
Housing: Teaching the Issues

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This paper discusses the social, political, economic and ecological consequences of contemporary housing patterns. Even though concerns and criticism regarding housing and the contemporary built environment are regularly and often vociferously voiced, rarely are the whole range of issues addressed. This paper summarizes and synthesizes the costs and effects of housing and settlement patterns, and argues that though housing is no longer considered to be an essential part of the studio curriculum, it is an area where education and the profession needs to proactively re-assert itself. The research, content, context and methodology of a series of housing studios and a recently completed urban design study (which was funded by the Downtown Development Authority of a small local city and focused on housing issues),

illustrate the comprehensive approach to housing that is necessary. A premise of the paper is that only through educating a populace (that has lost confidence in design professionals, and are subject to the same set of misconceptions and fantasies that have driven our settlement patterns,) can broad-based, significant change be effected. The paper concludes by outlining a range of housing options explored through case studies, and outlines strategies for effectively communicating the matrix of housing issues not only to students, but to the general public.

Editor's note: The full text of this paper was not available at the time of publication.