HOUSING FIRST

The concept of low-barrier housing was initially developed as an economic solution: it costs far less in dollars to provide housing to a chronic alcoholic living on the street than to provide emergency room services. But recently, studies have shown that drinking decreases significantly for these residents and their health improves. While abstinence and traditional treatment work for many people struggling against alcoholism, Eugene has a large segment of its homeless population who could benefit from the more moderate approach to providing housing.

This studio will focus on development of a complex housing program, appropriate site selection for the program, appropriate character definition for the structure, and excellence in design The dwelling typology may be a continuum from shelter, to transitional housing, to permanent supportive housing. Each student will develop a program and building design and will select from sites of varying density and neighborhood context. The scale of the building will be between two and four stories, between 15,000 and 20,000 s.f. of wood-frame construction. While there will be extensive feedback from housing providers and representative users, this is a design studio and students are encouraged to be brave and innovative in the creative pursuit.

Because of the complexity of this program, students will have a short required reading list of books, articles and reports. These include Sam Davis’, “Designing for the Homeless” and the full report of the University of Washington evaluation of 1811 Housing.

There will be a field trip to Seattle on the Friday of the first week of class and students will have the opportunity to tour similar pre-recovery housing for formerly homeless individuals. Students should preference this studio if they are able to attend this field trip.

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