

MODERN HOUSING, PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

A4598

Professor Gwendolyn Wright gw8@columbia.edu

TA: Colin Agur ca2393@columbia.edu

Tuesdays, 11-1

408 Avery Hall

Office hours, Tuesdays, 10-11, and by apt., 203 Buell

Housing has been a prime site for experiments throughout the history of modern architecture. The principal locales, ideas and forms have changed, of course. For example, today's modernists recognize that innovation does not preclude comfort, delight and familiarity. We no longer promote a single standard. Housing and dwelling converge, at once a universal human need and a diverse panoply of forms, desires and social conditions. Architecture extends to a range of services within and beyond specific sites. Design prowess now includes realms like financing, political support and popular media.

This seminar will explore key themes and examples of 20th- and 21st-century modern housing around the world. The first half of the class will survey and compare a broad range of early examples from the iconic social-democratic housing estates of Europe in the 1920s and progressive American enclaves of that era to more recent prefab prototypes in Sweden, barrios in Caracas, dharavi in Mumbai, new suburbs in China, "green" apartment buildings in Malaysia, affordable housing in the US, the mix of market-rate with social housing in Amsterdam. We'll also explore multiple scales from the individual body, the room and the wall to larger composites of housing complexes, production systems, social services, environmental factors and economic challenges.

Design choices are one component of the class. Students in the GSAPP Housing Studio will work with students from other programs and other departments across the university. Research is a parallel theme. Students will choose topics for the second half of the semester and present their initial work, culminating in papers and/or design projects due on **Friday Dec 13** at noon. Required weekly readings for group discussion will be available on Seminar Shelf #359 in the Avery Library Reserve Reading Room.

Week 1 (Sept. 3) : What Is ‘Modern Housing’?

The term “Modern Housing” used to mean canonical European villas and social-democratic workers’ dwellings of the 1920s. That remains an essential foundation in architecture and ambitions. We’ll compare it to some more recent iconic forms and the social/cultural aspirations of the term today.

** Everyone should look over the seminar shelf’s range of books, including:

Hilary French, *New Urban Housing* (New Haven, 2006)

Wolfgang Forster, *Housing in the 20th and 21st Centuries* (Munich, 2006)

Eric Firley and Caroline Stahl, *The Urban Housing Handbook* (NY, 2010)

[Albert Ferre and Tihamer Salij], *Total Housing: Alternatives to Urban Sprawl* (Barcelona, 2010)

Josep Luis Mateo, ed., *Global Housing Projects: 25 Buildings since 1980* (Barcelona and New York, 2008)

Annabel Biles and Adam Mornement, *Infill: New Houses for Urban Sites* (London, 2009)

Graham Towers, *At Home in the City: An Introduction to Urban Housing* (Rotterdam, 2005)

Christian Schittich, ed., *High Density Housing* (Basel and Boston, 2004)

Week 2 (Sept. 10): Meanings of Home, Housing, and Domesticity

Barbara Miller Lane, ed., *Housing and Dwelling: Perspectives on Modern Domestic Architecture* (New York & London, 2007), esp. pp. 50-81

Doreen Massey, “A Place Called Home” in “The Question of Home,” *New Formations: A Journal of Culture/Theory/Politics* (Summer 1992), pp. 3-15

Roderick Lawrence, “Understanding Home: Critical and Innovative Approaches,” *International Symposium on Culture & Space in the Home Environment* (Istanbul, 1997), 3-9

Kamo no Chamo, “An Account of My Hut” (1212) in Donald Keene, *Anthology of Japanese Literature* (1955), pp. 205-12

Recommended:

Pavlos Lafas, *Dwelling and Architecture from Heidegger to Koolhaas* (Berlin, 2009)

David Benjamin, ed., *The Home: Words, Interpretations, Meanings. . .* (1995)

Bridget Franklin, *Housing Transformations: Shaping the Space of Twenty-First Century Living* (London and New York, 2006)

Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling, *Home: Key Ideas in Geography* (NY, 2006)

Marie Aquilino, ed, *Beyond Shelter: Architecture and Human Dignity* (NY, 2011)

Charles Correa, *Housing and Urbanisation* (New York and London, 2000)

Week 3 (Sept. 17): Looking Backwards and Ahead

** Prepare 5-minute presentations on one historical example of a “modern housing” project and its site, seen in cultural, material and environmental terms

Possible sources:

Hilary French, *Key Urban Housing in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 2008)

Roger Sherwood, *Modern Housing Prototypes* (Cambridge, 1978)

Peter Rowe *Modernity and Housing* (Cambridge, 1993), esp. 19-73, 269-339

Nicholas Bullock and James Reed, *The Movement for Housing Reform in Germany and France* (Cambridge, 1985)

William Blumfield and Blair Ruble, eds., *Russian Housing in the Modern Age* (New York, 1993), esp. 85-170

Lu Junhua, Peter Rowe and Zhang Jie, *Modern Urban Housing in China, 1840-2000* (New York, 2001)

Week 4 (Sept. 24): Continue Presentations

Week 5 (Oct 1): Modern Standards, Technologies, Innovations and Ways of Living

Lucy Bullivant, ed., *Home Front: New Developments in Housing A.D.* vol 73, (July/August 2003), introduction and at least one article

Florian Urban, *Tower and Slab: Histories of Global Mass Housing* (New York and London, 2012), esp. pp. 1-17 and at least one case study

Sherry Ahrentzen, "Choice in Housing," Harvard Design Magazine (Summer 1999), pp. 63-67

Scott Berkun, The Myths of Innovation (Sebastopol, CA, 2010), pp. 37-52

Recommended:

Salvador Perez, Arroyo, Rossana Atena and Igor Kevbel, Emerging Technologies and Housing Prototypes (Madrid and Amsterdam, 2008), pp. TK

Delft Urban Studies on Housing [DASH], The Residential Floor Plan: Standard and Ideal (Rotterdam, 2010)

Graham Towers, Shelter is Not Enough: Transforming Multi-Storey Housing (Bristol, 2000)

Barry Bergdoll and Peter Christensen, eds., Home Delivery: Fabricating the Modern Dwelling (New York, 2008)

Ellen Lupton and J. Abbott Miller, The Bathroom, the Kitchen and the Aesthetics of Waste: A Process of Elimination (Dalton, MA. 1992)

Week 6 (Oct. 8). American Housing Reforms

I'll give an overview of the history and recent directions.

Gwendolyn Wright, USA: Modern Architectures in History (London and Chicago, 2008), esp. 209-222, 167-80, 249-50 [EBooks]

---, Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America (Cambridge, 1983)

Richard Plunz, ed., Housing Form and Public Policy in the United States (New York 1980), pp. 61-70

Ellen Dunham-Jones and June Williamson, Retrofitting Suburbia (Hoboken, 2009), esp. pp. viii-xiii, 2-13

Recommended:

Alex F. Schwartz, Modern Housing Policy in the United States (New York, 2010)

"Public Housing in the Americas," Journal of Urban History 33 (March 2007)

John F. Bauman, et.al., eds., From the Tenements to the Taylor Homes. . . Urban Housing Policy in 20th Century America (University Park, PA, 2000)

Lawrence J. Vale, From the Puritans to the Projects: Public Housing and Public Neighbors (Cambridge, 2000)

Gail Radford, *Modern Housing in America: Policy Struggles in the New Deal* (Chicago, 1996)

Week 7 (Oct. 15). Affordable Housing and the Search for Design Justice

“Affordable New York,” *Bauwelt* (March 2012)

Ken Tadashi Oshima, “Balancing the Cramped with the Communal: Recent Japanese Housing,” *Harvard Design Magazine* (Winter-Fall 2012), 142-7

“One Size Fits Some,” *Urban Omnibus*, Sept. 30, 2009 on CHCP Symposium

Recommended:

William Morrish, et.al., *Growing Urban Habitats: Seeking a New Housing Development Model* (San Francisco, 2009), esp. 106-11, 136-41, 178—83

Alan Mallach, *A Decent Home: Planning, Building and Preserving Affordable Housing* (Chicago and Washington, DC, 2009)

Institute for Urban Design, “Affordable Housing: Development & Design,” (New York, 2007), esp. pp. 20-39

“Housing in the Americas,” *Praxis 3* (Winter 2002)

Allison Arieff, “Affordable Housing That Doesn’t Scream ‘Affordable,’” *Atlantic Cities*, Oct. 21, 2011 [also in *Place Matters*]

Sam Davis, *The Architecture of Affordable Housing* (Berkeley, 1995)

Weeks 8-12 (Oct. 22- Nov. 20): Student presentations

We’ll choose topics for the next 5 weeks based on what you would like to pursue for research and short presentations, leading up to a research paper (&/or a design or policy proposal as well, if you’d like). You may choose to focus on a particular project or a more general topic, highlighting several specific examples; and a historical or a contemporary framework.

Please give other students (and me!) some basic background reading beforehand. A brief handout with basic information, site plans, etc. is much appreciated. I’ll also give you downloads of some of the excellent papers students have done for this seminar during the last two years

POSSIBLE TOPICS:

Social, Economic and Environmental Sustainability

From “Multi-Family” to “Multi-Unit” Dwellings for Transient Cohorts
Promoting Modern Housing in the Popular Media
“Supportive Housing” -- and Full-Service Facilities
Housing the Homeless
Housing Needs Based on Physical Conditions, Age, Ethnic/Racial Groups,
etc.
Adaptive Reuse and Modern Housing Reform
The Preservation and Adaptation of Public Housing
Live-Work Spaces for Various Kinds of Jobs
Reformatting the Suburbs
Particular Government Programs (eg., in the US: the New Deal, the “Good
Society” of the 1960s-70s, state-based programs like New York’s
UDC)
Housing reform, past or present, in various cultural/geographical contexts
Manufactured, Prefabricated, or Transportable Disaster-Relief Housing
Innovative Housing Finance for Innovative Design

Week 8 (Oct. 22):

Week 9 (Oct. 29):

Week 10 (Nov. 5): Holiday

Week 11 (Nov. 12):

Week 12 (Nov. 19):

Week 13 (Nov. 26):

Week 14 (Dec 3): Summary and discussion of 21st-century Housing

Rosemary Latter, “Educating Architects to Become Culturally Aware,” in
Lindsay Asquirh and Maracel Vellinga, eds., Vernacular Architecture
in the 21st Century: Theory, Education and Practice (NY/London,
2006), pp.245-61