San Francisco's 'Micro-Apartment': How Much Smaller Can We Go?

By ACL Real Estate Editors

We thought a 305-square-foot apartment was tiny, but San Francisco has shrunken the size of a studio even further — to a laughably miniscule 160 square feet. Patrick Kennedy of the development firm Panoramic Interests designed a life-size model of the smallest size studio apartment that's legally allowed in California — and yes, it really is only 160 square feet. But according to Kennedy, that's really all you need. Dressed out in custom, modular, multipurpose furniture, the "micro-apartment" offers the functionalities of a regular one-bedroom. There's space for a home office and dinner parties ("The only thing we don't like? The "knot-bath". An shower that's undivided from the rest of the bathroom and drains into its floor. Nobody likes to shower right next to the toilet.

According to Kennedy, living arrangements like the micro-apartment are necessary in San Francisco, where 42 percent of the population lives alone. "That percentage is much higher than in any other American city, yet there's very little addressing the needs of just a single person," said Kennedy. "Especially spaces that would be affordable to a single person."

Kennedy's thoughts are echoed by Sarah Watson, senior policy analyst at the Citizens Housing Planning Council. Watson says that the housing options available in New York City and other big cities, such as San Francisco and Los Angeles, no longer reflect residents' needs.

"Currently, laws in New York City are still based on the demographics and living arrangements of the 1960s," Watson told AOL Real Estate in January. "We need to move forward." Could moving forward be living in 160-square-foot and 305-square-foot apartments? You decide. (See the tour of San Francisco's 160-square-foot micro-apartment above.)

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