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HOUSING co-DETERMINANTS

Draft Version, August 23rd, 2013

handicap [*ˈhændɪkæp*], *n* **1.** *something that hampers or hinders.* **2.** *(Individual Sports, other than specified) a. a contest, esp a race, in which competitors are given advantages or disadvantages of weight, distance, time, etc., in an attempt to equalize their chances of winning....*

Determinants In housing design – as with some games or sports – performance, innovation and experience are constrained, or one could even say *determined*, by a series of decision-making frameworks. These emerge from a wide spectrum of considerations sometimes outside the architect's mandate (codes, budgets, maximization of density, distribution of unit types according to target demographics), and sometimes within (unit type, organization of vertical and horizontal circulation, optimization of natural light, construction method/structure, distribution of services, and relationship between domestic and collective spaces, to name a few). While the issue of limitations imposed by constraints is true of any architectural type or program, indeed almost a platitude, the unique confluence of pressures imposed by the challenge of locating a large number of living units within close proximity foregrounds these to a degree that is almost defining. Housing design for many architects and builders is a sort of game – puzzle, combinatorial matrix, repetitive pattern, spreadsheet, datascape – in which broader goals are sometimes forsaken by process.

Typological and Formal Innovation Rather than see handicaps as mere hindrances, innovative architects throughout history have selectively embraced one or other constraint to push the development of housing forward either incrementally or in a quantum leap. Consider, for example, the impact of the skip-stop corridor; conversely, imagine the formal and organizational consequences of designing a large viable housing project *without* corridors. Our studio section will critically acknowledge the game-like aspect of housing design, and pursue typological and formal innovation through an extreme prioritization of determinants. Each group will select only two, which placed into new relation will together reframe and simplify other decision-making contexts. In the spirit of the studio-wide's emphasis on working at a spectrum of scales, these *co-determinants* will connect the domestic scale of the unit to that of the collective. These may include systems or elements that, through exaggeration, suppression or re-contextualization, might have the capacity to provoke radical reformulations of housing design. The studio will also aim for self awareness about the potential slippage between intention, reading and effect, and open up the continual possibility of opportunistically reframing a thesis.

A (Serious) Game Beyond serving merely as pedagogical framework or heuristic device, we will consistently ask the question as to which determinants are relevant today and should therefore be exerting such unequal influence. To this end we will consider broader philosophical and cultural goals that resonate with a healthier and more sustainable contemporary society, attuned to the needs of future demographics and to new possibilities for urban life.