

KNOW 5880

Responding to Vacancy: Urban Design Strategies in Detroit

Autumn 2022

**Monday
9:10–11:55pm**
(1–2 times a month +
fieldtrip to Detroit)

Matt Williams
**Trott Distinguished
Visiting Professor,
2022–2023**

Detroit's past financial issues caused a housing crisis and population flight. Over the past two decades, Detroit's population has declined by approximately 33%. In response to crime & fire incidents in the homes and structures that were left behind, the city has become a national leader in removing blighted structures quickly and efficiently. Residential blocks that experienced the greatest number of demolitions have witnessed the greatest reduction in crime. However,

what happens
after the house
is removed?
What does De-
troit do with all
of this vacant
land?

Often, the result of
demolition are
blocks which are
isolated, dark,
overgrown, prone
to dumping, all
of which makes
residents feel
unsafe. The level
of vacancy also
depresses the
market value of
nearby property
and challenges
the city's ability
to provide basic
services. There
have been neigh-
borhood studies
which propose
parks, greenways
and mixed use
development on
vacant parcels.
Still, vacancy
(and the blight
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This interdisciplinary seminar will examine the issue of vacancy across the entire city of Detroit. During the seminar, students will investigate the history of settlement, segregation, urban renewal, flooding, and industry which have all had an impact on where people live, and why some areas have been harder hit than others. Students will tour Detroit, interview city officials & supporting agencies, meet with resident stakeholders, and design professionals who have completed relevant projects in the city that respond to these challenges.

3 Credits (1.5 in Autumn + 1.5 in Spring)

More info:

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Knowlton — School
Architecture, Landscape, Planning

 **THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**