

**CourseNo:** ARCHA6837\_001\_2013\_3

**Meeting Location:** [AVERY HALL 115](#)

**Meeting Time:** R 09:00A-11:00A

**Instructor Information:** [Richard A. Plunz](#)

Columbia University

Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and  
Preservation

Fall 2013

## **A6837 FABRICS AND TYPOLOGIES: NEW YORK/GLOBAL**

Instructor: Richard Plunz

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course explores the meaning of urban building typology and fabric in the evolution of cities worldwide. It questions the canons of architectural and urban historiography that tend to overemphasize the isolated monument rather than fabric. We scrutinize the evolutionary history of anonymous urban fabric, often created by the uncelebrated architect or builder, and which comprises the major building volume of this and all cities. The focus is on the culture of housing with intent to grasp the political and tectonic devices that lead to specific fabrics in specific urban contexts. The city becomes a crucible to be understood both forwards and backwards in time, from extant present-day realities to underlying formational causes and vice versa. Beginning with New York City, this exercise in urban forensics is played back for other global cities. Seminar participants translate the technique and values learned from the New York case to case-studies embedded in their own local knowledge, culminating in a final forum in which comparative projected architectural transformation of fabrics becomes the basis of critical discourse.

PART I of the seminar comprises a series of **LECTURES** focused on the historical evolution of fabric types in New York City within the comparative context of certain other large Western cities. Using New York as the primary reference, emphasis is placed on the interplay between the political and tectonic forces that have shaped modern urbanism with particular emphasis on housing fabrics.

PART II of the seminar is organized around participant presentations of **CASE STUDIES** comparing world cities in relation to their characteristic fabric types. The instructor and participants choose these cities jointly. Central to this analysis is the construction of numerical/geometrical analogues for each case study. These analogues, when applied in reverse, can function as a design tool to generate similar fabrics within the contemporary context of the same or other cities.

A compilation of the case studies including graphic analysis and written background constitutes the **requirements** for completion of the course. This material will stand as a record of the collective research. The exact nature of the analysis will evolve throughout the first half of the seminar in consultation with the instructor. It is expected that the case studies will follow a simple comparative format coordinated between the groups

Required readings for the Part I Lectures comprise the book A History of Housing in New York City, which is available at the Columbia University Bookstore. A volume of supplemental readings is available at Village Copier at 112th Street and Broadway.

## **PART I: COMPARATIVE EVOLUTION OF FABRIC TYPES**

Week 0: New York/Global: **DELIBERATING THE BUBBLE** (lecture)

Second post-industrial phase, the new global context, and the crisis of the F.I.R.E. economy; decline of social housing production; the ecological and economic imperatives for new green infrastructure; potentials for a renewed city-state configuration; the world city versus cosmopolitan ideals.

#### Week 1: Introduction: **Local Fabrics / Global Typologies** (lecture)

The pre-Colonial context of the European occupation; the 17<sup>th</sup> Century fabric of New York within a global context; Northern European origins of early building typologies New York as City-State during the early industrial revolution; methods and conventions for fabric analysis from type to phenomena.

#### Week 2: New York/Global: **Terrace Urbanism** (lecture)

Flemish origins for the New York fabric; English domination and the change in housing ideals; Americanization of the English terrace types; the imperative for density and the transformation of the row-dwelling; pathologies of density; the beginnings of the reform movement in London and New York.

#### Week 3: New York/Global: **Courtyard Urbanism** (lecture)

The impetus for reform and the pre-figuration of courtyard typologies; design ideals and the international housing movement in London, Brussels and Berlin; private philanthropy and the evolution of the courtyard; Paris, the Beaux-Arts, and development of normative New York fabric by the turn-of-the-century.

#### Week 4: New York/Global: **High-Rise Transformation** (lecture)

The demise of the brownstone house and the crisis in upper-class housing production; structural and mechanical engineering innovation and the revolution in domestic building technology; high and low technology and the urbanization process; Parisian urbanism of the Third Empire and the evolution of bourgeois housing ideals in New York; the new collective scale and the demise of continuous high-rise urbanism.

#### Week 5: New York/Global: **Horizontal Collectivity** (lecture)

The perfection of transportation technology and the evolution of the garden apartment; innovation in financing and the new scale of housing production; the new horizontal city of the outer Boroughs contrasted with housing innovation in London, Berlin and Amsterdam; spatial controls for the new inner periphery.

#### Week 6: New York/Global: **Modernist Interlude** (lecture)

The case for an indigenous American social-functionalism; the appearance of the aesthetic of "minimum existence" in Europe; transfer of American technology to the European modernist project; "International style" modernism and the disruption of the garden apartment tradition; Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Berlin and new housing reform ideals in New York; the development of government philanthropy and reductive housing typologies; evolution to the high-rise slab-block as global icon for modern social housing; housing production as cultural critique in Rome.

#### Week 7: New York/Global: **Sub-Urban Disjunction** (lecture)

The first post-industrial crisis and the development of de-urbanist strategies; the single-family house as catalyst for the new post-industrial culture; architects and the ideology of dispersal; the post-War sub-urban transformation of the culture of housing; the "affluent society" and its urban scourges.

#### Week 8: New York/Global: **Post-Suburban Urbanisms** (lecture)

The critique of de-urbanization in both city in suburb; the dissolution of the "tower-in-the-park" ideology and the reinvention of the low-rise city; new definitions of luxury; government disinvestment in social housing and the new philanthropy; evolution toward a "new American ghetto;" globalization of the culture of housing.

### PART II: **CASE-STUDY PREPARATION**

Week 9  
(tutorial)

**Global Case-Study: Fabric Documentation**

Week 10

**Global Case-Study: Typological Analysis** (tutorial)

Week 11  
(tutorial)

**Global Case-Study: Preliminary Transformation Due**

Week 12

**Global Case-Study: Analogue Development** (tutorial)

Week 14

**Global Case-Study: Final Presentation**

## PART I: LECTURES & READINGS

### SEPT 5 Lecture 0: NOTES ON THE BUBBLE, 1978-2011

Second post-industrial phase, the new global context, and the crisis of the F.I.R.E. economy; decline of social housing production; the ecological and economic imperatives for new green infrastructure; potentials for a renewed city-state; the world city versus cosmopolitan ideals.

#### Reading:

Richard Plunz, "Endgame: In the Bubble. New York City Housing Production, 1978-2008," Lotus International 147, September 2011, pp. 90-103.

#### Supplemental Reading:

Richard Plunz, Remediation as Redevelopment Strategy: Scratching the Surface," in Patricia Culligan, Richard Plunz, (eds.), Eco-Gownus: Urban Remediation by Design. New York: Columbia University MSAUD / New Urbanisms 8, 2007.

Richard Plunz and Michael Sheridan, "Deadlock Plus 50. On Public Housing in New York," Harvard Design Magazine, Summer 1999, pp. 4-9.

Miriam Greenberg, Rebranding New York. How a City in Crisis was Sold to the World. New York: Routledge, 2008. pp. 253-265.

Kim Moody, From Welfare State to Real Estate. Regime Change in New York City, 1974 to the Present. New York: The New Press, 2007. Ch. 6.

Sharon Zukin. Naked City. The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. Ch. 2.

Tony Judt, The Memory Chalet. New York: The Penguin Press, 2010. Chapter XXII.

Ulrich Beck and Johannes Willms, Conversations With Ulrich Beck Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 2004. Ch. 5.

## SEPT 12 Lecture 2: ORIGINS: LOCAL FABRICS / GLOBAL TYPOLOGIES

The pre-Colonial context of the European occupation; the 17<sup>th</sup> Century fabric of New York within a global context; Northern European origins of early building typologies New York as City-State during the early industrial revolution; methods and conventions for fabric analysis from type to phenomenon.

Reading:

Richard Plunz, A History of Housing in New York City. Dwelling Type and Social Change in the American Metropolis. New York: Columbia University Press,

1990. Ch. 1.

Supplemental Reading:

Enrico Guidoni, "Street and Block from the Late Middle Ages to the Eighteenth Century," Lotus 19 (1978). Pp. 5-19.

Giulio Carlo Argan, "On the Typology of Architecture," Architectural Design 33 (December 1963). pp. 564-565.

Rafael Moneo, "On Typology," Oppositions 13 (Summer 1978). Pp. 23-45.

Jean Castex and Philippe Panerai, "Prospects for Typomorphology," Lotus 36 (1982), pp. 94-99.

Christel Hollevoet, "Wandering in the City. *Flânerie to Dérive* and After: The Cognitive Mapping of Urban Space ," in Hollevoet and Karen Jones , The Power of the City. The City of Power New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1992. pp. 25-56.

Stephen Barber, Fragments of the European City London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 1995. pp. 67-76; 91-107.

Lieven DeCauter, "The City in the Age of Transcendental Capitalism," in Decauter, The Capsular Civilization Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2004. Pp. 40-53.



SEPT 19 Lecture 3: TERRACE URBANISM AND ITS DERIVATIVES, 1628-1863

Flemish origins for the New York fabric; English domination and the change in housing ideals; Americanization of the English terrace types; the imperative for density and the transformation of the row-dwelling; pathologies of density; the beginnings of the reform movement in London and New York.

Reading:

Richard Plunz, A History of Housing in New York City. Dwelling Type and Social Change in the American Metropolis. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990. Ch. 2.

Supplemental Reading:

"Geology," in John Kieran, A Natural History of New York City. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1959. Ch. 2.

"The Lenape," in Eric W. Sanderson, Mannahatta. A Natural History of New York City. New York: Abrams, 2009. Ch. 4.

Anne-Marie Cantwell and Diana diZerega Wall, Unearthing Gotham. The Archaeology of New York City. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001. Ch. 1,8.

Robert Greenhalgh Albion, The Rise of New York Port. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939. ch. 5.

Charles Lockwood, "Federal Style," Bricks and Brownstone: The New York Rowhouse 1783-1929. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972. Ch. 1.

## SEPT 26 Lecture 4: **EARLY COURTYARD URBANISM, 1872-1914**

The impetus for reform and the prefiguration of courtyard typologies; design ideals and the international housing movement in London, Brussels and Berlin; private philanthropy and the evolution of the courtyard; Paris, the Beaux-Arts, and development of normative New York fabric by the turn-of-the-century.

Reading:

Plunz, A History of Housing in New York City. Ch. 4.

Supplemental Reading:

"The New City: A House With Many Rooms," in David Schuyler, The New Urban Landscape. The Redefinition of City Form in Nineteenth Century America. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986. Ch. IX.

"The New Immigrants," in Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, Gotham. A History of New York City to 1898. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. Ch. 63.

Anthony Jackson, "The Problem Restated," A Place called Home. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1976. Ch. 9.

### OCT 3 Lecture 5: HIGH-RISE TRANSFORMATION, 1869-1915

The demise of the brownstone house and the crisis in upper-class housing production; structural and mechanical engineering innovation and the revolution in domestic building technology; high and low technology and the urbanization process; Parisian urbanism of the Third Empire and the evolution of bourgeois housing ideals in New York; the new collective scale and the demise of continuous high-rise urbanism.

Reading:

Plunz, A History of housing in New York City. Ch. 3.

Supplemental Reading:

"Manhattan Inc.," in Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, Gotham. A History of New York City to 1898. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. Ch. 59.

Dell Upton, "Inventing the Metropolis: Civilization and

Urbanity in Antebellum New York," in Catherine Hoover Voorsanger and John K. Howat (eds.), Art and the Empire City. New York 1825-1861. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000. pp. 3-45.

## OCT 10 Lecture 6: **NEW HORIZONTAL COLLECTIVITY, 1901-1929**

The perfection of transportation technology and the evolution of the garden apartment; innovation in financing and the new scale of housing production; the new horizontal city of the outer Boroughs contrasted with housing innovation in London, Berlin and Amsterdam; spatial controls for the new inner periphery.

### Reading:

Richard Plunz, A History of Housing in New York City. Ch. 4.

### Supplemental Reading:

Richard Pommer, "Neighborhood Block and Garden Court: New York City Housing Between the World Wars," in Josef Paul Kleihues and Christina Rathgeber (eds.), Berlin New York. Like and Unlike. Essays on Architecture and Art from 1870 to the Present. New York: Rizzoli, 1993. pp. 265-279.

Calvin Trillin, "U.S. Journal: The Bronx: The Co-ops," in The New Yorker LIII (August 1, 1977), pp. 49-54.

Suzanne Wasserman, "Déjà Vu: Replanning the Lower East Side in the 1930's," in Janet L. Abu-Lughod (ed.), From Urban Village to East Village. The Battle for New York's Lower East Side. Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell Publishers, 1994. Ch. 5.

## OCT 17 Lecture 7: **MODERNIST INTERLUDE, 1922-1950**

The case for an indigenous American social-functionalism; the appearance of the aesthetic of "minimum existence" in Europe; transfer of American technology to the European modernist project; "International style" modernism and the disruption of the garden apartment tradition; Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Berlin and new housing reform ideals in New York; the development of government philanthropy and reductive housing typologies; evolution to the high-rise slab-block as global icon for modern social housing; housing production as cultural critique in Rome.

Reading:

Plunz, A History of Housing in New York City. Ch. 5, 6.

Supplemental Reading:

Peter Marcuse, "The Beginnings of Public Housing in New York," Journal of Urban History XII (August, 1986). pp. 353-390.

Joel Schwartz, "Redevelopment and Public Housing," in The New York Approach. Robert Moses, Urban Liberals, and Redevelopment of the Inner City. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1993. Ch. 2.

## OCT 24 Lecture 8: **SUB-URBAN DISJUNCTION, 1931-1967**

The first post-industrial crisis and the development of de-urbanist strategies; the single-family house as catalyst for the new post-industrial culture; architects and the ideology of dispersal; the post-War sub-urban transformation of the culture of housing; the "affluent society" and its urban scourges.

Reading:

Plunz, A History of Housing in New York City. Ch. 7, 8.

Supplemental Reading:

Edward K. Spann, "Escape to Suburbia," in The New Metropolis. New York City 1840-1857. New York: Columbia University Press, 1981. Ch. 8.

Robert Fitch, "The Trend Benders: NYC Planning (1929-1993)," in The Assassination of New York. New York: Verso, 1993. Ch. 2.

M. Christine Boyer, "Manhattan Montage: The Art of Spatial Restructuring 1945-88," in Josef Paul Kleihues and Christina Rathgeber (eds.), Berlin New York. Like and Unlike. Essays on Architecture and Art from 1870 to the Present. New York: Rizzoli, 1993. pp. 411-421.

Roy Strickland, "The 1961 Zoning Revision and the Template of the Ideal City," in Todd W. Bressi (ed.), Planning and Zoning New York City. Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1993. pp. 48-60.

Deborah and Roderick Wallace, A Plague on Yours Houses. How New York Was Burned down and National Public Health Crumbled. New York: Verso, 1998. ch. 1,3.

Joe Flood, The Fires. How a Computer Formula, Big Ideas, and the Best of Intentions Burned Down New York City - and Determined the Future of Cities. New York: Riverhead Books, 2010.

Harold X. Connolly, "Conclusion: The Intensifying Ghetto" and "Epilogue," in A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn. New York: New York University Press, 1981. pp. 226-238.

## OCT 31 Lecture 9: **POST-SUBURBAN URBANISMS, 1964-94**

The critique of deurbanization in both city in suburb; the dissolution of the "tower-in-the-park" ideology and the

reinvention of the low-rise city; new definitions of luxury ; government disinvestment in social housing and the new philanthropy; evolution toward a "new American ghetto;" globalization of the culture of housing.

Reading:

Plunz, A History of Housing in New York City. Ch. 9,10.

Supplemental Reading:

Robert Fitch, "After Post-Industrialism," in The Assassination of New York. New York: Verso, 1993. Ch. 9.

Neil Smith, Betsy Duncan, and Laura Reid, "From Disinvestment to Reinvestment: Mapping the Urban 'Frontier' in the Lower East Side," in Janet L. Abu-Lughod (ed.), From Urban Village to East Village. The Battle for New York's Lower East Side. Cambridge, Mass:Blackwell Publishers, 1994. Ch. 7.

Janet Abu-Lughod, "The Battle for Tompkins Square Park," in Janet L. Abu-Lughod (ed.), From Urban Village to East Village. The Battle for New York's Lower East Side. Cambridge, Mass:Blackwell Publishers, 1994. Ch. 11.

Dolores Hayden, Building Suburbia. Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000. New York: Vintage Books, 2003. Ch. 10.

Kristiaan Versluys, "The Street as Theatre: Self-Presentation



and Specularity in Three Literary Texts on New York," in GUST (eds.), The Urban Condition: Space, Community and Self in the Contemporary Metropolis. Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1999. pp. 377-391.

Neil Smith, Deborah Cowen, "Suburban Manhattan," in Jerilou Hammett, Kingsley Hammett, eds, The Suburbanization of New York, New York; Princeton Architectural Press, 2007. pp. 33-40.

Nov 8  
(tutorial)

**Global Case-Study: Fabric Documentation**

Nov 15

**Global Case-Study: Typological Analysis (tutorial)**

Nov 21  
(tutorial)

**Global Case-Study: Preliminary Transformation Due**

Nov 29

**Global Case-Study: Analogue Development (tutorial)**

Dec 13

**Global Case-Study: Final Presentation**

Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and  
Preservation Fall 2012

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### THE COMPARATIVE FABRIC ANALYSIS

The seminar portion of this course is organized around student presentations of Case-Studies comparing several world cities in relation to their particular characteristic fabric types. For each, this comparison will begin with a historical background and documentation of the existing fabric under consideration. It will then expand to a presentation of a comparative analysis that follows the same format from city to city. Central to this analysis will be a construction of numerical / geometrical analogues for the existing fabric type. These analogues will then be applied in reverse as tools to generate new fabrics that may better respond to contemporary situations involving similar formal prerequisites. This "design" transformation will be the final element of the presentation, placed within a general overview of the particular city context .

The obvious implication of the comparative format is that cities with diverse cultural origins may share fabric types; or at least that fabric originating in widely variant cities having diverse formal characteristics can be coherently compared and evaluated. As well, there will be interesting possibilities for consideration of cross-cultural approaches and applications (one city to another), especially in that today's globalizing culture tends to hybridize. For this latter reason alone, it is important for the designer to precisely understand the range of potential types which may be drawn upon in given circumstances; and there is no better way to comprehend their design characteristics than through analytic drawing which constructs and reconstructs particular contexts.

A compilation of the Case-Studies including graphic presentation and

written summation constitutes the requirement for completion of the course. This material will stand as a record of the research and as a resource for this and subsequent classes. Because of the comparative nature of the Seminar presentations, it is important to carefully follow the minimum guidelines for the "Drawn Documentation." It is also important not to "over-reach" relative to the design exercise. This is a seminar presentation rather than a studio project.

Students will work in teams of two. Detailed guidelines for the Case-Study analyses will be distributed early on in the course.