Acclaimed architectural critic, Reyner Banham understood that the overly clean American house interior was shaped by a flimsy hollow shell—and the primary feature, mechanical services at its core. The potential utility and imaginary of housing systems are confronted by its contingencies in culture, including climate, landscape, and social politics. Postwar American suburban housing stock (single family) and the rise of luxury urban capital (pencil towers) have generated an unhealthy space between idealism and inaccessibility. How do fundamental questions in society and the environment relate to, and (re)form, the design of enclosures, social space, and our relationship to past live-work binaries? After analyzing several housing types across the US and reconfiguring architectural models for social and environmental retooling, new housing methods emerge. This architectural design studio expands upon Banham’s earlier observations and imagines a future society of increased affordability, environmental resiliency, and social collectivity across the diverse contexts of this extra-urban American landscape.
“With very little exaggeration, this baroque ensemble of domestic gadgetry epitomizes the intestinal complexity of gracious living—in other words, this is the junk that keeps the pad swinging. The house itself has been omitted from the drawing, but if mechanical services continue to accumulate at this rate it may be possible to omit the house in fact.”

- Reyner Banham, 1965
ARCH 4602
Architectural Design Studio VIII

ANATOMY OF AMERICAN HOUSING
An Architectural Design Studio for a Future Society

6 Semester Credit Hours

Prerequisite: ARCH 4601. Provides instruction in advanced architectural design projects. Students develop integrated design skills as they negotiate the complex issues of program, site, and form in a specific cultural context. Integrates aspects of architectural theory, building technology, and computation into the design process.

In response to the ongoing affordable housing crisis, how can architecture provide better alternatives for a future society—from the micro scale of a housing unit, to the “neighborhood,” and eventually to the regional scale? It is vital for the design profession to begin asking the critical questions to better understand, and interrogate, the role of design in relationship to environment, society, and technology. In an essay entitled “A Home is Not a House,” published in 1965, Reyner Banham observed that “Americans do not monumentalize or make architecture…they have tended to build a brick chimney and lean a collection of shacks against it.” A bold statement, nonetheless, Banham suggests the American house was more of a shell to hold an excessive use of utilities and the rise of home appliances (“piping, flues, ducts, wires, lights, inlets, outlets, ovens, sinks, refuse disposers, hi-fi reverberators, antennae, conduits, freezers, heaters”). Found deep within the context across the postwar urban landscape, a series of housing patterns emerged. As a hybrid of both local context and external migrations of culture, such examples include, but not limited to, bungalow (Chicago), shotgun (New Orleans), townhome (Houston), dingbat (Los Angeles), rowhouse (Boston), Bahamian (Miami), single (Charleston), painted ladies (San Francisco), and alley houses (Baltimore). For this semester, we will straddle between critical reinterpretations of Banham’s theory and the deep structure of the American house to better response to our current housing and help provide radical alternatives in support of affordability, adaptability, mobility, and collectivity.
The studio will follow five fundamental manifestos for imagining a future anatomy of American housing:

- Equity and affordability must be made central to design and planning.
- Housing easements must become public space: active and accessible.
- Alternative housing models must be built on innovative forms of infrastructure, including the advancement of environmental resiliency.
- (Re)Zoning must radicalize architectural programming for housing adjacencies such as labor, economy, and public service.
- Landscape strategies must be integrated into housing models for increasing biodiverse ecologies and environmental porosity.

The studio is organized in five phases: (1) Literature Review, (2) Typology, (3) Anatomy, (4) Collectivity, and (5) Final Documentation. Each phase will be accompanied by a lecture and a series of detailed assignments. Intentionally, each segment will build upon the previous exercises to advance the studio project into a comprehensive collection of ideas, propositions, and architectural drawings. At the end of each phase, all supporting materials, drawings, and InDesign files must be submitted to the respective course OneDrive folder. The architectural design project for the semester will provide suitable challenges for students to explore issues stated in the course description and learning goals as described in the NAAB Program and Student Criteria. An overview of the design project is presented during the first studio meeting. Assignment briefs are provided at appropriate intervals during the semester (see schedule) for various phases of the design project including digital documentation requirements. A final Digital Document is required of each student that communicates completion of all phases of the design project.

**SCHEDULE**

**Wk 1**  *introductions*
- Jan 12  all school meeting – studio lottery
- Jan 14  virtual lecture (on Zoom)

**Wk 2**  **PHASE I: LITERATURE REVIEW**
- Jan 17  *MLK - no class meeting*
- Jan 19  virtual studio meeting (on Zoom)
- Jan 21  all studio presentations

**Wk 3**  **PHASE II: TYPOLOGY**
- Jan 24  lecture
- Jan 26  desk crits
- Jan 28  all studio presentations

**Wk 4**  -
- Jan 31  desk crits / CoA lecture: Charles Davis II (Princeton)
- Feb 02  desk crits
- Feb 04  all studio presentations
Wk 5 -
  Feb 07  desk crits
  Feb 09  desk crits
  Feb 11  all studio presentations

Wk 6 **PHASE III: ANATOMY**
  Feb 14  lecture / CoA lecture: Viola Ago (UCLA)
  Feb 16  desk crits
  Feb 18  all studio presentations

Wk 7 -
  Feb 21  desk crits
  Feb 23  desk crits
  Feb 25  all studio presentations

Wk 8 -
  Feb 28  desk crits
  Mar 02  desk crits
  Mar 04  all studio presentations

Wk 9 -
  Mar 07  desk crits / CoA lecture: Chris Cornelius (UNM)
  Mar 09  desk crits
  Mar 11  all studio presentations

Wk 10
  Mar 14  *spring break – no class meetings*
  Mar 16  *spring break – no class meetings*
  Mar 18  *spring break – no class meetings*

Wk 11 **PHASE IV: COLLECTIVITY**
  Mar 21  lecture
  Mar 23  desk crits
  Mar 25  all studio presentations

Wk 12 -
  Mar 28  desk crits
  Mar 30  desk crits
  Apr 01  all studio presentations

Wk 13 -
  Apr 04  desk crits
  Apr 06  desk crits
  Apr 08  all studio presentations

Wk 14 -
  Apr 11  desk crits / CoA lecture: Ted Flato (Lake/Flato)
  Apr 13  desk crits
  Apr 15  all studio presentations

Wk 15 **PHASE V: FINAL DOCUMENTATION**
  Apr 18  *University holiday – no class meetings*
Apr 20  desk crits
Apr 22  *no class meeting – all studio work due*

Wk 16  *reviews*
Apr 25  desk crits
Apr 27  desk crits
Apr 29  all studio presentations

Wk 17  -
May 02  *University last day of classes*

**GRAPHICS**

Along with the typical rules in architectural drawing, a graphic standards list will be shared with the students at the beginning of the semester. You will be given specific instructions on drawings, models, and their pertinent scales at each submittal phase. Intermediate internal reviews will occur often and expect each student to be actively engaged in the discussions as well as being prepared for scheduled virtual pin-ups on Miro and virtual desk critiques. All drawings in the studio must follow these required drawings standards, they are not recommendations. General guidelines include:

- no color (and desaturate all images);
- no perspectives (only one-point perspectives, if necessary);
- sheet sizes (8.5”x11” and 11”x17”, depending upon the drawing and orientation); and if need, larger sheet sizes for in-person presentations will be coordinated by the instructor and provided in advance;
- line weights (five different line weights, nothing thicker than 1.2 pt or smaller than .10);
- line types (various dash types, including double dash, and dash-dot-dot);
- hatch types (5 or 6 types from Illustrator, including one solid with 3 different grayscales);
- projection types (only 3 types: 0 degrees frontal, 60 degrees oblique, and 45 degrees military projection);
- general scales of drawing (prefer engineering scales, no need to be too concerned with the architectural scale as we will need to make adjustments along the way);
- drawing labels, and text/font sizes should be consistent across the studio (Times New Roman: 8pt for captions, 10pt for labels/annotations, and 14pt bold for drawing titles in upper left-hand corner);
- signs and symbols – the same graphic scale and north arrow to be used across all drawings;
- entourage – should provide the same entourage (in vector format) for plan and elevations (trees, people, cars, should be consistent too).
REFERENCES


Keith Krumwiede, “As the American Dream Dies, We Must Rethink Our Communities,” in The Architect’s Newspaper, December 29, 2017.


RESOURCES

Cities for Adequate Housing
Municipalist Declaration of Local Governments for the Right to Housing and the Right to the City
https://citiesforhousing.org

“Defining the Just City Beyond Black and White,” Essay by Toni L. Griffin

Future of the American City
https://fotac.gsd.harvard.edu

“It’s time to vacate the 100-year floodplain,” by Albert Pope

“Los Angeles Has a Housing Crisis. Can Design Help?”
https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/22/arts/design/los-angeles-housing-crisis.html

“Racing The Sea: Miami Beach’s Housing Crisis Worsened by Climate Change”