Historic Courtyard Housing in Portland: Design - Characteristics

Portland, Oregon: Characteristics of Historic Courtyard Housing

In the early 1920s, Portland was embracing modernity and efficiency in residential design. Courtyard housing was one of the solutions to this urban movement. Although not as prominent today as it was a century ago, some historic courtyards still grace the streets of Portland. The purpose of this paper is to describe the layout and characteristics of the housing, focusing on the units, sidewalks, and transition from street to courtyard. The idea of a courtyard is a means of creating a sense of security and privacy, while also providing a clear transition from the street. This design allows for the integration of pedestrian activity, providing a clear distinction between the public space of the sidewalk and the semi-public space of the courtyard.

Some are narrow, minimal accessways. Others are beautiful, intriguing spaces. Some are narrow, minimal accessways. Others are beautiful, intriguing spaces. The transition from court to unit is an important aspect in the design process. The semi-private space in the court provides a clear transition from the street, marking a clear distinction between the public space of the sidewalk and the semi-public space of the courtyard. The wide-open nature of the court is divided into the public area and the private area, allowing for the integration of pedestrian activity into the design.

The earlier projects were usually wood-framed, with wood or stucco facades. The streetfronts were limited street frontage was the determining factor in the number of units across. High density housing can be built at a scale which complements the adjacent architecture, even in the absence of alleys. The typical units across, which mean that most residents keep their blinds closed. Courtyards can be seen as a further development of rowhouses. They are around

High density housing can be built at a scale which complements the adjacent architecture, even in the absence of alleys. This site plan illustrates another problem with the indiscriminate replication of a standard type without regard to specific site conditions can be seen here, the almost invariable pattern for Portland courtyard projects in the middle of long blocks. However, in the case of Portland, this pattern was not maintained, probably due to the lack of pressure to garage more cars. Sheffield Court accommodates three garages per unit, which is more than most units in the middle of long blocks. The early example from 1928 was not followed by future projects, probably due to the lack of pressure to garage more cars.

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For our purposes the most important aspect is the lessons they provide for future housing in Portland. These projects demonstrate that:

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