

# **FIFTH WARD RENAISSANCE**

Design Advocacy through Neighborhood-Based Collaboration and Social Engagement

ACSA DIVERSITY ACHIEVEMENT SUBMISSION

Fifth Ward Renaissance is a collaborative framework of curriculum-based endeavors developed by our team of educators in the College of Architecture and Design. Our endeavors have been carefully assembled into the second-, third- and fourth-year studios and support courses. Through these efforts, we have committed ourselves, our curriculum, and our students to a position of social advocacy by means of architectural research and practice. More specifically, our pedagogies have been tuned to serve the most socio-economically disadvantaged neighborhoods in Houston.

The Fifth Ward is a predominantly African American neighborhood that has witnessed a profound level of disinvestment and socio-economic hardship. Over the course of the last three years, Fifth Ward Renaissance has been structured as a flexible ecosystem of ongoing strategies between our program and the neighborhood. Several semesters of continual, on-the-ground engagement have provided phenomenal opportunities for our students and faculty to directly work with and learn from the citizens of the Fifth Ward. Their generosity and support have allowed us to explore and respond to architecture through adaptive reuse.

It is our intent to serve diversity and to celebrate an inherently humanist call to action. Fifth Ward Renaissance has initiated a dialogue that cuts across boundaries to engage historically underrepresented stakeholders. Our efforts are leveraged through curriculum-based strategies, and mobilized by small grants and pro bono activities drawing awareness and activation to the Fifth Ward. Neighborhood stakeholders including the CDRC (Community Design Resource Center), UH Small Grants Fund, RDA Initiatives for Houston Grant Fund, Olevia Community Development Corporation, Olivet Missionary Baptist Church, JW Peavy Senior Center, and Neighborhood Centers Inc. have provided our faculty and students with encouragement and resources. Our collaborative group has pursued various opportunities for competitive funding and strategic partnerships with these institutions and the citizens of the Fifth Ward.

This submission to the **ACSA Diversity Achievement Award** highlights multi-faceted aspects of the program framework including studio curriculum, small grants, collaboration with the CDRC, historical documentation of the African American community in the Fifth Ward, Inside/Out design-build, social advocacy speculative studios, and partnership with two primary stakeholders—Olivet Missionary Baptist Church and Neighborhood Centers.

Through Fifth Ward Renaissance, our predominantly minority students have been exposed to the potential for social advocacy existing within architecture, while they acquire leadership experience in the real world. The program serves the interests of diversity achievement in a complementary manner, developing diverse leaders while enabling diverse needs in an underserved neighborhood.

Our College of Architecture and Design is among the most diverse in the United States. We believe that our greatest resource is the students, of whom, a disproportionate number represent minority communities. Fifth Ward Renaissance has allowed us to critically reconsider our role as architecture educators and to more actively develop design leadership through our enviably diverse talent base. We believe that an exceptional opportunity exists to shift and mobilize significant demographic change in architecture--within academia as well as practice. Bringing together the diversity of our students with the diversity of the Fifth Ward proposes a new model for incremental and ongoing interchange.



Community Design Resource Center  
Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture  
University of Houston



*An abandoned shotgun storehouse, transformed by **Fifth Ward Renaissance***



Established in 2005 at the University of Houston by Susan Rogers, the Community Design Resource Center's mission is to serve the public interest through design, research, education, and practice focused on enhancing livability in Houston.

Over the last ten years, the Community Design Resource Center has partnered with twenty-nine community-based and non-profit organizations to complete twenty-two funded design projects. The projects range in scale from community visioning— Collaborative Community Design Initiative—to the implementation of small scale design projects such as the "Zona de Juego" in Magnolia Park, a 600' long public art project celebrating the history of the neighborhood and encouraging active play for children. CDRC projects illustrate the capacity to work creatively and collaboratively at different scales and with multiple partners and diverse communities.

CDRC partnerships have significantly contributed to the public debate on the role of architecture and good design in catalyzing community change. As the organization moves forward, it is designing new ways to engage community partners, and new ways to enhance the mutuality, reciprocity and impact of its activities. The CDRC was the catalyst for **Fifth Ward Renaissance**, providing the 'connective tissue' and acting as a neighborhood liason linking UH faculty and students with communities in need.

# Olivet Missionary BAPTIST CHURCH



An abandoned shotgun storehouse, transformed by **Fifth Ward Renaissance**



The Olivet Missionary Baptist Church (OMBC) is located in the historic Fifth Ward Community of Houston. Its mission is faith-based and systemic; responsible citizens cannot simply take resources and leave the community bare. The church is taking an active role in its community by developing people, property, and resources so that the Fifth Ward becomes a supportive and revitalized 'village' in the city.

With this focus, the OMBC is working across denominations, socio-economic boundaries, and racial lines to teach credit repair, homeownership (PrimeWay FCU), individual development accounts, (Covenant Community Capital), financial literacy, and G.E.D curriculum (Houston CC) in the community.

The OMBC is committed to neighborhood nutrition through a discounted fresh fruit and vegetable program. The church is located in a food desert and is attempting to fund the construction of a mobile grocery store within a refurbished city bus. The OMBC is an agent of positive change in the Fifth Ward.

Led by Pastor Robert Thomas, the OMBC serves as a primary partner and supportive mentor for UH faculty and students in **Fifth Ward Renaissance**. Their guidance has allowed us to contribute to the neighborhood by establishing citizen connections with the church and larger Fifth Ward leveraged through architecture and design-build opportunities such as *Inside-Out* and the JW Peavy Senior Center project.



## NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS



Our partnership with NCI mobilizes *Fifth Ward Renaissance* design interventions



Neighborhood Centers Inc. has a rich history in building communities that work since the early days when it was part of the Settlement House. When Alice Graham Baker founded the agency in 1907, the main intention was to help socio-economically disadvantaged residents in Houston access opportunities for education, health, and work while learning how to become actively engaged in participatory democracy.

One hundred years later, the purpose of Neighborhood Centers has not changed. The organization connects low-income families and individuals to opportunities so they can achieve their goals. This principle frames the core attributes of Neighborhood Centers since its origin--that *neighborhoods* offer bridges to opportunity and that citizens can transform their own communities.



Our partnership with Neighborhood Centers is a critical, long-term commitment that offers the potential for our curriculum to be continually energized through social advocacy, speculative thinking, and design-build opportunities throughout Houston. Our current collaboration with Neighborhood Centers connects **Fifth Ward Renaissance** faculty and students with senior citizens in a multi-phased renovation and improvement project in the JW Peavy Senior Center. This project is improving the functional, performative, and aesthetic qualities of the facility through small-scale design interventions.



## JW PEAVY SENIOR CENTER FIFTH WARD



*UH students engage with community members at the JW Peavy Senior Center*



The JW Peavy Senior Center provides a safe place for the elder population of the Fifth Ward to visit during the day for social activities. Programs include a educational opportunities, a noon-time meal, fitness, health and nutrition counseling, and recreation. The center assists fixed-income residents with completion of an application for payment of their city water bill. The center provides space for public meetings, receptions, workshops, banquets, and seminars. It serves a predominantly African American and Hispanic population with a significant number of recently settled non-English-speaking immigrants.

Through our initial efforts with the Olivet Missionary Baptist Church, the **Fifth Ward Renaissance** team established this ongoing partnership with the JW Peavy Senior Center to address an even larger organization and citizen group through better design. The JW Peavy Senior Center serves many members of the OMBC and Fifth Ward neighborhood.



Our current initiative, facilitated through a collaborative effort of Meggin Lorino, Director of Neighborhood-based Services; and faculty members Ziad Qureshi and Gregory Marinic, has established a collaborative framework to work with the seniors and pursue ongoing building renovations and improvements to the JW Peavy Senior Center. By mobilizing social advocacy through architecture, speculative design proposals produced by UH students act as a catalyst for the center.

**Rice Design Alliance Grant: Initiatives for Houston 2014**  
**Grant Proposal: 'Fifth Ward Renaissance: From History, A Future'**

This is a winning grant proposal to the Rice Design Alliance Grant: Initiatives for Houston 2014. This proposal, 'Fifth' was proposed and submitted by Gregory Marinic and awarded a \$5,000 grant in Spring 2014.



**Fifth Ward Renaissance: From History, a Future**

*"One of the differences between this neighborhood and one like River Oaks is that they have lots of support and all kinds of resources available. Here, in the Fifth Ward, it's the exact opposite— these people have no resources at all. There's one clinic, one library, no YMCA, very few activities, and the community is very fragmented. It's not the kind of environment that helps a child excel."*

Ernest McMillan  
Community Activist and Contributor to the Fifth Ward Enrichment Program

This proposal for the **Rice Design Alliance Grants Program: Initiatives for Houston 2014** will engage design-research toward the rebuilding an historic African-American community in Houston's Fifth Ward. It will partner with the Fifth Ward CDC, CDRC, and the Olivet Missionary Baptist Church to build an e-Reading Room that enhances literacy and learning in the neighborhood. Furthermore, this proposal seeks to mobilize history in the rebuilding of a modest and threatened structure in the neighborhood, while activating undergraduate students in the design-build studio of the Interior Architecture program of the University of Houston Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture for which I serve as director.

**ORIGINS: A Prominent Past**

After the Civil War, newly freed slaves began settling in the sparsely populated areas of northeast Houston. In 1866, this district was designated as the Fifth Ward, and by the 1880s, the neighborhood became home to a substantial African-American working-class community whose livelihood was primarily based on work found in Ship Channel industries and homes of wealthy Houstonians. Although the Fifth Ward was always predominantly African-American, immigrants from Italy, the Philippines, Latin America, and South Asia have also called the neighborhood home.

Before desegregation, the neighborhood housed African-Americans of all occupations and income levels in a socially and economically diverse community. In the 1930s, the Fifth Ward was one of the proudest, most influential, and prosperous black neighborhoods in the United States, as evidenced in more than forty African-American businesses along Lyons Avenue.

Desegregation opened the suburbs of Houston to middle class African-Americans. In the 1970s, the Fifth Ward had lost a significant part of its population and many houses were abandoned as residents followed prosperity toward the periphery. The Lyons Avenue retail district became increasingly vacant and several buildings fell into disrepair or were demolished. By the 1980s, the Fifth Ward had become notorious throughout Houston for violence and disinvestment.

**FUTURES: A Renaissance Awaits**

The proposal offers a two-fold agency—one that blends history with design-build community advocacy. Using the archives of various African-American churches in the Fifth Ward, this proposal will result in the development of an exhibition that chronicles the historical rise, fall, and projected rebirth of the Fifth Ward in its most extensive form to date. The proposed e-Reading Room will be housed in a building of historical significance to the African-American community in the neighborhood. A diminutive and poetically crumbling shotgun storehouse will offer an opportunity for students of the newly formed Interior Architecture program at the University of Houston to serve as community advocates, designers, and re-builders of the Fifth Ward. This shotgun storehouse represents a quintessential vernacular building type that is unique to our region. Time-worn yet beloved, the structure is in critical need of stabilization and offers an opportunity to support resilience in the neighborhood. The new e-Reading Room will establish a permanent shared environment that encourages learning in the Fifth Ward. One of the primary intentions of this project is to illustrate how *Architecture* can promote social advocacy to serve and support underrepresented communities.

**Rice Design Alliance Grant: Initiatives for Houston 2014**

**Grant Proposal: ‘Fifth Ward Renaissance: From History, A Future’ (continued)**



The shotgun storehouse will be transformed through modest means of interior reconstruction using high-technology digital fabrication equipment in the Keeland Center and resources of the University of Houston Community Design Resource Center. Archival research will foster a way for students to activate scholarship through technology and community service. Furthermore, Fifth Ward Renaissance provides a chance for the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture—and more specifically the new Interior Architecture program—to support the stabilization of historically significant structures in our city and to advance community advocacy.

The University of Houston is located in similarly impoverished district, and it is my hope that **Fifth Ward Renaissance** will serve as a bottom-up exemplar of hybridized archive-design-research scholarship in the discipline. Such forms of engagement are quite rare, yet particularly well-suited to the fledgling Interior Architecture program since our work is contingent upon existing structures. Modest structures are often very poorly documented, so this approach to neighborhood research fosters a way in which the program may incrementally steward our city’s material culture—and to become a model for the nation.

The new Interior Architecture program at the University of Houston investigates the discipline by positioning our program in the reuse, adaptation, and transformation of existing buildings. Poised at the intersection of architecture, conservation, spatial design, and ecological performance—the trans-disciplinary nature of Fifth Ward Renaissance will allow archival scholarship, technology, and the art of making to converge. Focusing on the technological, material, ecological, and social promise of Interior Architecture as a specialization within Architecture, this endeavor will allow our students to critically address contemporary challenges in Houston—and to translate those lessons to cities across the globe.

**RESEARCH PAIRED WITH COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

**Fifth Ward Renaissance** is a research initiative that will be paired with on-going course development of the INAR 3501 Interior Architecture Design-Build Studio Interior at the University of Houston Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture. Parallel to faculty-led research, course participants will research and visualize the narrative of Houston vernacular architecture in the Fifth Ward.

**INTENT**

- Support resilience in the Fifth Ward through building stabilization and adaptation
- Expand understanding of the complexities of Interior Architecture in a Houston context
- Reveal social issues relative to urban regeneration at an interior scale
- Rebuild a modest building of significant neighborhood interest as an e-Reading Room.

**BUDGET**

FIFTH WARD RENAISSANCE proposes an operating budget of \$5,000 that builds upon a Phase I grant awarded to Gregory Marinic by the University of Houston in Spring 2014. The RDA grant will be used to stabilize the structure and build an on-site interior transformation. erate research/visualizations in-studio and independently

**DISSEMINATION PLAN**

This proposal will stabilize an existing structure rebuilt through a digital fabrication interior transformation. A permanent e-Reading Room will support on-going intergenerational learning in the Fifth Ward.

**GRANT RECIPIENT / PROGRAM DIRECTOR**

Gregory Marinic, Director of Interior Architecture & Assistant Professor, University of Houston

**TEAM**

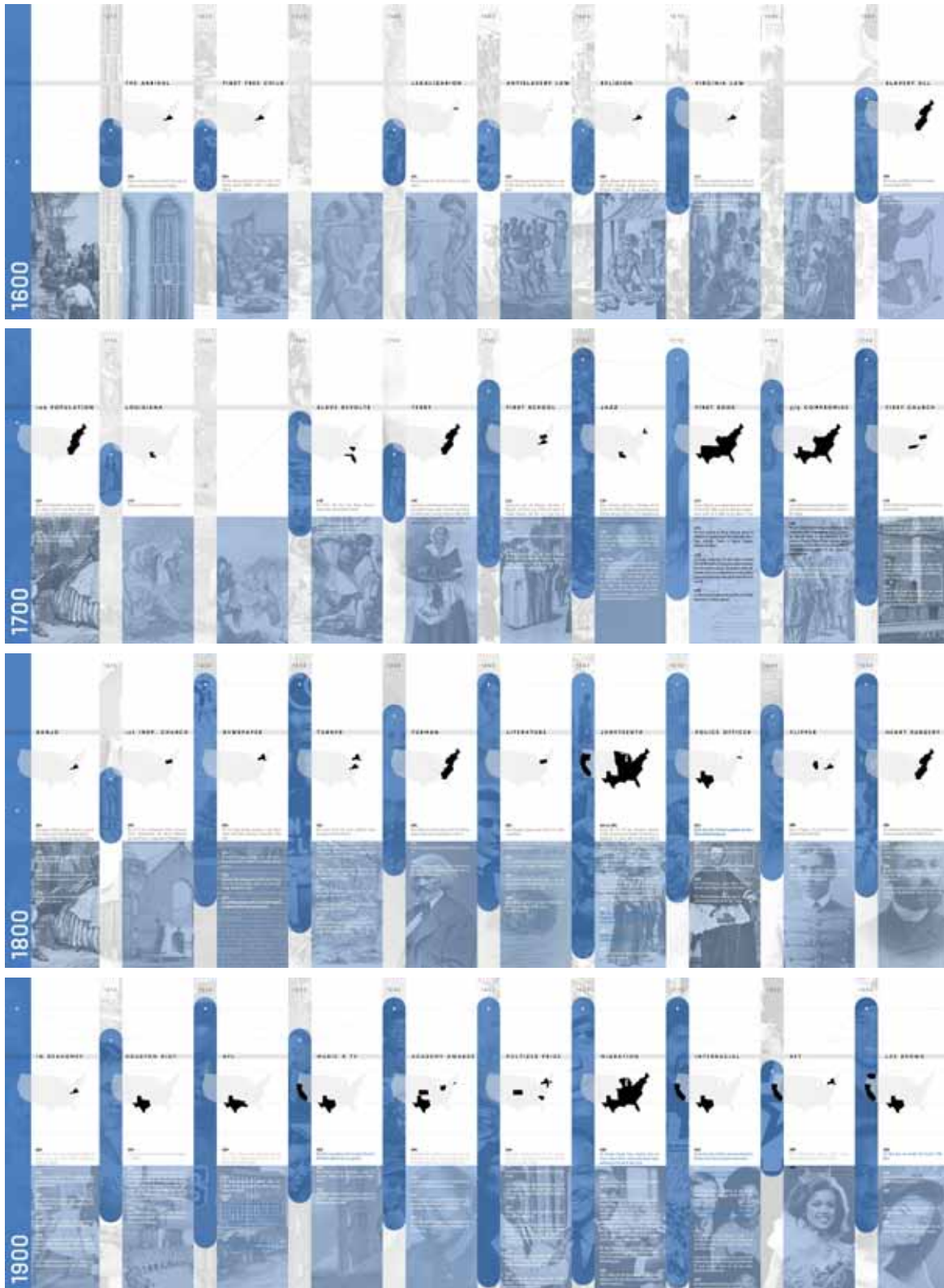
Neighborhood Liasons: Susan Rogers/CDRC, Pastor Robert Thomas/OMBC; Studio Instructors: Jason Logan, Josh Robbins; Curriculum-Archival Research-Grants: Gregory Marinic; Guest Critic & Consultant: Ziad Qureshi





# AFRICAN AMERICAN ARCHIVAL WORK | FIFTH WARD RENAISSANCE

A \$6,000 UH New Faculty Grant awarded to Gregory Marinic incorporated archival research documentation of the African American community in the Fifth Ward, as well as a final built intervention. Students worked in the design studio, fabrication lab, and on-site under the guidance of studio instructors Jason Logan and Josh Robbins. Collaborators Susan Rogers/CDRC, Pastor Robert Thomas/OMBC, Ziad Qureshi, and Gregory Marinic served as consultants and design critics. As part of the UH grant deliverables, the following visualization represents a small portion of our historical documentation of the African American community in the Fifth Ward. This research was performed by students under the guidance of Jason Logan and Gregory Marinic--in consultation with local archives and the Olivet Missionary Baptist Church.

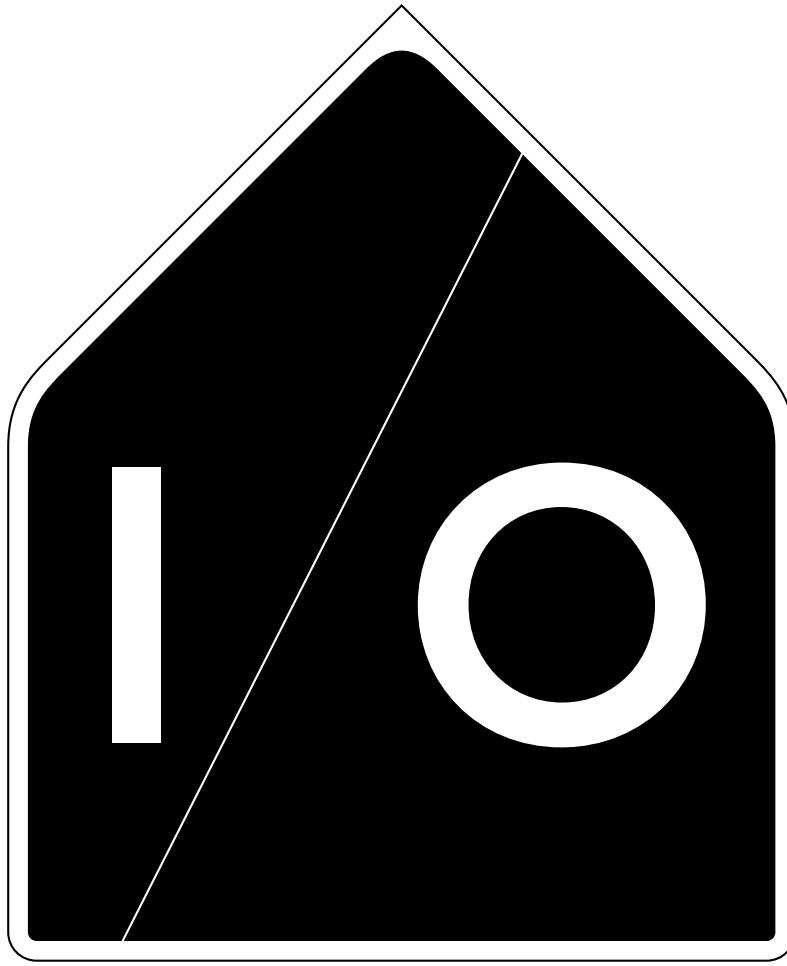


## INSIDE-OUT | FIFTH WARD RENAISSANCE

**Fifth Ward Renaissance** mobilized grant funding, social advocacy design-research, archival documentation, digital fabrication, and building to rethink an obsolete and abandoned structure in the Fifth Ward. Working with the Olivet Missionary Baptist Church, neighborhood advocates, faculty, and students collaboratively delivered 'Inside-Out' an e-reading room for residents in an underserved African American community. This studio was directed by Jason Logan and Josh Robbins.

Students: Christopher Al-Jumah, Beatriz Arellano, Maricela Calderon, Jessica Garrett, Grace Kim, Kana Kim, Kevin Pham, Tania Rodriguez, Priscila Rivera, Martin Rodriguez, Sara Skinner; Neighborhood Liaison: Susan Rogers/CDRC; Advocate/Client: Pastor Robert Thomas/OMBC; Grants/Curriculum: Gregory Marinic; Supporting Grants: Rice Design Alliance & University of Houston





## Inside/Out Adapting a Shotgun Storehouse for the Greater Fifth Ward

*Inside/Out* is simultaneously an exhibition about Houston's Fifth Ward community and a structure-in-waiting. The title describes both the way in which the design research is organized and the way in which the built structure will function once it is re-constructed within an existing building - supporting a dilapidated shotgun storehouse from the "inside-out". Located on Farmer Street in the Fifth Ward, the structure transforms an old shotgun storehouse into a small public reading room and e-resource community center for young adults placing out of the foster care system.

Over the course of the spring 2015 semester, students were asked to develop a structure that would simultaneously stabilize the existing building and provide a new spatial environment that could accommodate book storage. Conceptually similar to a medical stent, which supports a vein from the inside, the structure opens up a linear space for a variety of activities and activates a side yard for flexible programming formats. The project reestablishes a connection to the street through a new front porch and a much needed community garden frames the side-yard and deck.

The exhibition is a cross-disciplinary effort between the Interior Architecture program (INAR) and the Community Design Resource Center (CDRC) at the University of Houston, in collaboration with numerous community partners and stakeholders. The exhibition showcases research developed during the Collaborative Community Design Initiative, an effort organized by the University of Houston's CDRC in 2013-2014. This research provided the context for a design/build studio co-launched by adjunct professors Jason Logan and Josh Robbins in the INAR program. Working with community partner Olivet Missionary Baptist Church in the Fifth Ward, the INAR 3500 spring studio investigated urban regeneration at the scale of the interior.

Here in the atrium, visitors will find on the outside of the structure a selection of the research used in the studio to frame both the history and the context of the Fifth Ward. This out-side information influenced the design development of the *inside* structure throughout the semester. Inside the structure, visitors will find design process documents, models, and fabrication drawings developed during the three phases of the spring 2015 INAR design/build studio. These documents track the evolution of the design and how it is integrated into the project site. A "Projective Map" on the outside of the structure links the INAR project to the larger Fifth Ward community development strategies proposed by the CDRC. In doing so, the structure stands as both a prototype for a way of making, and a prototype for sustainable community development.

When the design studio began in late January 2015, twelve third-year INAR students visited the site on Farmer Street where the shotgun storehouse is located and began researching the history of the Fifth Ward neighborhood. Their historical research was later used to develop a time-line that places the community research from the CDRC within a broader historical perspective of the neighborhood. The students were then asked to individually develop concepts for an economical structure that worked within three structural themes for supporting the building: Thickening, Bracing, and Buttrissing. Based on common affinities found within the first studio review, students were grouped into three teams. The three teams worked for two weeks to synthesize the ideas that each member brought to the project. At the conclusion of the fourth week, each team presented to the client and a panel of critics. Rather than selecting a "winner", comments were taken from the review to establish a more detailed set of constraints for the upcoming midterm review. The list of comments included:

- The structure should be open and flexible, allowing for multiple programming formats.
- A "front porch" is desired to shelter the entry and establish a social space that connects with the sidewalk and Farmer Street
- Large sliding doors that open onto a deck in the side-yard would allow for more intimate assembly formats, and could promote cross-ventilation through the structure.
- A shipping container, which will be used to store the structure components on-site temporarily, will be repositioned as an office, restroom, and kitchenette. The shipping container can be used to frame the garden and public gathering space in the side yard.
- Due to budgetary constraints, all schemes would use industrial framing lumber for a majority of the structure. More expensive sheet materials such as plywood would be minimized within the structure (at the connection nodes) to remove any complex cuts during fabrication.
- All midterm schemes would look at how the manipulation of a simple truss or brace along the length of the structure could create opportunities for natural day lighting and new interior spatial volumes.

Using this list, the three teams developed schemes within a more focused set of parameters, allowing the midterm review to consider a wider range of concerns, from more practical issues of budget and fabrication, to phenomenological conditions of light, space, and experience. At the midterm review, a final design scheme was selected by the client and critics. The design was chosen for its simplicity and legibility as a structural, formal and spatial interior structure that allowed for a variety of programs. Following the midterm review, the studio operated as a single design team. Each student had specific tasks assigned to them as the studio transitioned to the garden and public gathering effort. Weeks 8-12 of the semester were used to develop the fabrication details, drawings and digital protocols for the fabrication process. In the final four weeks of the semester, students began to fabricate all of the components for the interior structure in the University of Houston's Keeland Design Center. Following the college's 2015 graduation and awards ceremony in the atrium, installation began on the structure and exhibition. At the conclusion of the exhibition, in early September, the structure will be disassembled, transported, and stored on-site until additional funding is raised for the reassembly of the structure within the existing shotgun storehouse.

### Support

*Inside/Out* would not have been possible without the generous support of two grants: A University of Houston New Faculty Research grant, and a Rice Design Alliance "Initiatives for Houston" grant pursued by and awarded to Gregory Marinic, former director of the Interior Architecture program.

We would also like to thank Dean Patricia Oliver for her support of the exhibition, lecture and reception. This project benefited greatly from the support and guidance of Gregory Marinic, the former Director of the Interior Architecture program; Susan Rogers, the Director of the Community Design Resource Center; Insight Structures, and all of our invited critics who offered essential feedback and suggestions during the development of the project. Additionally, we thank Olivet Missionary Baptist Church, Pastor Robert Thomas, and the Thomas family for their trust and support during this process. Finally, thank you to the spring 2015 INAR 3500 students, the CDRC student researchers, and the Fifth Ward seminar/workshop team, whose hard work, patience, and creativity have made this project possible.

### INAR Students

Christopher Al-Jumaih  
Brazlitz Arellano  
Marcela Calderon  
Jessica Garrett  
Grace Kim  
Kiana Kim  
Kevin Pham  
Tania Rodriguez  
Priscilla Rivera  
Martin Rodriguez  
Sara Skinner

### CDRC Student Researchers

Rosa Lee  
Mina Santillo  
Ricardo Sepulveda

### Fifth Ward Seminar/Workshop Team

John Gardoski  
Kathleen Roosen  
Natalia Sanchez  
Alfredo Tronzo

### Interior Architecture @ UH

The Interior Architecture program at the University of Houston investigates the discipline by positioning the program in the reuse, adaptation, and transformation of existing buildings. By identifying opportunities for growth and expansion within existing structures, Interior Architecture provides an inherently sustainable approach to urban growth. Repurposing buildings, rather than demolishing them, reduces the waste stream and supports smarter strategies for growing our cities from within. Considering the forces of abandonment, obsolescence, and the social agency of Interior Architecture, INAR students work to develop projects that advance urban regeneration at an interior scale.

### CDRC

Established in 2005, the Community Design Resource Center's mission is to serve the public interest through design, research, education, and practice focused on enhancing the livability of Houston's communities.

Over the last nine years the Community Design Resource Center has partnered with 29 community-based and non-profit organizations to complete 22 funded design projects. The projects range in scale from community visioning—Collaborative Community Design Initiative—to the implementation of small scale design projects such as the "Zona de Juego" in Magnolia Park, a 600' long public art project celebrating the history of the neighborhood and encouraging active play for children. Our projects illustrate our capacity to work creatively and collaboratively at different scales and with multiple partners and diverse communities.

### Faculty

**Jason Logan** is currently an adjunct professor at the University of Houston College of Architecture, where he teaches undergraduate Architecture and Interior Architecture design studios. Jason is also a co-founder and principal of Logan and Johnson Architecture LLC (LLOJO). Jason received a Master of Science in Advanced Architectural Design from Columbia University and a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Houston.

**Josh Robbins** is currently an adjunct professor at the University of Houston College of Architecture, where he teaches undergraduate Architecture and Interior Architecture design studios. Josh is a Project Designer with Logan and Johnson Architecture LLC (LLOJO). Josh received a Master of Architecture from Harvard University's Graduate School of Design, and a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Houston.

### Project Collaborators

**Gregory Marinic** previously served as founding director of the Interior Architecture program at the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture. Gregory is an associate professor in the Syracuse University School of Design, and program head of the Environmental and Interior Design program. He is director and co-founder of i3, a New York based architectural/interior design/branding organization. Gregory is a recipient of Architecture's New York based architectural practice engaged in design, research, teaching, and experimentation. Prior to independent practice, Gregory worked in the New York and London offices of Rafael Vinoly Architects and his portfolio includes AIA and AIAA award-winning work undertaken at Rafael Vinoly, Yoshitaka Nishino, and ABB Architects.

**Susan Rogers** is the Director of the Community Design Resource Center (CDRC) at the University of Houston's College of Architecture and an Assistant Professor. Her research, teaching, and practice focus on design as a strategy for community change, exploring the seams between place, justice and the public interest. The CDRC founded in 2005, has partnered with dozens of community-based and non-profit organizations across the city of Houston to develop collaborative and pragmatic solutions to design challenges.

**Pastor Robert Thomas** has served as the Senior Pastor of Olivet Missionary Baptist Church since 2004. He is the Board Chair of the Olivet CDC, whose goals and mission are to remove blight from the community, to provide youth education and job skill training, and to organize the construction of supportive services, including housing for 18 year olds aging out of the foster care system, and cottages for senior citizens needing to downsize because of family and/or medical needs. Pastor Thomas has been the Host and Co-Host of The New Church & Community in Action, a bi-monthly radio talk show addressing local, community, economic and education concerns within the Harris and Walker county boundaries. The talk show aired on KPUG-FM, 98.3, Prairie View A&M University. He has also been a monthly guest on the 92.1 FM Radio Broadcast - "Spice & Soul" - a weekly bible study hosted by Houston area pastors; the broadcast occurred Sunday mornings at 6:30 am.

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON



cdrc  
Community Design Resource Center

BURDETTE KEELAND JR.  
Design Exploration Center



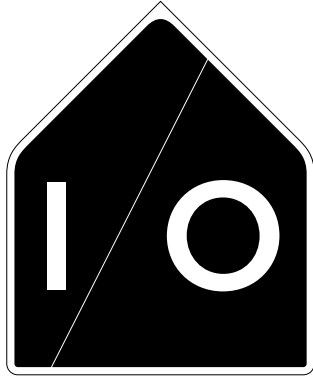
INSIGHT Structures

LO JO

Client Funding Organizations

Project Collaborators

Firm Sponsors



**Inside/Out**

Adapting a Shotgun Storehouse for the Greater Fifth Ward

**WEDNESDAY**    **LECTURE:** 6-7pm in the theater  
**SEPT 2**        **RECEPTION:** 7-8pm in the atrium (food and drinks will be served)

**SPEAKERS**    **JASON LOGAN**    Adjunct Professor  
                       **JOSH ROBBINS**    Adjunct Professor  
                       **SUSAN ROGERS**    Associate Professor, Director of the CDRC

**LOCATION**        The University of Houston, College of Architecture and Design  
 122 Hines College of Architecture and Design, Houston, TX 77204-4000

**EXHIBITION:** August 3rd - September 4th, in the atrium of the College of Architecture and Design  
**HOURS:** M-F 9am - 6pm

For more information, please call:  
 713-743-2400 or visit [www.arch](http://www.arch)



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<p><b>Faculty</b></p> <p>Jason Logan              Josh Robbins</p> <p><b>Project Collaborators</b></p> <p>Gregory Marinic              Susan Rogers              Pastor Robert Thomas              Insight Structures</p>	<p><b>Students</b></p> <p>Christopher Al-Jumah              Beatriz Arellano              Maricela Calderon              Jessica Garrett              Grace Kim              Kana Kim              Kevin Pham              Tania Rodriguez              Priscila Rivera              Martin Rodriguez              Sara Skinner</p> <p><b>CDRC Student Researchers</b></p> <p>Rose Lee              Mirna Santillan              Ricardo Sepulveda</p> <p><b>Fifth Ward Seminar/WS Team</b></p> <p>John Gardosik              Kathleen Roosen              Natalia Sanchez              Alfredo Tinajero</p>
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*Photograph: Luis Ayala*

INSIDE-OUT | FIFTH WARD RENAISSANCE



In our global, complex, and continually evolving society, architecture and spatial design are undergoing profound transformations. This alternatively framed convergence of perspectives relates, connects, and blends trans-disciplinary thinking within a new blurred territory. Critical and theoretical investigations, design-research, and didactic explorations shape a rich terrain of emerging architectural practices.

A sequenced, three-semester studio curriculum supports the social advocacy goals of **Fifth Ward Renaissance**. Our curriculum seeks to embrace the full potential of social advocacy, community building, critical practice, and technological innovation in architecture.

## **INAR 2501: 'Social Intervention' Design Studio**

**INSTRUCTORS: Ziad Qureshi, Gregory Marinic**

INAR 2501 engages with the potential for community building in architecture. The semester is currently sequenced in two projects. The first project rethinks an underused skybridge as a performative space for social engagement. The second project intervenes within an abandoned building to determine alternative futures for socio-economically disadvantaged urban communities. Projects call specific attention to the health and wellness of migrant groups and displaced persons.

## **INAR 3500: 'Urban Regeneration' Design Studio**

**INSTRUCTORS: Ziad Qureshi, Gregory Marinic**

INAR 3500 considers architecture as a participant in urban regeneration. The semester is sequenced as a single-duration program focused on social advocacy, spatial complexities, and contemporary issues. Students explore themes of obsolescence, abandonment, durability, and re-use by rethinking futures for existing buildings in downtown Houston and the Fifth Ward. Framed through ecological awareness and densification, students reimagine structures into high-density residential environments.

## **INAR 3501: 'Advanced Fabrication' Design Studio**

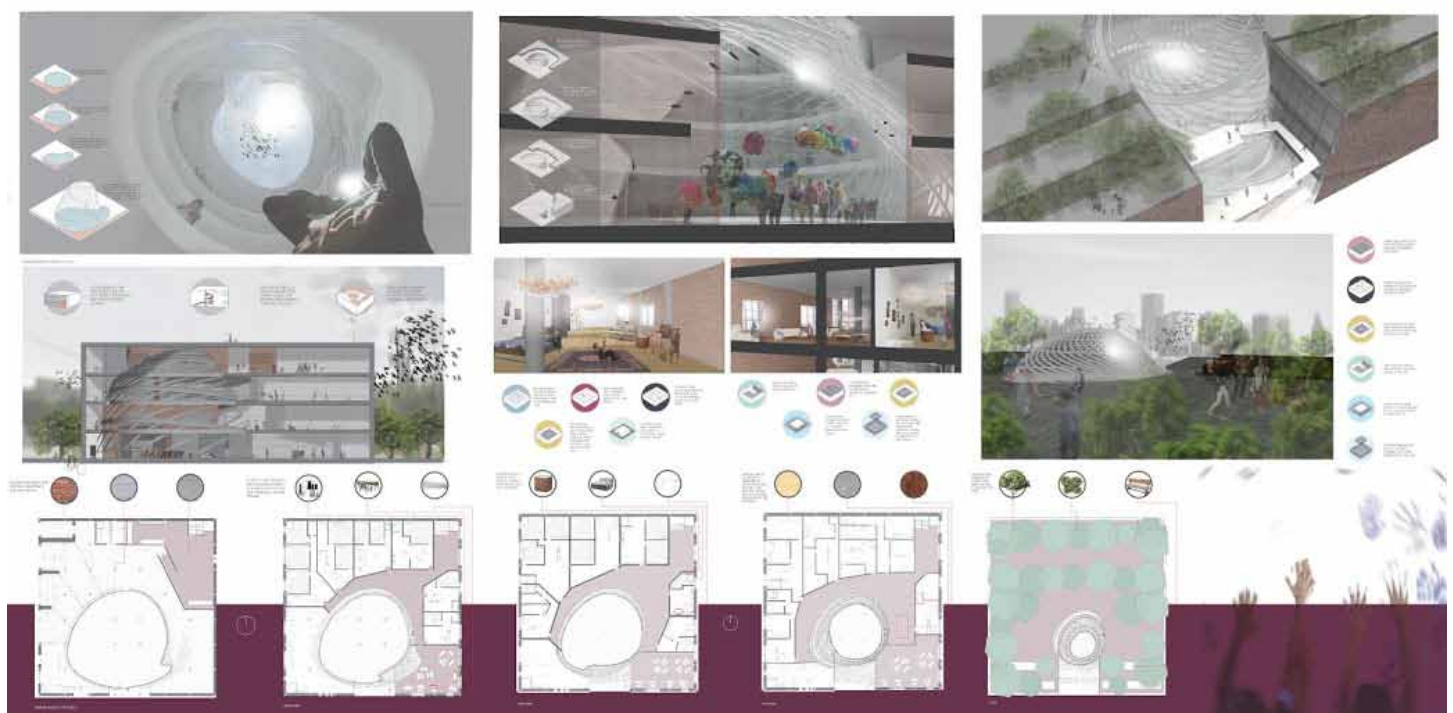
**INSTRUCTORS: Jason Logan, Josh Robbins**

INAR 3501 explores the material and fabrication opportunities of advanced computation and digital fabrication in architecture. This studio is framed through a scalar lens of "1:1". The 1:1 studio examines the particularities of interior space--material, light, surface, etc.--which it may be argued, are best understood at full-scale. The studio locates itself in the gap between drawing (representation) and building (fabrication), leveraging the digital tools of the Keeland Design Center and the generative potentials of advanced software for their perceptual, spatial, and formal effect. Oscillating between the virtual and the physical, whereby the digital techniques and methods of making inform each other in a continuous space of mutual feedback, the 1:1 studio acts as a form of applied research in which material, form, space, and technique are all categories to be designed and re-imagined. This studio critically examines and questions the graphic technique of describing the separation of space--inside/outside or inside/inside--as an inert and inaccessible boundary.



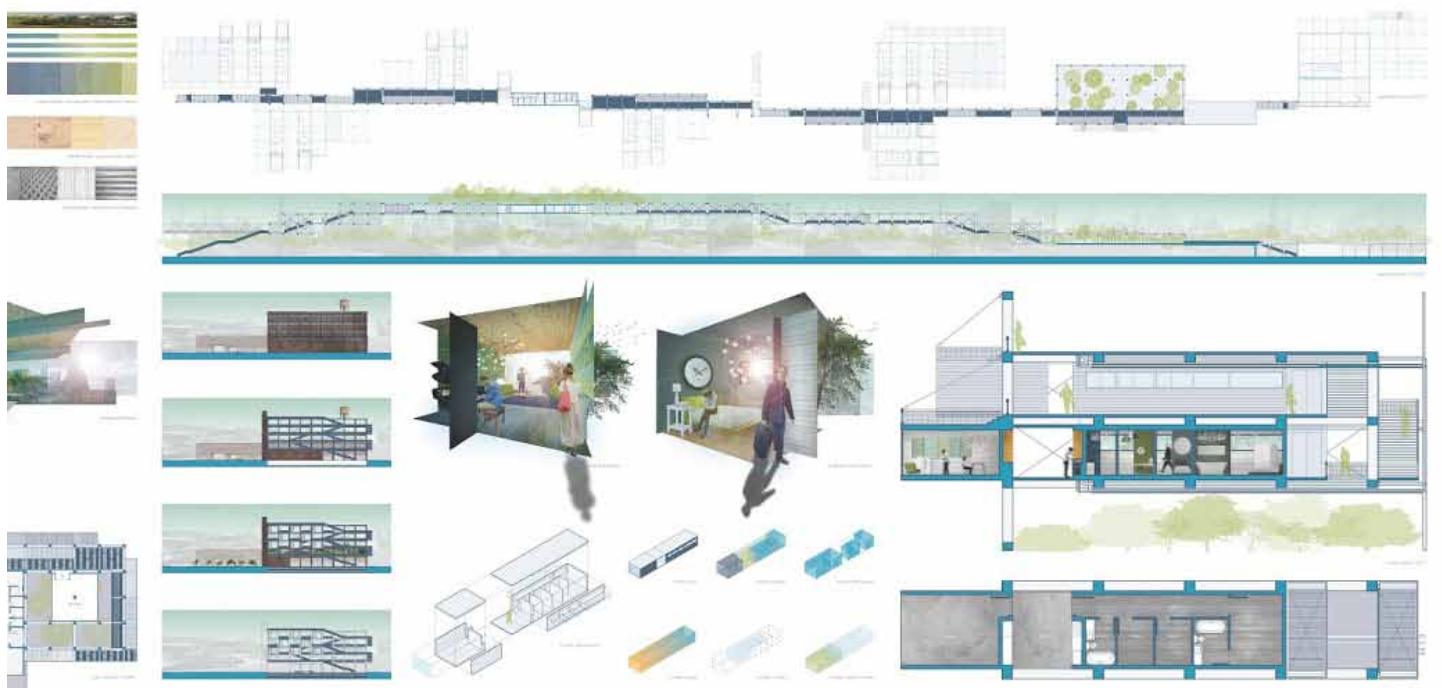
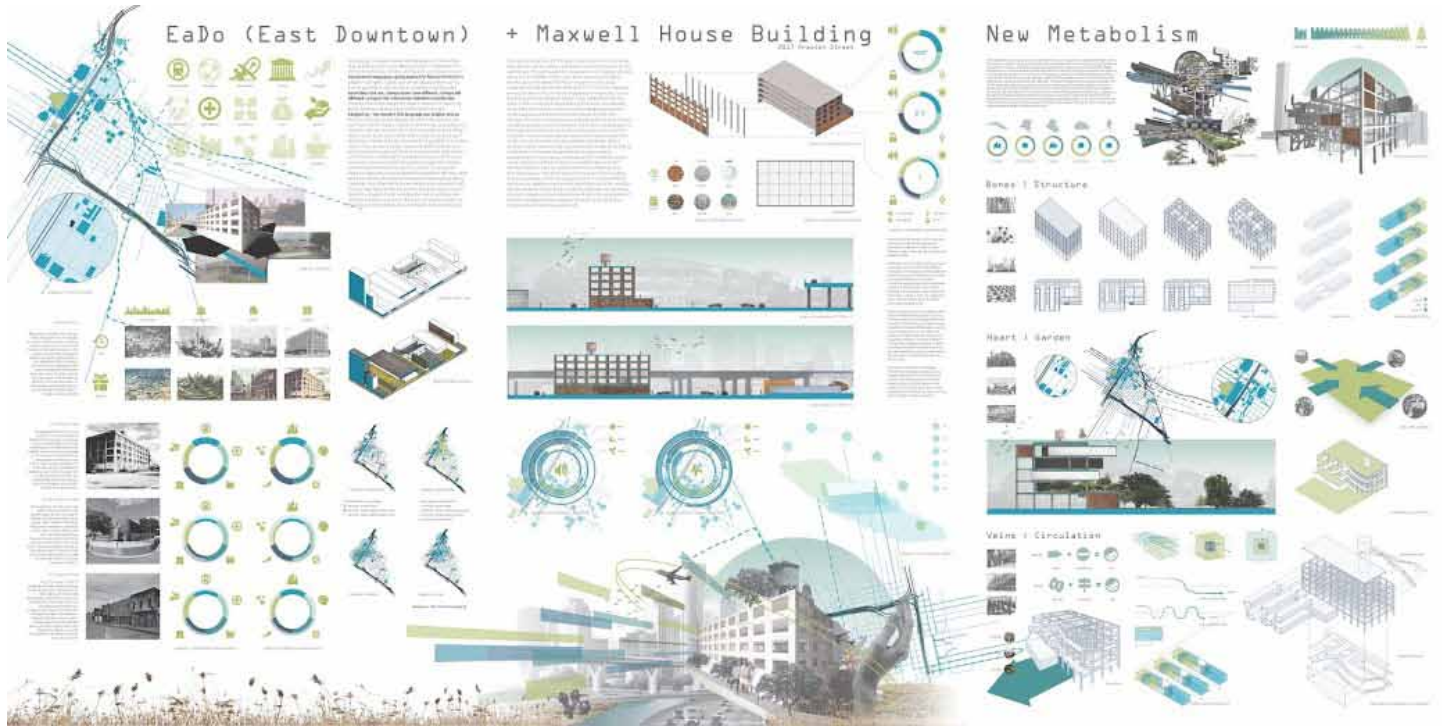
# SOCIAL ADVOCACY DESIGN CURRICULUM | FIFTH WARD RENAISSANCE

**Fifth Ward Renaissance** reconsiders neglected neighborhoods in Houston to rethink social problems through the lens of architecture. The third-year fall studio **INAR 3500** offers a speculative forum for students to contemplate their role as critically-engaged design advocates for disadvantaged people and their communities. This example of student work reconsidered abandoned and obsolete buildings as higher-density residential environments serving displaced persons. INAR 3500 offers a speculative forum for social advocacy prior to the spring semester design-build studio. In the spring semester, INAR 3501 students engage directly with socially-lensed built interventions leveraged at full-scale. Studio Instructor: Ziad Qureshi; Curriculum: Gregory Marinic; Liaison: Susan Rogers/CDRC





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**Fifth Ward Renaissance** is currently working with Neighborhood Centers to rethink the spatial configuration and performance of its existing buildings. Speculative proposals have been produced for the JW Peavy Senior Center. Students, faculty, and stakeholders are working together to find cost-effective ways to improve the architectural and functional potentialities of the center. Students and faculty are working hand-in-hand, on-site directly with the seniors in this under-represented minority community. JW Peavy Senior Center has been provided with several speculative proposals with an example shown herein. Prototypes and full-scale interventions are being developed. Studio Instructor: Ziad Qureshi; Curriculum/Liaison: Gregory Marinic; Client: Meggin Lorino/NCI

# SPATIALLY INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

## JW PEAVY SENIOR CENTER

### NATIONAL ELDERLY DEMOGRAPHICS

32.1%

### HOUSTON ELDERLY DEMOGRAPHICS

28%

### FIFTH WARD ELDERLY DEMOGRAPHICS

24%

### DECONSTRUCTING THE TOTAL ENVIRONMENT

### PRIMARY AND SECONDARY CIRCULATION

### MAJOR SOCIAL ENERGY ZONES

### TRANSLUCENCY AND SOLIDITY

### WISDOM STATEMENT

Our rapidly growing elderly population has become a top priority for our generation of designers. To respond to these elderly residents of our world, we bring mobility, safety, and access to senior specific residential spaces, with little regard to their needs and living conditions. While addressing our elderly population at the national, regional, and Fifth Ward Community levels, I have explored the strong opinions of this age group, along with the emotional, physiological, and social needs of this growing population. The Greater Fifth Ward is home to the JW Peavy Senior Center, a growing facility, focused on revitalization and the future. In addition to the analysis done on the existing site, feedback and interviews with the seniors themselves were conducted to gain a better understanding of their needs and wants. In this research I aim to serve the spatial needs of our seniors and strengthen the already solid foundation of community in the Fifth Ward, and through adaptive reuse of the historic, I plan to insert a design influenced by investment and memory, bringing an qualities of space such as circulation, major social zones, and translucency and solidity.



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## 2014 Initiatives for Houston Grant Winners



UH students explore shotgun house in Fifth Ward with Professor Jason Logan  
Photo: Joshua Heiser

Two \$5,000 Rice Design Alliance initiatives for Houston grants will be awarded for projects proposed by a faculty member and an undergraduate student at the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture at the University of Houston. For 15 years, [RDA grants](#) have helped students and faculty at UH, the Rice School of Architecture, the School of Architecture at Prairie View A&M University, and the Department of Urban Planning and Environmental Policy at Texas Southern University to develop and implement projects shaping both Houston's built environment and our understanding of it.

Guest jurors awarded this year's grants to Gregory Marini, Assistant Professor and Director of Interior Architecture, and Giovanni Peña, a fourth-year student in environmental design.

Marini's proposal, "Fifth Ward Renaissance," focuses on the revitalization of a "poetically crumbling" shotgun house into a community "e-Reading Room," he writes, or education center. The \$5,000 grant will help to fund necessary structural improvements to the building as well as an interior overhaul, including the installation of an exhibition of photographs and archival documents chronicling the history of the Fifth Ward. Marini's students will collaborate with Pastor Robert Thomas, Jason Logan, and third-year Interior Architecture students, experimenting with digital fabrication techniques and engaging in interdisciplinary research, while working directly with the Fifth Ward CDC, Olivet Missionary Baptist Church, and the UH Community Design Resource Center led by Susan Rogers.

Peña's project, "Shaping the 'Urban' Landscape," proposes to elaborate on an experience he had during a landscape competition at "The Hill" along West Bayou. Peña aims to draw community attention to the 54-foot geologic covey and degraded 250-acre deflection basin around it, shaping the site into a recreation and educational area for Sunnyside and South Acres-Crestmont. He proposes to continue clearing illegally dumped trash, while reconstructing sculptures at park entrances and developing nature trails, meditation areas, and educational gardens for students.

Guest jurors included David Calkins, Regional Managing Principal at Gensler; Kobi M. Grizzle, Senior Associate at Walker P Moore; Wilford Holmes, Associate Director of Administration, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Andy Ickm, Chief Development Officer, Office of the Mayor, City of Houston; and Dennis Thomsouls, Adjunct Instructor at Houston Community College.

RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE GRANTS PROGRAM  
**INITIATIVES FOR HOUSTON 2014**



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Former plumbing supply store near Lynn Avenue, Third Ward, Fifth Avenue.

### Fifth Ward Stent: UH Students Shore Up Old Storefront with New E-Reading Room

You can learn more about "Inside-Out" at a lecture and reception at the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture at the University of Houston on Thursday, September 3, starting at 6 p.m. Visit the project's [OpenUp! campaign](#) to learn about other ways to give back.

Call it a transplant, an implant, a stent — third-year Interior Architecture students at the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture at the University of Houston are performing not only quality design, but a kind of complex surgery — imbuing new life into a blighted plumbing supply store in Houston's Fifth Ward.

Like many operations, the building's rehabilitation won't be visible from the outside. Inside, a gently curving wood structure of slightly sloped and offset custom designed ribs will arc across the ceiling. Between the individual ribs small nooks for seating and shelving will be created for resting passers-by. In early renderings of the project, young-looking urbanites consult the gleaming screens of e-books in a softly lit and gently curving space.



Rendering of e-Book Store.

UH's Interior Architecture program is brand new. This project is the program's first and an ambitious start, for sure. It was led by Gregory Marini, who was awarded a Rice Design Alliance Initiative for Houston grant to launch the project. Marini has since taken a teaching job elsewhere.



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From the beginning, it was clear that this was not going to be a typical interiors program. "There was a desire to push the limits of the curriculum," says Jason Logan, professor and partner in architecture firm [LOG/30](#). "We had a conviction that interior architecture could shape space in ways and at a scale that would be traditionally expected of larger more traditionally conceived architectural projects."

When given the challenge to teach in Spring 2014, Logan and his faculty partner Josh Robbins immediately set out to find an opportunity for the students to test these new convictions. Critical to this endeavor was the ability to build at a one-to-one scale.

But where to find such an opportunity? Susan Rogers, Professor and Director of the UH Community Design Center, had just the connection. Having worked in the Fifth Ward for several years, Rogers was aware of some of the needs in the community. The Olivet Missionary Baptist Church, led by Pastor Robert Thomas, had a vision for improvement, willingness to involve a student project, and several vacant properties, including the plumbing supply store. "We asked, what could we do to transform the building for young and old — to make it safe and available for people to come and read with technology as a driving force?" explains Pastor Thomas. "Susan and her team came up with an idea for a pop-up library and that eventually led to this idea of an e-library."



With a site in hand and a willing client, Logan, Robbins, and their students began to work. The organization of the studio was simple and straightforward — emphasizing teamwork and building consensus. Pastor Thomas was in attendance for all reviews, and after each design phase the students would go back to the studio and assimilate the best elements of all the projects. Says Robbins, "People worked individually to develop schemes but quickly the studio organized into groups of students pursuing groups of ideas. It was collaborative, as much as possible."

"We gave the students a series of design constraints that they had to operate within," says Logan. "Obviously there's the storefront property itself. But the students also had to navigate budget constraints, digital fabrication techniques, construction issues, as well as our desire to synthesize the structural components with an interior environment."

A turning point in the project came when cost and time estimates for the project came in over budget. Determined not to sacrifice their design intent and still produce a quality structure, the students resolved to use only "off-the-shelf" and, more importantly, straight-lined materials for construction.

But the challenge was to devise a way to make those straight-lined materials twist inside the curving space of the design, each stud tips slightly more than its neighbor, and each connection point — from stud to beam — is unique. It's a daunting number of connections requiring a high degree of precision. If it were done by hand, it might have taken months to complete.



Photo: Gary Beth Wrozek

Logan and Robbins turned to digital fabrication tools to streamline what would otherwise be a very labor-intensive process. Using the 3D modeling program Rhinoceros and its parametric modeling interface Grasshopper, the students created a custom algorithm to identify the specific connection points at every joint. These connection points were then mapped to a two-dimensional file that could be computer-cut on a large router table at the Burdette Keeland, Jr. Design Exploration Center at UH. In a fraction of the time a traditional method would have required, the students had designed and produced the precise gusset plates to connect the straight lines of the framing timber into their sweeping curves, keeping the project in budget and on schedule.

You can see the results for yourself. The structure stands completed, awaiting installation in its permanent home. In the atrium space of the College of Architecture.

"The scale of the structure gives you so many angles and viewpoints," says Pastor Thomas. "Depending on where you stand, it's like a cathedral. Then you move a few feet and it's like a warehouse. Then it's like a pavilion. It's amazing how moving inside the structure puts in a different mind frame at nearly every step. But, really, it just takes your vocabulary away."

He also stresses the building's intended use: "As we take spaces back and make them usable, it's important that we not only improve them but that they become resources for the next generation. It's not just a repurposing of the building but adding a value to the community."