

# 100 Small Houses Of The Thirties Brown Blodgett Company

## 100 Small Houses of the Thirties: Exploring the Brown Blodgett Company's Legacy

The Great Depression cast a long shadow over American architecture, yet amidst the hardship, innovative companies like the Brown Blodgett Company emerged, offering affordable and stylish housing solutions. Their contribution to the architectural landscape of the 1930s is significant, particularly their catalog featuring "100 Small Houses," a collection that exemplifies the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the era. This article delves into the legacy of the Brown Blodgett Company, exploring the design features, historical context, and lasting impact of these charming and historically significant small homes. We'll also examine their enduring appeal in today's market, considering factors like **Craftsman bungalow style**, **pre-fabricated housing**, and the **economic impact** of such readily available designs.

### The Historical Context: Building Amidst the Depression

The 1930s presented unique challenges to the construction industry. The Great Depression crippled the economy, leaving many Americans struggling to find affordable housing. The Brown Blodgett Company recognized this need and responded with their catalog, "100 Small Houses," offering a range of designs catering to a variety of budgets and family sizes. These weren't simply blueprints; they represented a vision of accessible, attractive homes that could be built relatively quickly and affordably, using readily available materials. This initiative was crucial in alleviating some of the housing crisis and allowing individuals to achieve the American dream of homeownership despite economic hardship. The designs reflected the prevailing architectural styles of the time, often incorporating elements of **Arts and Crafts** and the emerging **Modernist** movements, showcasing a blend of practicality and aesthetic appeal.

## Design Features and Architectural Styles of the 100 Small Houses

The 100 Small Houses showcased a remarkable diversity of styles, demonstrating the adaptability of the Brown Blodgett Company's designs. Many reflected the popular Craftsman bungalow style, characterized by low-pitched roofs, exposed beams, and natural materials. Others showcased elements of the emerging Modernist movement, with simpler lines and a focus on functionality. Key features often included:

- **Efficient floor plans:** Designed to maximize space and functionality within a compact footprint, reflecting the necessity of economic space utilization.
- **Simple construction:** The designs emphasized straightforward construction techniques, minimizing labor costs and making them accessible to both professional builders and ambitious homeowners undertaking DIY projects.
- **Natural materials:** The prevalent use of wood, brick, and stone echoed the Craftsman aesthetic and contributed to the overall charm of these homes.
- **Porches and verandas:** These outdoor spaces were common features, extending living areas and providing a connection to the surrounding environment.

These design features contributed to the overall appeal and practicality of the 100 Small Houses, making them desirable options for a wide range of prospective homeowners. The affordability, combined with their aesthetically pleasing designs, ensured that these houses were not only functional but also attractive and desirable.

## The Enduring Appeal: 100 Small Houses Today

While designed for the economic realities of the 1930s, the 100 Small Houses continue to hold a certain charm and appeal in the 21st century. Their compact size aligns with contemporary trends towards smaller, more sustainable living. Many homeowners today appreciate the character and craftsmanship inherent in these designs, finding them a refreshing alternative to mass-produced, cookie-cutter homes. The simplicity of the designs also makes them relatively easy and affordable to renovate or restore, allowing homeowners to personalize them to their individual tastes. The inherent charm and historical significance add to their value, making them desirable investment properties in certain markets. Restoring and maintaining one of these houses can be a rewarding project, preserving a piece of architectural history while creating a beautiful and comfortable home. The widespread availability of plans and information online also makes it easier for individuals to build or adapt these designs to fit modern needs and building codes.

## **The Legacy of Brown Blodgett and Prefabricated Housing**

The Brown Blodgett Company's "100 Small Houses" contributed significantly to the evolution of prefabricated housing in the United States. While not strictly prefabricated in the modern sense (they provided plans rather than pre-cut components), the emphasis on standardized designs and efficient construction techniques laid the groundwork for future innovations in this field. Their approach to making affordable and attractive housing readily accessible left a lasting impact on the building industry. The success of the 100 Small Houses demonstrates the power of design and ingenuity to address social and economic challenges, leaving behind a legacy of stylish, functional, and historically significant homes that continue to be appreciated today. This innovative approach to housing design has influenced subsequent generations of architects and builders, underscoring the enduring relevance of Brown Blodgett's contribution.

## **Conclusion**

The Brown Blodgett Company's "100 Small Houses" represent a remarkable achievement in architectural history. Designed and released during the challenging economic climate of the Great Depression, these homes offered a practical and aesthetically pleasing solution to the housing shortage. Their enduring appeal stems from a combination of factors, including efficient floor plans, charming architectural styles, and the use of high-quality, readily available materials. These houses represent a significant contribution to both the architectural landscape and the social fabric of the era, reflecting resourcefulness and a commitment to providing accessible and attractive homes for all. The legacy continues to inspire contemporary builders and homeowners alike, proving the timeless appeal of thoughtful design and sustainable building practices.

## **FAQ**

### **Q1: Where can I find plans for the Brown Blodgett 100 Small Houses?**

A1: Unfortunately, the original Brown Blodgett catalog may be difficult to locate in its entirety. However, various online archives and historical societies might possess copies or digitized versions. Searching online using keywords such as "Brown Blodgett 100 Small Houses plans" may yield some results. You can also try contacting architectural historians or specialists in historical house plans. Remember, adapting plans to meet current building codes is crucial if you intend to build from these older designs.

**Q2: Are these houses still suitable for modern living?**

A2: While they may require some updating to meet modern standards and preferences, many of the designs are surprisingly adaptable. Their fundamental layouts remain relevant, and modern renovations can easily integrate contemporary appliances and amenities. The original charm can be maintained while improving energy efficiency and modernizing the interior.

**Q3: What was the average cost of building one of these houses in the 1930s?**

A3: Precise cost information is difficult to obtain definitively due to inflation and variations in materials and labor costs across different regions. However, historical records suggest that they were designed to be considerably more affordable than larger, more elaborate homes of the same era.

**Q4: What materials were commonly used in building these houses?**

A4: Common materials included wood framing, clapboard or shingle siding, brick (in some designs), and often stone foundations. Interior finishes would have varied depending on the homeowner's budget, but typically included wood flooring, plaster walls, and simple cabinetry.

**Q5: Are there any surviving examples of these houses still standing today?**

A5: Yes, many houses based on the Brown Blodgett designs likely remain standing across the United States. Identifying them requires careful research using historical records and potentially contacting local historical societies or architectural preservation groups. Locating such houses may require examining property records and visually inspecting houses that match the stylistic characteristics of the Brown Blodgett designs.

**Q6: How do these homes compare to modern small house designs?**

A6: While modern small house designs often prioritize minimalism and open floor plans, the Brown Blodgett houses emphasized functionality within a compact space using the popular stylistic elements of their day. Modern designs often incorporate more advanced building techniques and materials for improved energy efficiency.

**Q7: What are the pros and cons of building a house based on a Brown Blodgett design today?**

A7: **Pros:** Unique architectural style, potentially lower construction costs (compared to contemporary custom homes), opportunity for historical preservation. **Cons:** Adaptation to modern building codes and energy standards may be required, potential difficulty sourcing original materials, and the need for skilled craftsmanship for accurate replication.

**Q8: What is the best resource to learn more about the Brown Blodgett Company?**

A8: Start by searching online archives and historical databases for information related to the company. Local historical societies in regions where the company operated might hold relevant documents or records. Contacting architectural historians specializing in the housing styles of the 1930s could also yield valuable insights.

## **100 Small Houses of the Thirties Brown Blodgett Company: A Legacy of Craftsmanship and Compact Living**

The economic downturn of the 1930s necessitated a reassessment of architectural practices. Amidst the chaos, the Brown Blodgett Company emerged as a major player, supplying hundreds of delightful small houses that perfectly combined functionality with aesthetic appeal. This article examines the legacy of these 100 small houses, exposing the architectural principles that caused them both extraordinary and enduring testaments to ingenious design within limitations.

The Brown Blodgett Company, different from many builders of the era, understood that inexpensive housing didn't have to sacrifice quality or style. Their 100 small houses, built predominantly implementing native materials and modern construction approaches, represent a resolve to creating habitable spaces for families on tight budgets. These homes were not merely abodes; they were thoughtfully designed environments that optimized space and illumination while maintaining a impression of coziness.

One of the principal features of these homes was their effective floor arrangements. Rooms were miniature but balanced, eliminating wasted space and fostering a feeling of neatness. The use of built-in cabinetry and clever storage approaches further bettered the sense of spaciousness. The Brown Blodgett houses frequently featured ample windows, permitting copious natural light to flood the interiors. This simply brightened the spaces but also generated a sense of openness.

The outside aesthetic of the houses was equally considerate. Common characteristics included plain lines, attractive elements, and a range of outside materials such as brick, lumber, and stucco. These materials, often procured regionally,

showed a respect for both environmental responsibility and local finance.

The heritage of the Brown Blodgett Company's 100 small houses stretches beyond their direct impact on accommodation in the 1930s. They show the potential for creating beautiful, practical, and cheap homes, even under trying circumstances. Their construction principles continue to inspire architects and developers today, underlining the importance of careful planning, optimized space utilization, and the application of eco-friendly materials.

The study of these 100 small houses offers precious lessons for modern accommodation design. By studying their plan, material selections, and general architectural methodology, we can obtain insight into creating compact yet livable homes that are both attractive and ecologically responsible. The ease and beauty of these houses emphasize us that excellent architecture doesn't demand excessive size or price.

In conclusion, the 100 small houses of the Thirties Brown Blodgett Company symbolize a extraordinary achievement in construction heritage. Their permanent attraction lies in their blend of usefulness, visual charisma, and commitment to inexpensive and sustainable lodging. These houses serve as a strong reminder of the value of considerate design and the capability to create important living spaces even within limited funds.

### **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):**

#### **Q1: Where can I find examples of these Brown Blodgett houses today?**

A1: Unfortunately, locating specific examples requires local historical research. Many may still exist, but identifying them requires investigating local property records and historical archives in areas where Brown Blodgett was active.

#### **Q2: Are blueprints or plans available for these houses?**

A2: The availability of original blueprints is unlikely. Local historical societies or archives might possess some documentation, but finding complete sets is improbable.

#### **Q3: What building materials were predominantly used?**

A3: Common materials included readily-available local options like brick, wood, and stucco, reflecting a focus on economical and sustainable construction.

**Q4: What were the typical square footages of these homes?**

A4: Given the "small house" designation, square footages likely ranged from approximately 600 to 1200 square feet, varying according to specific models and client requests.

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