

Fall, 2003

Department of Architecture
MIT 4.220 (H)

URBAN HOUSING

A TALE OF THREE CITIES: PARIS, LONDON, NEW YORK

Units: 0-9-0
Instructor: Michael Dennis
Time: Monday, 6:30 – 9:00
Place: 5-216
Prerequisites: SMArchS, March Level II, Permission of the Instructor

Course Description

This course explores urban housing. In the last few years, housing – especially urban housing – has suffered from a crisis of confidence on the part of architects and theorists. Belief in modernist models has waned as urban problems have increased and decentralization has continued. In America urban housing has traditionally been regarded with suspicion. As the rest of the world moves towards a predominately urban population with at least 50% of the population now living in cities, America appears to be moving in the opposite direction with at least 50% of the people not living in cities. Despite this trend, and enormous socio-economic problems, American cities have demonstrated remarkable staying power. Indeed, some are thriving. But to be truly livable a city requires a rich repertoire of urban housing. This course will examine the topic in terms of both traditional and modern models.

The seminar will analyze the development of housing models and their urban implications in Paris, London, and New York. Included in the discussion will be the French *Hotel* and *Apartment Building*, the Georgian *Townhouse*, and the New York *Row House*, *Tenement*, and *Apartment Building*. Modern housing projects in each city will be covered. By bringing the survey to the present, the seminar will present revisions of architectural modernism's urban housing principles in the work of contemporary designers.

The course is structured as a research seminar and will meet once per week. Presentations by the instructor will bring the seminar to 1975.

This year student research and presentations will focus on urban housing in the city of **Berlin**, and will be submitted as research papers at the end of the course.

In addition to a presentation and report, class attendance and participation are required.