer a variety of kitchen and living configuration options within the same footprint. Walkability and community connectivity are promoted through garage access off the alley and providing large front porches.



- ① Variety of options allow buyers to personalize living configurations
- ② Full-depth apron allows for second parking space, as well as providing depth for rear yard
- ③ Alternate living configuration offers plan variety within identical building footprint
- ④ Optional roof decks over garages provide additional outdoor living opportunities

Veranda at Esencia

ARCHITECT: Robert Hidey Architects (<https://www.roberthidey.com>), ahidey@roberthidey.com

(<mailto:ahidey@roberthidey.com>), 949.655.1550

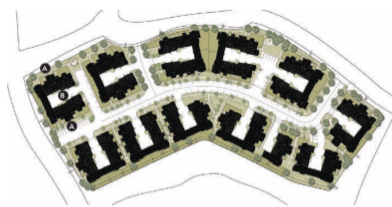
PROJECT SITE: 8.1 acres; 86 units; Living area: 1,681 to 2,254 sf

UNIT IX PLAN SIZE: Width: 33 feet, 8 inches; Depth: 44 feet; Living area: 1,721 sf



Photo: Robert Hidey Architects

Designed for MBK Homes (<http://mbkhomes.com/>), multifamily neighborhood Veranda feels distinctly single-family. Located in hilltop village Esencia, Rancho Mission Viejo, Calif., walking trails connect neighborhoods, retail, schools, and green and open space (<https://www.probuilder.com/green-projects>). Functional outdoor use areas support family living—private yards resemble those in detached single-family developments, and optional third-floor outdoor living space (<https://www.probuilder.com/outdoor-spaces>) for some. Although the site offered a tremendous landscape, the irregularly shaped landform challenged planning. To capture residual land areas and maximize living, unique building and unit types add perimeter and realize light and view opportunities.



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



THIRD FLOOR

- 1 Passes lead to private yards and resident entries, defined by a covered porch
- 2 Entry to the two-car garage through a motor court
- 3 Floor plans offer ground-floor convenience in an informal setting. Open-plan great rooms feel expansive, with 10-foot ceilings and no interior partition walls
- 4 French doors provide direct access from the kitchen to the private yard
- 5 Second-floor master suite features dual vanities, shower, and walk-in closet. Secondary bedrooms designed to limit nuisance party-wall adjacencies and make efficient use of available floor area; bedrooms 2 and 3 share a bath
- 6 Third-floor interior bonus spaces or covered decks extend the home's social function, with ocean and mountain views. Model 1x enjoys a spacious covered deck; model 1y features an enclosed interior bonus room

Hyde Park Townhome

DESIGNERS: GMD Design Group (<https://www.gmdesigngroup.com>), Scott Gardner, scott@gmdesigngroup.com

(<mailto:scott@gmdesigngroup.com>), 919.320.3022; Donnie McGrath, donnie@gmdesigngroup.com

(<mailto:donnie@gmdesigngroup.com>), 770.375.7351

PLAN SIZE: Width: 24 feet; Depth: 46 feet; Living area: 2,427 sf

(<https://www.probuilder.com/townhouses-and-urban-homes>) is overtaking the single-family detached home at the middle price point. To meet the higher expectations of the mid-price buyer, exterior elevations are of the highest importance. Designed (<https://www.probuilder.com/design>) as a manor, where each home shares the same style as the overall building, these rear-loaded, thoughtfully detailed elevations impress from the curb. Luxury baths, open floor plans, outdoor spaces, and elevators meet the expectations of today's buyer who, in the past, would have selected a detached single-family home.



Culturefix

ARCHITECT + DESIGNER: Todd Hallett, AIA, Michael Latimer, TK Design & Associates (<https://www.tkhomedesign.com>), 248.446.1960

PLAN SIZE: Width: 18 feet; Depth: 41 feet; Living area: 1,894 sf



The missing middle represents varied housing types that bridge the gap between single-family detached housing and mid-rise housing units. Missing-middle design (<https://www.probuilder.com/design>) can occur in several forms: apartments, townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, and housing clusters, and must be responsive to the increased desire for housing that promotes walkability and social connectivity. Michael Latimer from TK Design & Associates designed and developed concepts for this modern rooftop townhome to be built on an infill site near downtown Atlanta.



- 1 Tandem garage allows for additional storage or second-car parking, not often found in a narrow townhome
- 2 Narrow units allow for a clustering effect on the elevator, promoting walkability and helping to unify the

- Open floor plan increases livability and makes the home live larger
- Pocket office space is ideal for a work-at-home situation
- Generous size glazing brings natural light into and through the space

- streetscape
- Third-level loft can be converted to an additional suite
- Rooftop terrace affords great views of the city and can be the perfect hangout space

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