This course will examine the architecture of American dwellings (houses, apartments, etc.) from the first settlements of Spanish and English colonists in the 16th and 17th centuries to issues of dwelling in the present. Some specific issues that we will repeatedly take up (emphasis varies according to time period) are: the changing forms of household and family; the social/economic class of dwellers; modes and costs of producing dwellings; the relation of the dwelling to nature; the relation of the dwelling to the state; the relation of the dwelling to modes of transportation; and competing issues of rank and function in the dwelling plan. The aim of the course is to prepare you with sufficient historical understanding so you will be a good designer in the Housing Studio.

The architecture of houses is often presented as a sequence of styles, and those who can identify “what style is it?” are assumed to understand the subject. In this course we will instead concern ourselves first with the builders and users of houses, and ask such questions as: what spatial concepts were available to an English colonist in Massachusetts in 1630 who wished to build a house? Who were the household inhabitants that a Spanish colonial California house would contain? What sorts of tasks was a house supposed to support for its 1850s Boston dwellers? Through what means did a house convey meaning to the other dwellers in a 1950s community? What were the historical routes by which such ideas came to be accepted and then replaced? The buildings of Boston and the surrounding area will be used to study these architectural principles as well as style characteristics.

Required readings are in Snell library on reserve under the course number and Prof. Cromley’s name.

Optional: If you need more familiarity with the architectural styles used in American houses, get either McAlester, Field Guide to American Houses; or Jeffery Howe, The Houses We Live In. These books will allow you to become familiar with the changes in American house design over time; read to keep up with the chronological progress of the class. Additional readings of general interest are eds Upton and Vlach, Common Places (UV); Lester Walker, American Shelter; Mayhew and Meyers, Documentary History of Interiors; Clifford Clark, American Family Home; Mary Foley, The American House; Fitch, American Building vol.1, 2; Gwendolyn Wright, Building the Dream; Lawrence Vale, From the Puritans to the Projects; Calloway and Cromley, Elements of Style.

Conduct of the class: You will go see the required field-trip buildings together (or on your own); look at the images provided on Blackboard; consider the issues raised for each class meeting; read as you need to both to become familiar with the dwellings of the time period and to write reports on the assigned readings; and come to class ready to discuss the dwellings, issues, and readings listed for each session.

Grading: there will be 5 short reports on the field trips following assignments on Blackboard (5 pts each=25); one exam (25 points), reports on the readings (5 pts each = 50) and 1 research project (25 points). Assignments are due on the dates specified.

Class Schedule

11 Sept.   Intro. to course material

18 Sept   Anglo Colonial houses and settlement patterns in New England and the Chesapeake region
          Issues: what principles governed the spatial organization of colonial houses? how do economic circumstances affect building aims and results?
Architects, v.1; Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) for Massachusetts. See also HABS online for each state.

**Trip 1:** Meet at Paul Revere House on North Square, in the North End (Green or Orange T to Haymarket).

25 Sept

Spanish and French colonial types; Eighteenth-century houses of New England

Issue: how did different ethnic groups make houses to suit their traditions?

**Required** reading: *Wilson, “When a Room is the Hall”;

Recommended reading: Reps, Making of Urban America; Chappell, "Acculturation in the Shenandoah Valley: Rhenish Houses," UV.

DUE: Paper on field trip 1
Due: Paper on Wilson article

**Trip 2:** Meet at Harrison Gray Otis House 141 Cambridge St. (Green T to Govt Center or Haymarket)

2 Oct

The Plantation and eighteenth-century houses of the South; the Federal period - new interior planning in larger houses. Issue: what is new in the functional specificity of rooms and strategies of circulation space?

**Required** reading: Wenger, “Dining Room in Early VA”


DUE: Paper on field trip 2
Due: Paper on Wenger article

**Trip 3:** Meet at the Gibson House Museum, 137 Beacon St. (Green T to Arlington)

9 Oct

Urban row-house forms and the expansion of cities; conveniences.

Issue: how do new inventions/technologies affect house planning?

**Required** reading: *Ames, "Meaning in Artifacts: Hall Furnishings in Victorian America" and Beecher, selection from American Woman's Home, 1869

Recommended reading on row-houses: B. Bunting, Boston Back Bay; Lockwood, Bricks and Brownstone; Olwell, Gift to the Street

DUE: Paper on field trip 3
Due: Paper on Ames article

16 Oct

Mills and factory towns: workers' housing ; utopias

Issue: who provides housing for poor laborers?

**Required** reading: *Borchert, "Alley Landscapes of Washington”

Recommended reading: Buder, Pullman; Coolidge, Mill and Mansion; Byington, Homestead; Vlach, “The Shotgun House,” UV

DUE: Paper on Borchert article

23 Oct

Apartments and tenements; the invention of multiple dwellings for the U.S., Triple deckers and other New England multiple dwellings

Issue: how does middle-class individualism deal with multiple dwellings?

Recommended reading: K. Heath, The Patina of Place; E. Cromley, Alone Together

**Required** reading: *Cromley, “Apartments and Collective Life”

DUE: Paper on Cromley article
30 Oct  Prairie School and bungalow; The automobile and early 20th century automobile suburbs; Issue: How does the automobile reshape design? Recommended reading: H. Brooks, *The Prairie School*; and the mail-away plans catalogs such as *Radford’s Bungalows* or the Sears Roebuck pre-cut houses and Private and Federal housing of the 1930s, 40s; Federal greenbelt towns; Issue: what is the Federal government’s role in housing its citizens? **Required** Reading: *Barron, “Adequately Re-housing Low Income Families”*

Due: Paper on Barron article

**Field trip 4**—Villa Victoria

6 Nov  Modernism and the house: Buckminster Fuller, Charles and Ray Eames, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Philip Johnson, Marcel Breuer  **Required** reading: selection from *A. Friedman, Women and the Making of the Modern House*, on Farnsworth House Recommended reading: McCoy, Second Generation; Frampton, American Masterworks

DUE: Paper on field trip 4  Due: Paper on Friedman article


Due: Paper on Chow article

**Field Trip 5** to Mission Main

20 Nov  High-rise homes for rich and poor; government-initiated housing since 1950.  **Required** reading: Vale, selection from *Reclaiming Public Housing*

DUE: Paper on field trip 5  Due: paper on Vale article

4 Dec  Housing alternatives of the 1980s-2010; co-housing; work at home; child-centered; green; multigenerational, zoning and legislative frameworks; New Urbanism  **Required** reading: Kruse, “The Legal Technology of Exclusion” from *New Suburban History*

Due: Paper on Kruse article

**Final Research Paper due by 5pm**, Dec. 9, in my mailbox in 151 RY

Final exam date TBD
**Research Paper Assignment**: Choose a dwelling to investigate and report on it in comparison to examples of its type, examined through one of the issues that run through this course.

Step 1: Choose a dwelling (house, apartment, etc.), probably from the Boston area, that you can see in person to draw, photograph, get inside of, measure, and get to know; discover the original and current names of its rooms, find out the date of construction and the dates of alterations and additions. (Town Buildings Departments keep these records, some on-line; interview the owners/residents, see county and town histories; search local historical societies and libraries). Do not choose a dwelling that is famous and already has a lot written about it.

Step 2: Identify the category of houses to which yours belongs and research the history of that category of houses --for example: 19th-century urban rowhouse, or 18th-century rural farmhouse, or early 20th century suburban bungalow, or mid-twentieth-century public housing unit, or contemporary bachelor condo, etc.

Step 3: Compare and contrast your example with the general category to which it belongs, focusing on one of the following aspects of the dwelling either as built or in the present:

- changing forms of household and family, social/economic class (Resources: social history, history of the family, census data)

- room selection, room naming, uses of and changes to rooms (Resources: social history, economic history, census data, interviews, construction evidence)

- modes and costs of producing dwellings, prefabrication, kits (Resources: construction history, period advertisements, buildings dept. records, builders’ professional organizations)

- relation of the dwelling to nature (Resources: histories of period attitudes toward nature, siting and landscape; uses of outdoor space; nature indoors)

- relation of the dwelling to modes of transportation (Resources: City atlases, histories of transit, relation of dwelling to public and private transpo. routes, vehicles and parking)

**The Final Paper**. Develop a bibliography of building documents, books and articles, etc. As you write your final paper, apply to your analysis those lecture topics and field-trip examples that illuminate your subject and cite specific course readings. The completed paper will be 10 pp. typed (250 words/pg); endnotes (or other correct citations of sources), bibliography and illustrations will add additional pages. If supporting material is odd-sized, contain all in a binder of 9"x12" max.
Everyone will use these questions to guide the reading of classpack articles for discussion:

1. What has the author defined as the problem or issue to be explored in the article?

2. What kinds of evidence are summoned to unravel the problem or expose the issue?

3. How does the argument proceed? What resolution does the author arrive at? What path is illuminated?

4. Does the evidence offered to answer the questions posed by the author satisfy you? What holes do you see in the arguments? Do the conclusions seem convincing or wrong?

5. List some ways that the insights in this article could be applied to a housing issue in the present.

REPORT: when it is your turn to manage the discussion, you will write up your analysis of the assigned reading (answering the questions above and anything else you wish to say) and hand it in on the day of the discussion.

List of readings in classpack

Abbott Cummings, sample inventories from "Inside the MA House"
Chris Wilson, “When a Room is the Hall”
Mark Wenger, “The Dining Room”
Jan Jennings, “Drawing on the Vernacular Interior” and Calvert Vaux, selection from Villas and Cottages
Ken Ames, "Meaning in Artifacts: Hall Furnishings in Victorian America" and Catharine Beecher, selection from American Woman’s Home
James Borchert, "Alley Landscapes of Washington"
Cromley, “Apartments and Collective Life”
Cheryl Robertson, “Male and Female Agendas”
Alice Friedman, selection from Women and the Making of the Modern House, on Farnsworth House
Barron, “Adequately Re-housing Low Income Families”
Renee Chow, selection from Suburban Space: the Fabric of Dwelling
Larry Vale, selection from Reclaiming Public Housing
“New American House” from Franck, New Households
Gerald Frug, “Legal Technology of Exclusion” from New Suburban History

Academic Integrity: Northeastern University is committed to the principles of intellectual honesty and integrity. All members of the Northeastern community are expected to maintain complete honesty in all academic work, presenting only that which is their own work in tests and assignments. The use of correct citations and a strong bibliography in your paper will enable the reader to understand the development of your ideas and the sources for them. If you have questions regarding the proper attribution of the work of others, contact me or a librarian prior to submitting your work for evaluation. More information is available at <http://www.judicialaffairs.neu.edu/academicintegrity.htm>
Assignments for ARC3350

For each required reading you will hand in a 400-500-word report and discuss the reading in class. When we discuss the readings, and in your written reports, talk about these questions:

1. What has the author defined as the problem or issue to be explored in the article or chapter?

2. What kinds of evidence are summoned to unravel the problem or expose the issue? How does the argument proceed?

3. Does the evidence offered in answer to the question posed by the author satisfy you? What holes do you see in the arguments? Do the conclusions seem convincing?

4. Note how the issues and insights in this article/chapter can be applied to a housing problem in the present.

List of readings

Abbott Lowell Cummings, “Inventories” from The Framed Houses of Massachusetts Bay

Amanda Flather, “Gender, Space, and Place” (from Home Cultures v.8, 2, July 2011)

Chris Wilson, “When a Room is the Hall”

Calvert Vaux, selection from Villas and Cottages, and Catharine Beecher, selection from American Woman’s Home

Ken Ames, “Meaning in Artifacts: Hall Furnishings in Victorian America”

Cromley, “Apartments as Collective…”

James Borchert, “Alley Landscapes of Washington”,

Robert Twombly, “Saving the Family”

Barron, “Adequately Re-housing Low Income Families”

Renee Chow, selection from Suburban Space: the Fabric of Dwelling

Alice Friedman, selection from Women and the Making of the Modern House, on Farnsworth House

Gerald Frug, “Legislated Exclusion” from The New Suburban History

Academic Integrity: Northeastern University is committed to the principles of intellectual honesty and integrity. All members of the Northeastern community are expected to maintain complete honesty in all academic work, presenting only that which is their own work in tests and assignments. The use of correct citations and a strong bibliography in your paper will enable the reader to understand the development of your ideas and the sources for them. If you have questions regarding the proper attribution of the work of others, contact your professor prior to submitting your work for evaluation. More information is available at <http://www.judicialaffairs.neu.edu/academicintegrity.htm>
Research Project and Paper Assignment: Choose a dwelling to investigate and report on it in comparison to examples of its type, focusing on one of the issues* that run through this course.

Step 1: Choose a dwelling (house, apartment, etc.), probably from the Boston area, that you can see in person to draw, photograph, measure, and get to know; discover the original and current names of its rooms, find out the date of construction and the dates of alterations and additions. Do not choose a dwelling that is famous or already has a lot written about it (such as a house-museum).

Step 2: Identify the category of houses to which yours belongs and research the history of that category of houses -- for example: 19th-century urban rowhouse, or 18th-century rural farmhouse, or early 20th century suburban bungalow, or mid-twentieth-century public housing unit, or contemporary bachelor condo, etc. Set your chosen dwelling in the context of its type.

Step 3: Prepare a 1-page paper proposal, explaining the building(s) you will analyze (step 1), your category (step 2), your theme --examples of themes on the list below--, and the line of argument you expect to develop; and prepare a 1-page bibliography of books and articles supporting this research (resources for bibliography are suggested below with the themes). Hand in Oct. 14; I will read it and help you find materials, focus questions, or frame your theme.

Step 4: Write the paper: compare and contrast your example(s) with the general category to which it belongs, focusing on your chosen *issue or aspect of the dwelling, either as built originally or in the present: In your analysis, refer to the specific readings, field trips, and lecture topics that illuminate your subject. Add to your bibliography as you discover further resources.

Choose one of these Issues to focus on in the paper:
*changing forms/numbers/period definitions of household and family and how those affect the form of houses (Kinds of resources that should be cited in your bibliography: social history, housing law, history of the family, census data)
*the social/economic class of dwellers and their dwelling preferences (Resources: social history, economic history, census data, interviews)
*modes and costs of constructing, producing and owning dwellings; life-span building costs (Resources: sustainable and green theory; construction history, prefabrication, period advertisements, federal, state or local housing policies--tax refunds and other subsidies, census, builders’ professional organizations)
*the relation of the dwelling to nature (Resources: histories of period attitudes toward nature, siting and landscape; uses of outdoor space; natural materials; nature indoors; green and sustainable issues)
*relation of the dwelling to modes of transportation (Resources: City atlases, histories of transit, relation of dwelling to public and private transportation routes, vehicles and parking)
*Programming/room use/meaning in the dwelling plan and changes over time (Resources: names of rooms and circulation spaces, uses of rooms, who uses them, meanings; Town Buildings Departments keep these records; interview the owners/residents).

The Paper will be 10 pp. typed (250 words/pg); endnotes (or other correct citations of sources), bibliography and illustrations will add additional pages. Hand in the paper and all supporting material (if there are odd sized items, put in a binder of 9"x12" max.), on or before Dec. 13
Field Trip to Revere House and Pierce-Hichborn House

Trace the entrance sequence in the original 1680s Revere House. How does the front door address the street and sit in its façade? What space do you enter when you come inside? What is the circulation/path of movement like on the first and second floors (vertical and horizontal circulation=stairs and corridors/halls or equivalent spaces).

Compare this 17th century system with the early 18th c. version in Pierce-Hitchborn. If we can’t get inside Pierce-Hitchborn, focus on the question of façade and entrance from the exterior.

Field trip assignment for Otis House compared to Revere house

When you visit the Harrison Gray Otis House, write a response to this question (about 500 words):

How does this house separate more public activities from more private ones in plan and section: define what you mean by public and private; what rooms or spaces are “public” and which are “private;” and who uses which (family, servants, friends, important guests)? Compare the Otis House public/private system to that used in the Paul Revere House.

Use labeled diagrams (analytic sketches, plans, sections, elevations) and bullet points or sentences as needed. Refer to at least one class reading. Hand this in at the class meeting following the Otis House visit.

When you visit the Gibson House, write a response to these statements:

In the later 19th century, houses for the upper-middle class got increasing numbers of function-specific rooms. Identify the new rooms added to the list of expected rooms, compared to Otis House.

Row houses/party-wall houses typically arrange their rooms in a stack of floors, in contrast to contemporary apartments where all rooms in a unit are on one floor. What advantages are provided by stacking function-specific rooms? What are the drawbacks? Which ones go where in the stack?

Use labeled diagrams (analytic sketches, plans, sections, elevations) and bullet points or sentences as needed.

Refer to class readings and discussion as useful. (Total: 4 points) Hand this in at the class meeting following the Gibson House visit.
Field trip to Villa Victoria: answer the question in 2 pages of observations/diagrams and hand in next week.

“Good” residential neighborhoods, according to Jane Jacobs, share these qualities: low-rise buildings, so that residents remain in touch with street/sidewalk life; small, local stores/services which stay open for extended hours to provide both convenience and casual surveillance; facilities for all ages from children to elderly; and a level of density that assures that neighbors encounter each other often, keeping an eye out for each other’s well-being and safety.

In the American Houses course we have also found that “good” houses share these qualities: the most highly valued are single-family and free-standing; they have a connection to nature, they provide clear distinctions between public and private spaces, both indoor and outdoor; they give architectural weight to front doors and entrance sequences; and they offer good light and fresh air.

Explain how the dwellings at Villa Victoria do/don’t meet these criteria. Which criteria are really important for creating a sense of community (e.g. things held in common) and which are outdated?

Field trip to Mission Main: answer the question in 2 pages of observations/diagrams and hand in at the next class. (NB: Stragglers, please hand in all the assignments to date as soon as possible.)

In the American Houses course we have looked at many different dwelling types: free-standing single-family houses, single family row-houses, multi-family tenements, multi-family apartment houses, two-family houses, triple-deckers for 3 households, utopian dwellings for multiple people (sometimes sex-segregated), dwellings for bachelors/singles, housing for war-worker couples, etc.

Which dwelling types are used at Mission Main. How does the architecture tell us what dwelling types are arranged inside the Mission Main buildings? Explain which ones might have been better choices for this site and population?