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Cover graphics by Junyang Liu
HOUSING IS { SOCIAL
PERSONAL
SPATIAL
REGULATED
POLITICAL
CULTURAL
ECONOMICS
CONTEXTUAL
RELATIONAL
HOUSING IS A HUMAN RIGHT
INTRODUCTION

Housing is a human right. Housing is central to public health, education, employment, and the general well being of societies. And yet, our political and social priorities do not include affordable housing. As a result, unchecked market forces are causing people with fewer means out of areas with the highest proximity to jobs, quality schools, healthcare, parks, and opportunities for economic mobility.

This document is a summary of the Fall 2018 Tulane School of Architecture’s Housing Studio. The studio addressed affordable housing in New Orleans and focused its design efforts within Central City, a neighborhood well positioned to help meet the city’s affordable housing goals.

This studio’s work builds on the Affordable Housing research of the Albert and Tina Small Center for Collaborative Design and was led by studio faculty: Miwako Hattori, Irene Keil, Liz McCormick, Bruce Goodwin, and Emilie Taylor Welty with digital media instruction by Matt Decotiis.
WHAT IS AFFORDABLE HOUSING?
What is affordable housing?
DEFINITION THAT POLICY IS BASED ON:

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

housing for which the occupant(s) is/are paying no more than 30 percent of his or her income for gross housing costs, including utilities.

- Department of Housing and Urban Development
“WITH AFFORDABLE HOUSING STOCK SCARCE, PRICES ARE SPIKING. AN ESTIMATED 12 MILLION AMERICANS, MOST OF THEM POOR, NOW SPEND MORE THAN HALF OF THEIR EARNINGS ON HOUSING, ACCORDING TO DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD) STATISTICS.

- New York Times, 2018²
NOT AFFORDABLE HOUSING

people who spend more than 30% of their income on housing and utilities are in a situation where housing is not affordable.
WHAT IS AFFORDABLE FOR NEW ORLEANS RESIDENTS?

Images from Small Center’s Cost of Home Exhibit
For more information on Area Median Income see endnotes.

STAY-AT-HOME MOM
ANNUAL SALARY: $0
CAN AFFORD: $0 MO

MUSICIAN
ANNUAL SALARY: $17,800*
CAN AFFORD: $445 MO
* Mostly cash income. Claims $12,000.

HOSPITAL ORDERLY
ANNUAL SALARY: $19,370
CAN AFFORD: $484 MO
What is affordable for New Orleans residents?

- **Nonprofit Worker**
  - Annual Salary: $37,340
  - Can Afford: $934 MO

- **Police Officer**
  - Annual Salary: $39,140
  - Can Afford: $979 MO

- **Teacher**
  - Annual Salary: $43,240
  - Can Afford: $1,081 MO

- **Lawyer**
  - Annual Salary: $72,000
  - Can Afford: $1,800 MO

Median: $37K
Areas of opportunity and where subsidized units are

Bluest neighborhoods have the highest access to a wide range of educational, environmental, economic, and political opportunities. Grey zones have the lowest opportunities. Dots represent location of various rent-subsidized units in the city.
51% of New Orleans renters are paying 35% or more of pre-tax income on housing

- The Data Center, Prosperity Index, April 2018

Average rent in New Orleans for a one bedroom is $1,400, well above the limit of affordability for median families

- The Advocate, The count: average rental price per month of a one-bedroom apartment in New Orleans, Kevin Allman July 24, 2017

Rents are increasing faster than incomes, creating social and financial pressures that affect all New Orleanians. Culture bearers, hospitality workers, and public servants, among others, are being forced out of neighborhoods that are close to jobs and transportation. Those who move to suburbs may find lower housing costs but are burdened by greater transportation costs, longer commutes, less access to opportunities, jobs, and social networks.
IN SHORT:
RENTS ARE RISING
INCOME IS FLAT
NEW ORLEANIANS CAN NO LONGER
FIND AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEAR JOBS
HOUSING NOLA estimates 33,600 units of affordable housing are needed over the next 10 years.
SMALL INCREASES IN DENSITY CAN HAVE LARGE IMPACTS
OC HALEY BLVD. AND CENTRAL CITY, A BRIEF HISTORY

The Oretha Castle Haley Corridor (pictured above) runs through Central City, a neighborhood rich in social, cultural, and architectural history. From its founding the corridor was a bustling area of commerce particularly for African American, German, and Jewish merchants and shoppers. At its height in the years after World War II, the Dryades Street (now called Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard) district boasted over 200 businesses, with businesses owned primarily by Jewish and African American entrepreneurs.
The neighborhood surrounding the corridor was built out as working class residential area in the first half of the 19th century. Development was spurred by the opening of the New Orleans & Carrollton Railway, which became the St. Charles Streetcar, along with the New Basin Canal. In the 20th century the neighborhood was home to local civil rights and social justice movements in the 1960’s.

As with many urban areas in the 70’s and 80’s, Central City experienced a period of disinvestment yet within the last few decades has seen a rebirth. Currently the OC Haley corridor is home to many of the city’s non-profits and social justice oriented organizations. The neighborhood access to transit lines, central location, and adjacency to the CBD, Warehouse District, French Quarter and their opportunities provides an ideal location for housing in the city.
Central City was founded as a working class suburb of the city of New Orleans. Shotgun doubles, townhomes, and cottages made for dense residential blocks with mixed use development along major corridors. Over the next hundred years the neighborhood’s fabric changed substantially with many homes neglected and demolished and others razed to make way for larger scale developments as disinvestment in center-city neighborhoods paralleled the development of suburbs.

Now the city of New Orleans faces a housing crisis with HousingNOLA projecting a need for 33,600 affordable units by 2027. Central City is well positioned to provide affordable housing opportunities, given its historic density, its proximity to jobs, and transportation, and its relative flood elevation.

Even modest increases in current density can have drastic increases
family B: A B

family A: A B

shotgun double

family B: A

family A: A

shotgun double

family A: A

shotgun single + short term rental
DENSITY AT THE SCALE OF HOME

One factor that has reduced New Orleans density over time is related to how many buildings there are, and also how the use of those buildings have shifted over time.

The traditional shotgun double, a mainstay of New Orleans’ housing stock, was originally designed to accommodate two families. Within the last 50 years family size has seen a sizeable decline, meaning fewer people are living in these homes; and at the same time these smaller families have been converting doubles into single family homes. More recently some home owners have been renting out the additional unit to vacation travelers leaving even less housing available for residents of the city and further decreasing the density of our neighborhoods.
**CURRENT DENSITY**
Simon Bolivar Ave at Erato St. is representative of many of the blocks in Central City. Currently the block is over 50% vacant and has a few single and double residences.

**33,600 GOAL DENSITY**
To achieve the GNOHA’s estimated goal of 30,000 affordable units over ten years each block would need to add three affordable units.

**POTENTIAL DENSITY**
Blocks like this in Central City could easily accommodate a greater housing density. Furthermore, their proximity to housing and transportation make these blocks ideal locations for additional housing.
Density at the Neighborhood Scale

Considering the Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance’s (GNOHA) estimate of 33,600 affordable housing units needed and distributing that need across the city proportional to current neighborhood population, each Central City block would need to add about 3 units of affordable housing over the next 10 years.

There is space for more housing in Central City and neighborhoods near the core of the city, which were once more densely inhabited than they are today. Radically increased housing opportunities could be achieved by simply returning to the neighborhood density that existed 80 years ago.

Source: the Data Center - Central City Statistical area info. based on data from the 2000 census and the 2012-2016 American Community Survey

In 2015 Central City’s population was: 13,543. In 2015 Orleans Parish’s population was: 382,922.

Considering Central City’s current population as a proportion of the city total it would need to develop at least 3.5% of the affordable housing needed citywide, or 1,176 units. Averaging an additional 3 units per block to meet GNOHA’s goal.
DENSITY IS CONTEXTUAL

New Orleans is a city of old and new examples of housing density

1) French Quarter, historic density
AFFORDABILITY IS ABOUT MORE THAN JUST THE RENT
A local example of energy efficient affordable housing near the city’s center is the St Bernard Project’s housing for military veterans. The 50 unit project, designed by Eskew + Dumez + Ripple is the city’s first net zero multi-family housing project. Through an enhanced envelope, emphasis on passive strategies, and on-site renewables and energy storage, the project is able to achieve net-zero energy status. This reduces the electricity consumption of the entire neighborhood as well as the utility costs of the tenant.
LONG TERM AFFORDABILITY

Any conversation about affordability and design must go beyond the initial cost of construction and project financing model to include monthly energy costs. As many New Orleanians know, a poorly insulated house can drive up the cost of living through an increased need for heating and cooling. In our hot and humid climate, design must consider energy burden as a key factor in the long term affordability of housing.

A recent study by American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) and Energy Efficiency for All showed that low-income households in New Orleans spent a significantly higher portion of their income on utility bills than median income families. Though the cost of electricity in Louisiana is currently the lowest in the country, the amount of income spent on energy bills is disproportionally high. In large part, this is due to severe income disparities as well as the low-quality building stock seen in Louisiana. Emphasis on the lifetime cost instead of initial costs could play a significant role in reducing the tenant energy burdens as well as occupant health and building longevity. In the New Orleans su-tropical climate, moisture management is essential for occupant health and wellbeing. Energy efficiency strategies in housing include many issues that can be addressed by good design such as proper orientation and passive strategies, insulation and infiltration (air leakage) control, moisture management as well as efficient fixtures and appliances.

Until recently, Louisiana featured the highest tax incentive for installation of solar panels. Other sustainable technologies demonstrated during the hurricane recovery period include geothermal by Global Green and the Pontchartrain Park CDC.
RESEARCH

{ PRECEDENTS CONTEXT SITES ZONING DESIGN }
STUDIO PROPOSALS
FOR INCREASING DENSITY AND PROVIDING TRANSFORMATIVE
AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN NEW ORLEANS’ CENTRAL CITY
Projects included in this booklet are a small sample of student work. All students and faculty involved in the studio are listed on this page.
ARCH 6031

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Boyd, Hannah L.
Brereton, Henry
Last, Casey
Lewis, Jonathan
Li, Aize
Parra Paulino, Chewys M.
Snyder, Ryan
Tolbert, Jessica
Surtain, Brandon
Gray, Seneca

IRENE KEIL (02)

Faller, Kalyn
Heitz, Michael J.
Hogans, Austin B.
Lan, Mengning
Liu, Junyang (Leo)
Olson, Emma
Reese, Shanelle N
Satzewich, Lucy
Scott, Taylor J.
Xing, Chenbo
Hausladen, John
Site 1 – 1239 S. Rampart St.
Area: approx. 20,900 sq. ft

Site 2 – 1630 Baronne St.
Area: approx. 20,100 square feet

Site 3 – 1826 S. Rampart St.
Area: approx. 21,300 square feet

Site 4 – 1810 Oretha Castle Haley
Area: approx. 15,900 square feet

Site 5 – 1122 Oretha Castle Haley
Area: approx. 12,000 square feet
STUDIO BRIEF

Through a semester-long housing design project, the studio explored mixed use, multi-family housing designs in New Orleans’ Central City neighborhood. Students researched site zoning and regulatory overlays and investigated design at the scale of dwelling units, and urban form along with strategies for organizing and accessing units in a multi-family building. Students researched local issues, selected a specialized affordable housing program (such as Senior Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, Workforce, etc) and crafted a position for their programatic vision for the site.

The projects consist of 20-35 apartments according to site constraints and programatic positions, with other non-residential programs on the ground floor as appropriate to individual sites and housing options. As seen in the short sampling of projects that follow, students explored massing and site strategies, dwelling units and their aggregation, non residential program development, and material ideas.
Many thanks to the guest speakers, designers, and tour guides who informed the semester’s investigation.
SHAWN PREAU
EDR, “Affordable Net Zero - SBP Veterans Housing Case Study”

JIM REMLIN
Sherwood Engineers, Atlanta
“Site and Water Management”

DW 3
by Matt Decotiis
Sectional Perspectives
Animated Linework

DW 3+
by Matt Decotiis
Renderings
V-RAY

HOUSING DESIGN

PART 3
Non Residential Program and Site Development

PART 4
Detail and Material Development

PART 5
Final Presentation Graphics
ENDNOTES:

1. The right to housing is recognized in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, signed by the U.S. in 1948 and Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights signed by the U.S. in 1966. for more information see ‘Housing is a Human Right’ from the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty. accessed on the American Bar Association website on 14 February 2019: https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/events/homelessness_poverty/2013_Midyear_Meeting_Right_To_Housing/housing_as_a_right_fact_sheet.pdf


3. Data from New Orleans Data Center.
A note about AMI and statistical areas from the Small Center Cost of Home exhibit: Area Median Income is a way of making HUD’s income categories make sense across a big, economically diverse, country. AMI provides a starting point for grouping individuals and families into the percentages that are used to determine eligibility for programs and services.
To understand AMI it’s also important to understand Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The MSA groups a central metropolitan area (at least 50,000 people) with its surrounding suburbs and small towns that are tied together economically to determine the “Area” part of Area Median Income. What this means is that neighborhoods in New Orleans with quite low median incomes are combined with neighborhoods in Metarie with higher median incomes. Therefore what constitutes affordability for an area is often far above an urban neighborhood’s reality of affordability.

4. Base Map and dot locations are sourced from the HousingNOLA’s 10 Year Strategy and Implementation plan, see pages 30 and 48
About Housing Nola: In early 2014, the Foundation for Louisiana’s TOGETHER Initiative convened an affordable housing group of residents and non-profits to develop strategies for improving housing policies and increasing equity in New Orleans. The result was HousingNOLA: a community-led housing process that would seek address the housing needs of New Orleans over ten years. The Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance (GNOHA) was chosen by the group to manage the initial HousingNOLA process, assisted by fair housing advocates, developers and City officials – in partnership with civic, neighborhood, business, and philanthropic leaders. GNOHA is a collaborative of home builders and community development organization advocating for the preservation and production of affordable housing. (from housingnola.org)

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

The New Orleans Prosperity Index, The Data Center. April 2018


What is Affordable Housing Guidebook - Center for Urban Pedagogy. web access: http://welcometocup.org/Store?product_id=16

THANKS:

Special thanks to all the reviewers and speakers who informed the students work, to the Albert and Tina Small Center for Collaborative Design, and to the Tulane School of Architecture and the Center for Public Service for supporting the studio. and to Courtney Castleman for work on the booklet and exhibit.