

Schedule Fall 2023 Seminar

The seminar was scaffolded around a series of research experiences, each comprised of readings, presentations, guest lectures, and field research.

week				
Collective Housing Across Time and Space	01	Aug	23 Intro to Collective Housing	
	02		30 History: From the Long House to Collective Housing	
	03	Sep	06 Commoning: From Tragedy to Potential of the Common	
	04		13 Community: The Politics of Housing and the Agency of Home	
	05		20 Lifestyle: Productive and Reproductive Labor	
	06		27 Organization: Squatters, Syndicates, Cooperatives, and other Managerial Models	
	07	Oct	04 Property: Value, Land, Law, and the Economy of Sharing	
	08		11 Urbanism: From the Right to the City to the Right to Housing	
	09		18 We Summit Prep	
			19 Th International Summit on Collective Housing	
			20 Fr	
	Case Chicago for Collective Housing	10		25 Community: From Redlining to Open Access for Chicago
		11	Nov	01 Lifestyle: From Nuclear Family to Blended Life for Chicago
		12		08 Organization: Managerial Models for Chicago
		13		15 Property: Landownership, Laws, Rights, and Loopholes for Chicago
		14		22 Urbanism: From Segregated Community to Urban Collectives for Chicago
15			29 <u>Research Project Presentation: "Chicago Field Guide towards Collective Housing"</u>	
16		Dec	06 Submit Files	

Field Trips, Tours, Visits, Guest Lectures

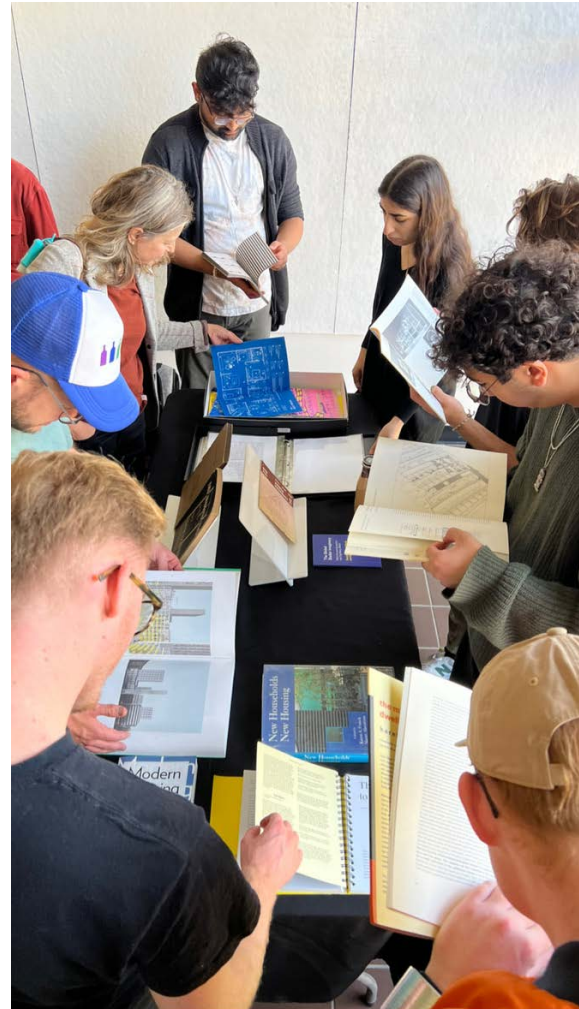
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| 1. Marina City (Alexander Eisenschmidt) | Tour |
| 2. Jane Addams Hull House (UIC, CADA) | Visit |
| 3. Chicago Community Loan Fund (David Feinberg) | Lecture |
| 4. Fair Housing Legal Support Center (Allison Bethel) | Visit |
| 5. National Public Housing Museum (Lisa Lee) | Tour or Talk |
| 6. The Resurrection Project, Pilsen (Raul Raymundo) | Visit |
| 7. North Lawndale Historical and Cultural Society (Blanche Killingsworth) | Neighborhood Tour |
| 8. Auburn Gresham Community Center (Crystal Stevenson, UIC) | Community Survey |
| 9. UIC Social Work, HUD Financial Mechanisms for Housing (Andrew Foell) | Lecture |

Community Engagement



Students engaged communities and conducted field research in underserved communities. The course collaborated with neighborhood centers in places like Auburn Gresham, Chicago, where students were able to host a booth at the local Renaissance Fair to conduct conversations and surveys on housing needs.

Community Activation



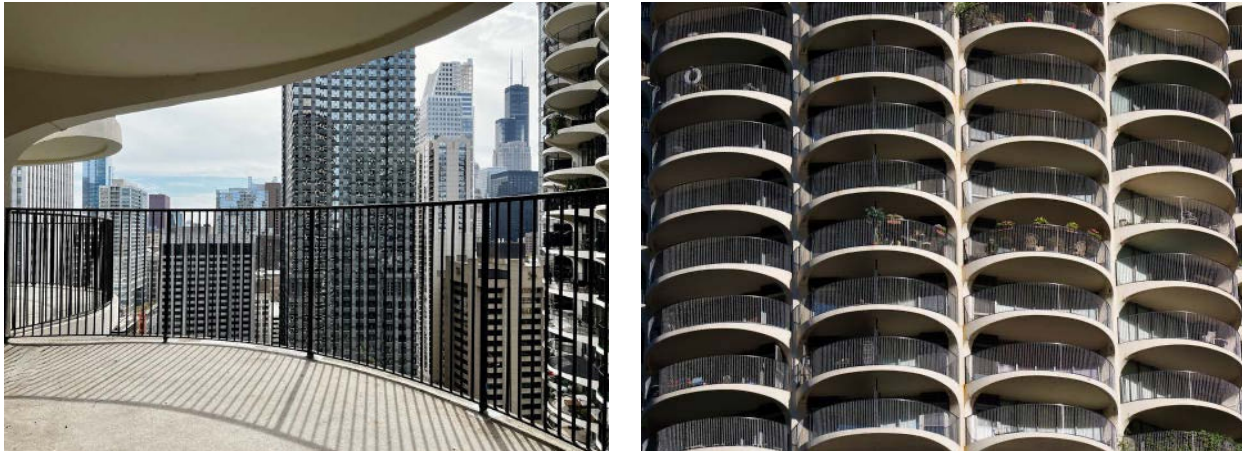
The course raised a flag in solidarity with the collective struggle towards better housing and we shared literature from across the history of housing, supported by our school's archive.

Archive Visits & Guest Lectures



The course visited the National Public Housing Museum and its Archive, and we received a lecture and tour by its director. (the name of the director has been withheld to maintain anonymity)

Field Research & Visits



The course studied and visited legendary housing projects such as Marina City in Chicago.



And, the course studied and visited housing projects that are currently under renovation, such as the Jane Addams Homes in Chicago, originally built in 1938, under FDR's PWA Program.



Collective Housing Primer and Declaration for Chicago



Spreads from the 300-page primer by the student researchers on Chicago's dismal housing history and projections for possible futures to come. Chapters included "Communities Beyond Redlining," "Policies Beyond Real-Estate Templates," "Organizations Beyond Home-Owner Associations," "Lifestyles Beyond the Nuclear Family," and "Urbanisms Beyond the Single Lot."

At Home with the Collective

Housing could be described as one of the basic forms of architecture and its main responsibility, if not today's most crucial task. Yet the pervasive model of for-profit, mortgage-backed, developer-driven housing in the United States has systematically eradicated affordable housing. Currently, the US has a shortage of 7.3 million affordable units, which accounts for a sharp decline in units by 8% in the past 2 years alone—a decline that disproportionately affects low-income and Black, Latinx, and First Nation households. But escaping profit-based homeownership seems increasingly difficult when dominated by global neoliberal market forces and values that have the unique ability to swallow and monetize everything in its way.

We, therefore, identify the conundrum of housing in the following terms: The severe lack of housing for the less affluent in the US is not a unique temporary crisis but rather a prolonged and ongoing struggle. The current housing situation does not indicate a failure of the system but rather works exactly as it was designed since more demand for housing increases value. Mortgage holders and property owners are not motivated to support affordable housing but rather profit from a housing shortage. With a homeownership rate of 65% of Americans and mortgages constituting 70% of overall consumer debt, the majority of private citizens has no incentive and public officials have no mandate to provide affordable housing but rather need to ensure that housing value never depreciates.

Therefore, solutions for the housing struggle in the US will never come through legislation or philanthropy but only through a radical rethink of the way housing is designed, built, and financed, which we see as a productive challenge for architecture.

12 Points on How to Collective Housing

1. Ally with local communities/organizations/institutions in their efforts for affordable housing (unions, first-nations, NGOs, religious groups, local neighborhood organizations).
2. Guide these allies in the selection, purchase, and zoning/rezoning (via Zoning Amendments or Planned Developments) of land that is available, affordable, and suited for large-scale housing.
3. Set up a Community Land Trust (CLT for land that is collectively purchased, owned, and managed).
4. Design for many but not for the generic: design with particular communities in mind, except the nuclear, heteronormative family.
5. Welcome specific managerial models (syndicates, cooperatives, communes, colonies, squatters, etc.), except for-profit developers and condo associations.
6. Aim to build 1.000 units: it creates community, keeps costs low, and makes it resilient (“too big to fail”).
7. Develop compact, pliable plans that can accommodate multiple forms of inhabitation on a small footprint.
8. Designate different degrees of communal spaces to give agency to the inhabitants and to foster solidarity (not a social condenser but a social activist).
9. Embrace the Fair Housing Act as a constructive principle (with ramps for accessibility and club rooms and kitchens for the community).
10. Set up a pilot project to demonstrate feasibility.
11. Develop scalable projects that are high on community and low on cost.
12. Implement protocols for upkeep to avoid decay.

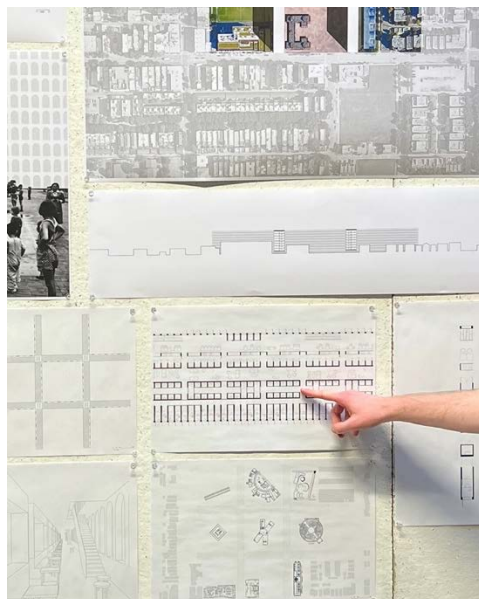
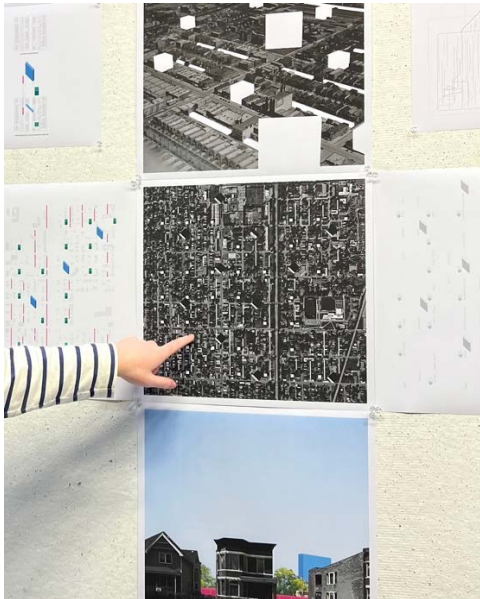
A presentation on the chapters as well as a reading of the jointly written declaration on collective housing concluded the Fall semester seminar and set the stage for the Spring Semester Design Studio. (names of students have been withheld to maintain anonymity)

Schedule

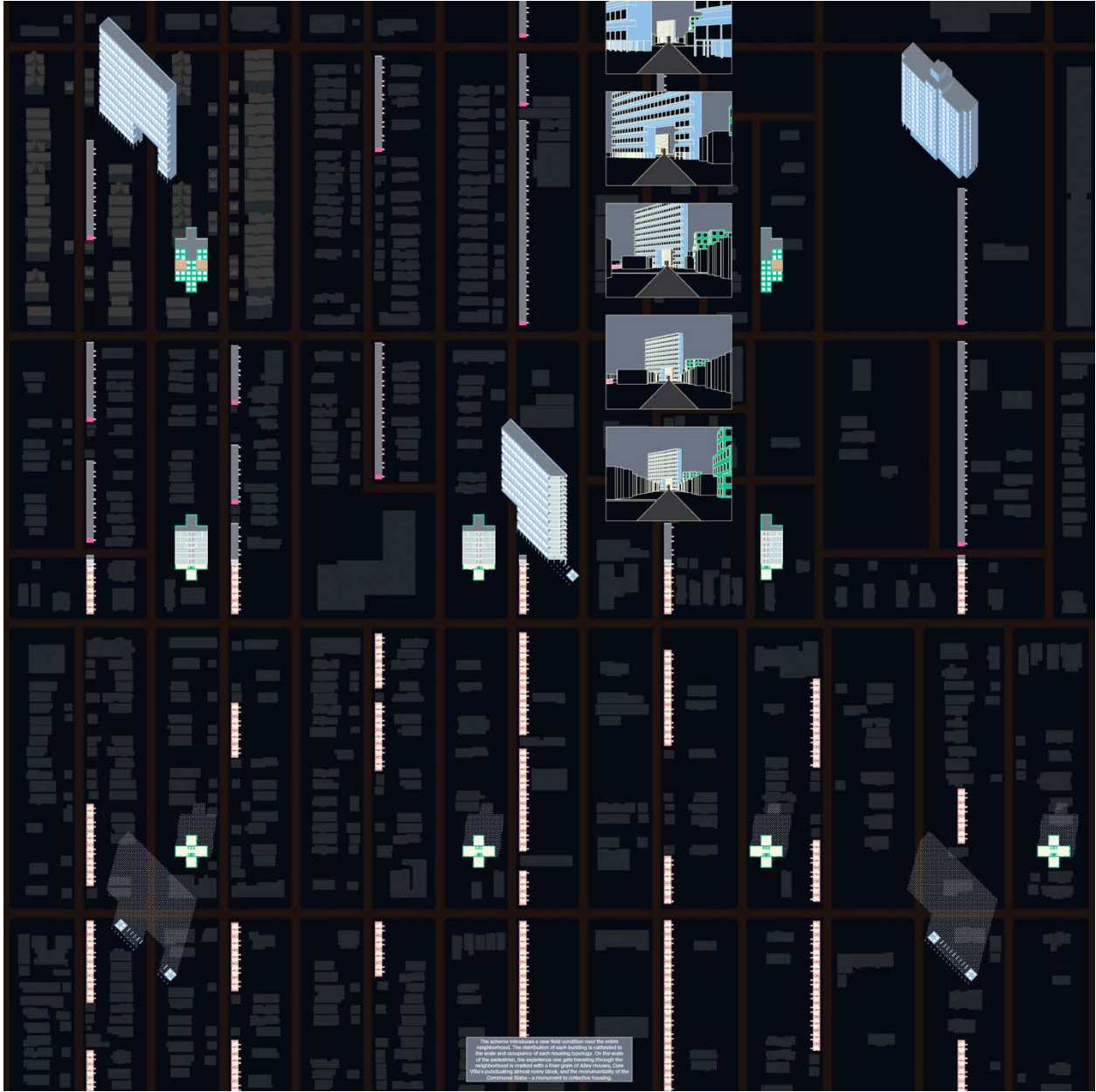
Spring 2024 Design Studio

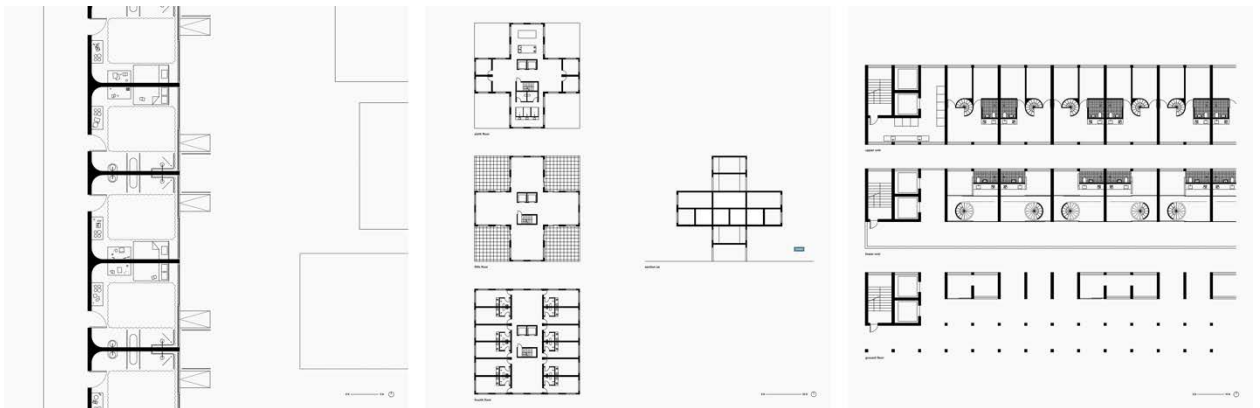
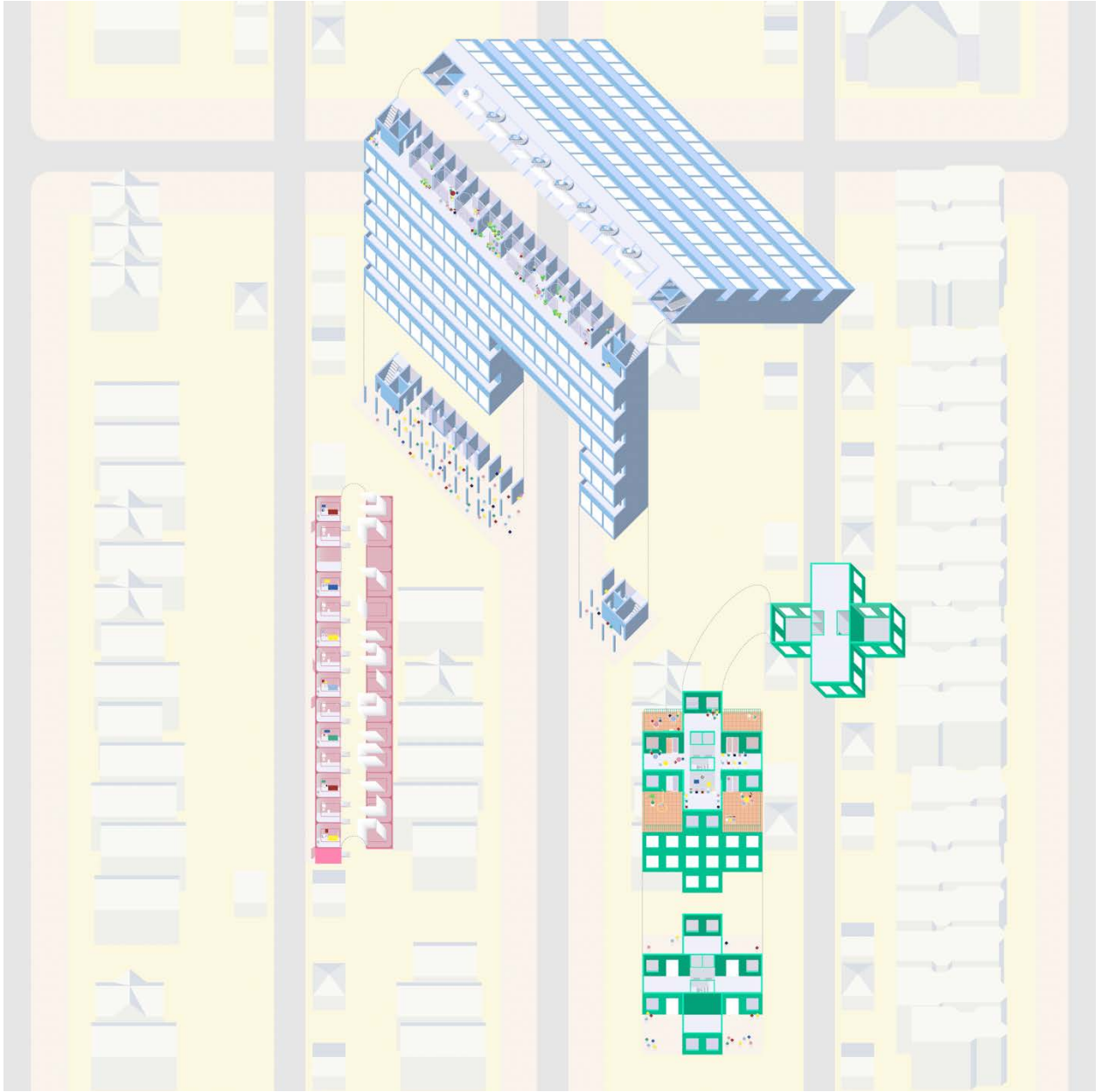
week					
01	Jan	08 10 12	M W F	Introduction, 1-3 pm (1100), 3:00-5:50 pm (studio) (assign A1: Location)	
02		15 17 19	M W F	Martin Luther King Day (no classes)	
03		22 24 26	M W F	A1: Location (figure-ground)	(assign A2: Program)
04		29 31	M W		
	Feb	02	F	A2: Program (unit, block, neighborhood)	(assign Mid-term Requirements)
05		05 07 09	M T F	Pre-midterm Pin-up / Presentation	
06		12 14 16	M W F	A3: Mid-term Review Reviewing Mid-term Critique	(assign A4: Unit)
07		19 22 23	M W F		
08		26 28	M W		
	Mar	01	F	A4: Unit	(assign A5: Block)
09		04 06 08	M W F		
10		11 13 15	M W F	A5: Block	(assign A6: Neighborhood)
11		Spring Break (no class)			
12		25 27 29	M W F	A6: Neighborhood	(final assign: 1:1 Units)
13	Apr	01 03 05	M W F	4:30 pm, Grad Open House Walk-through	
14		08 10 12	M W F		
15		15 17 19	M W F		
16		22 24 26	M W F	Pre-final Pin-up	
	May	29 02 03	M Thursday F	Final Review Year-End-Show	9am – 12:30pm (Submitting to Project Archive)

Preliminary Schemes



Early design schemes were presented to faculty members and local housing activists.



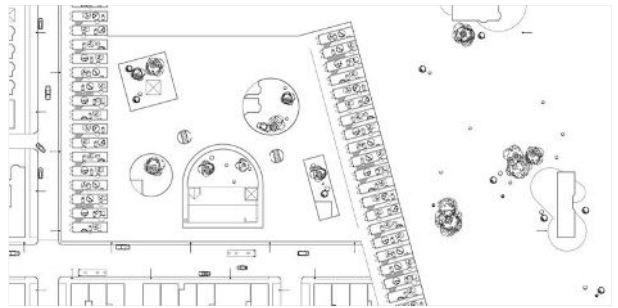
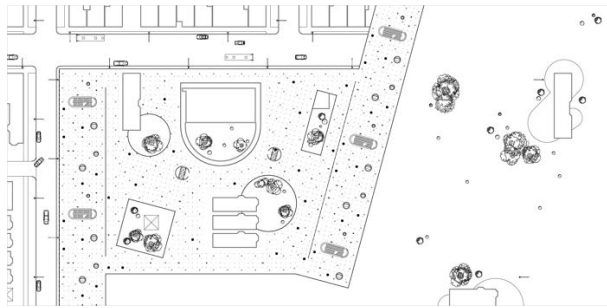


Project Sample 2

Framing Reparation: Collective Housing for Black, Brown, and First-Nation Communities

This project sees in Chicago's urban depopulation potential to bring the Prairie back and frames it with housing for displaced populations. For their design, the student communicated with First-Nation community leaders to develop a culturally aware and architecturally inventive scheme.

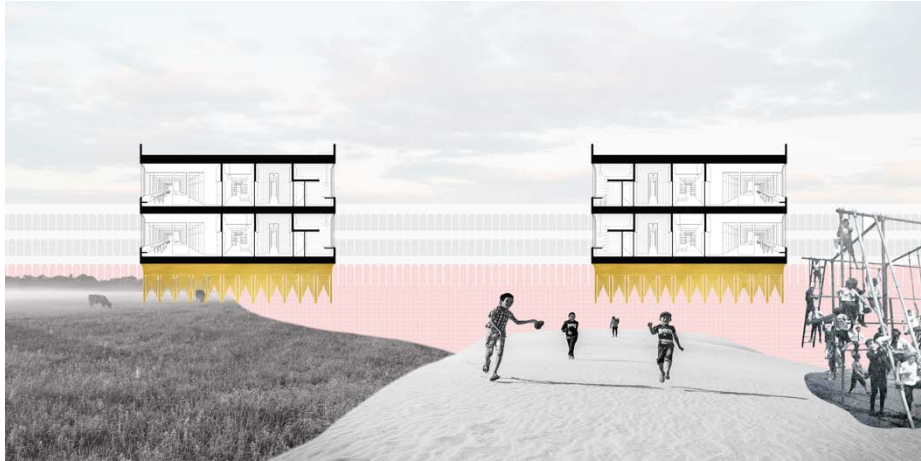
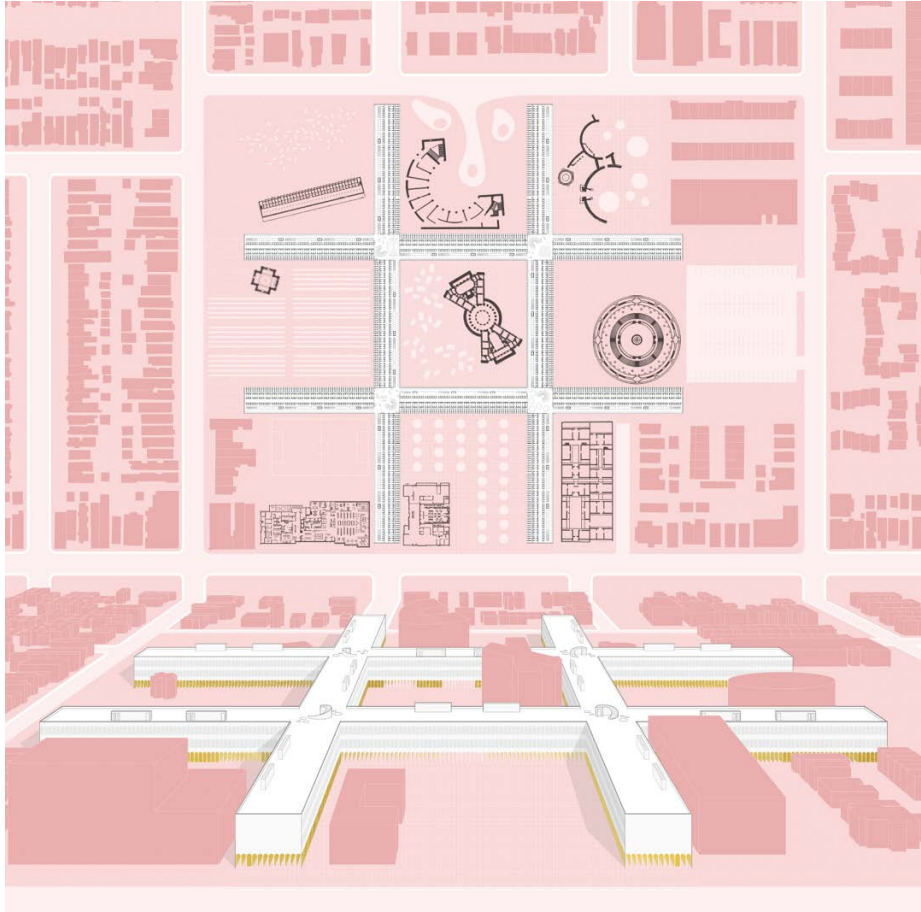


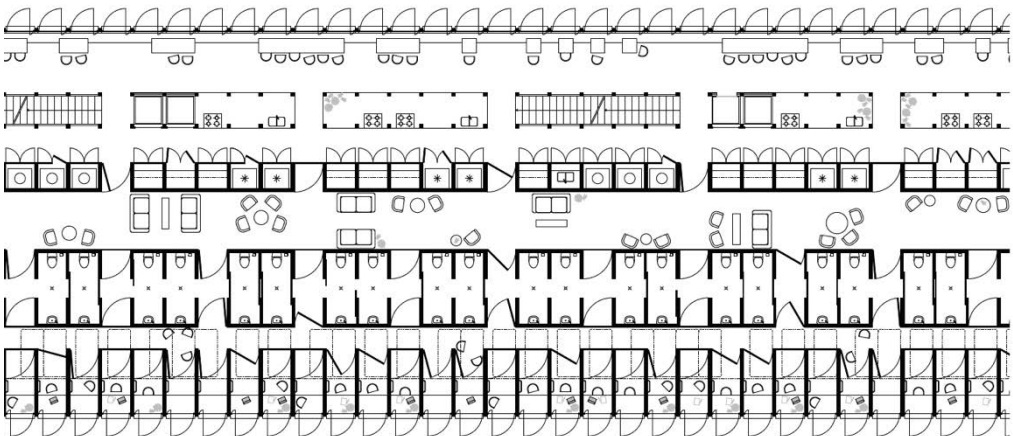
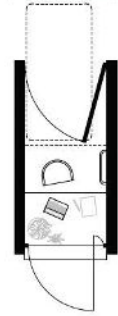
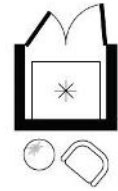
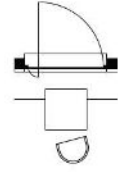


Project Sample 3

The People's Convent: Collective Housing for the Vulnerable

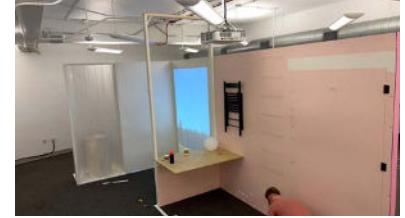
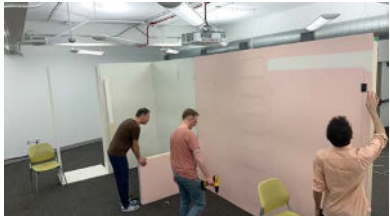
§ 501(d) of the Internal Revenue Code exempts religious institutions from the burden of paying taxes, allowing more flexibility in funding than §501(c)(3) charitable organizations. Therefore, religious organizations provide a promising vessel for a radical rethinking of housing. This project seeks to leverage the humanitarian role of the religious institution for those in transient living situations. The private space is either a single monastic room or is combined into a larger unit, while the collective spaces are uninterrupted and continuous, aiming to encourage moments of solidarity.





Building Units at 1:1

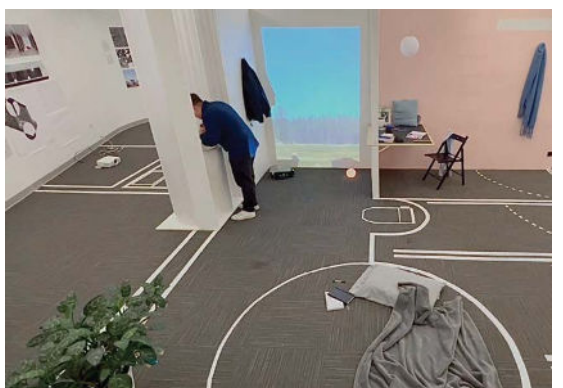
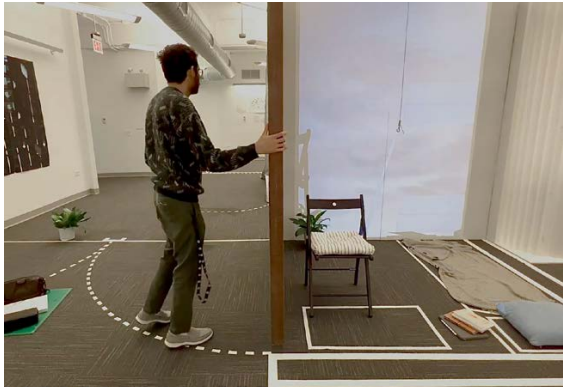




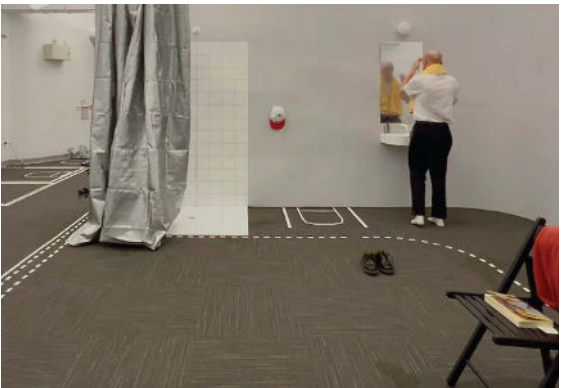
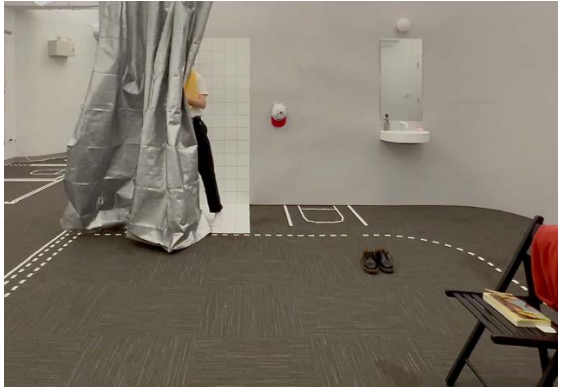
The students collectively built mockups of their units at 1:1 scale for the Year End Show exhibition. This was a unique experience that projected beyond the research findings and design proposals, empowering students to see how academic exercises can productively engage culture and practice. The quality of the work

was acknowledged by an external panel, which awarded the prize of “Best Graduate Work for the Academic Year 2023/24” to a student from our studio. The final review of the project was staged in the units, enabling students, external critics, and faculty members to inhabit and evaluate the space of each dwelling. Community organizers and housing policy experts also visited the installation. (names of students and visitors have been withheld to maintain anonymity)

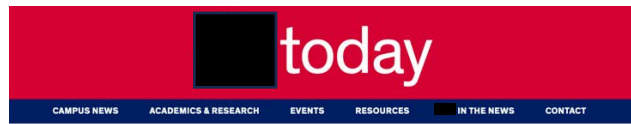
Inhabiting & Testing Units



Video stills from "A Day in the Life of a Unit," where students inhabited their designs for 24 hours.



Press Features Housing Studio



Architecture students explore big and small ideas for housing shortage

July 29, 2024

The U.S. — and the world — has an affordable housing crisis. Many people are without a home, millions are severely rent-burdened and families struggle to buy homes. In a lecture hall this spring, students built four life-size, single-room models to address this enormous problem with small, flexible homes that can be aggregated into innovative complexes.

At Home with the Collective, a project led by [redacted] in the [redacted] challenges architects to reimagine housing from the individual unit up to large buildings and neighborhoods. So far, the project has spanned a conference, an upcoming book and a May exhibition where [redacted] students constructed and displayed their single-room apartment mockups.

The project's aim is to create affordable living spaces for people — such as refugees, the elderly or Native Americans — who suffer most from the housing shortage. Instead of the conventional single-family home, [redacted] envisions small, modular units grouped into creatively designed, large-scale settlements that foster community and solidarity.



"There's a real potential here for architecture to make a difference, and an inventiveness that hasn't been capitalized on," [redacted] said.

Last fall, [redacted] kicked off the project by inviting experts from around the world to [redacted] a conference to discuss their ideas and experiences with collective housing in Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe. Also in attendance were students from his year-long research studio class, which turned the At Home with the Collective concept into an educational curriculum.



In the first half of the year, students examined the history of public housing in Chicago — from the Jane Addams Homes through Cabrini-Green — and other cities in the contexts of urbanism, community and law. Student essays on these topics were collected in a pamphlet, and chapters written by the conference attendees will be collected for a book forthcoming in 2025, funded by an Award for [redacted].

Walking into their own designs

Students then spent the second half of the course on an ambitious assignment: Design a thousand-unit housing scheme that meets the needs of a particular underhoused population.

Students had to think both big and small. They had to design the settlement's overall layout and individual units with flexible, comfortable living space, including rooms with multiple functions or that can be shared with other inhabitants. Then the students — [redacted] — built these one-room homes, at life size, for the School of Architecture Year End Show in May.

"That does not happen very often in architecture schools; most projects are expressed through drawings and models." "This exhibit went one step further and enabled the students to test their ideas in space, to actually build and inhabit them."

[redacted] who graduated this spring with a master's degree in architecture, studied discriminatory housing policies, including early treaties that restricted where Native Americans could live in Chicago. When he looked at the numerous vacant lots on the West and South sides of the city, he got an idea.

"As an architect, the most natural thing to say is, 'Let's rebuild,'" [redacted] said. "Instead, I said let's embrace it and let the prairie come back to the city. But then we frame it with housing to protect the prairie from the city growing back into it."

In his concept, inspired by reparation movements that call for returning property to Black and First Nation communities, wild areas are peppered with neighborhood landmarks surrounded by long buildings on stilts. Inside those structures, open communal spaces and one-room housing units with nooks and curtains efficiently create private and functional areas.

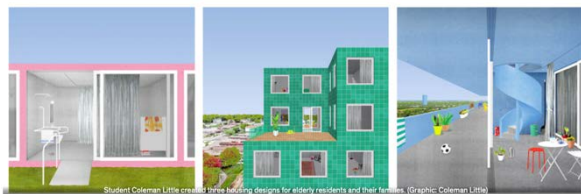
[redacted] also focused on vacant lots and Chicago's block grid to imagine a system of alley-facing units made accessible for elderly and disabled residents. These single units could share backyards with larger homes where family members and caregivers reside or sit next to apartment towers containing two-story residences for multigenerational families.

At the Year End Show, [redacted] marked the dimensions of his unit with tape; built a curved wall; hung a curtain; installed a sink, lamp and mirror; and saw how the drawings he made in the studio would translate to the real world.

"I've never really worked on a project where I've been able to feel the scale like that," said [redacted], a graduate student who won the 2024 Best Graduate Project Prize at the Year End Show. "You find out that even small details can have a big impact and can really change the space."

Both students said the research and design experience changed the way they view the architecture and urban planning of housing, inspiring them to continue using what they learned to serve the needs of under-resourced communities.

"I feel like I found my voice. I'm not afraid to speak out," [redacted] said. "I'm definitely going to be more vocal about what architecture can do."



On July 29, 2024, the housing research and studio was featured in the university news. According to the interviewed students, the course allowed them "to be more vocal about what architecture can do." (names of the professor, students, and institutions have been withheld to maintain anonymity)