

NC STATE Design

Affordable + Supportive Student Housing for NC State

The lack of affordable housing is a national problem. This includes a significant need for affordable, alternative, and supportive housing options for university students. In the past decade or so, there has been an emphasis on boutique student housing that includes a range of luxury amenities. During this same time, tuition, housing, and living costs have risen while wages and financial aid funding have remained flat. Some universities have responded to the growing student housing crisis, including NC State.

In 2017 a group of concerned faculty, staff, and students formed the Food and Housing Security Initiative to address food and housing insecurity among students at NC State. As part of the initiative, faculty and student researchers conducted a campus-wide student survey, which revealed that almost 10% of respondents had experienced homelessness in the past year. The U.S. Department of Education defines homelessness as the lack of a regular nighttime residence, which includes doubling up, sleeping in cars and outdoor locations, and staying in shelters. The causes of homelessness are complex but in most cases, are the result of housing costs exceeding what individuals and families can afford. When one is housing cost burdened, defined as paying over 30% of one's income on housing, a medical emergency, job loss, parents separating, or other unexpected emergencies, can mean missed rent payments and eviction proceedings.

At NC State, approximately 30% of students live in university housing, including freshmen who are required to do so. Even though the costs for university housing are less than market-rate, they can cost burden some students. It is easy to see why there is a growing need for affordable and supportive housing for NC State students. In the past ten years, average housing prices in Raleigh and costs for attending NC State have risen approximately 50%, while family incomes have not kept pace and the minimum wage has remained at \$7.25/hr. As more low wealth students enter the university, there will be increasing needs for affordable housing options. Supportive services to assist students in responding to challenges, navigating resources, and supporting their educational goals will also be needed.

The Food and Housing Security Initiative issued a full report in 2018 and a Call to Action was released in 2019 that outlined immediate steps to address the problem. It challenges NC State to be a national leader in solutions to student food and housing insecurity.

The full project outcomes can be accessed at the College of Design's *Affordable Housing + Sustainable Communities Initiative* website. See the *Pack Essentials* webpage of the Department of Student and Academic Affairs for information on the Food and Housing Security Initiative's activities, research, and outcomes.



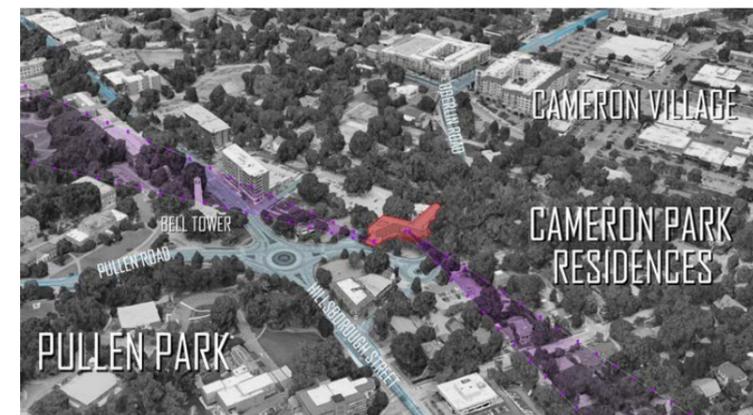
Public spaces and a local fresh foods market at the King Village site | Ryan Cooper



Entrance and Basic Needs Hub at Oberlin Road site | Daniel Garrett

Project Team

- Project Director: Thomas Barrie AIA, DPACSA, Professor of Architecture
- Studio Critic: David Hill FAIA, Head, School of Architecture
- Food and Housing Security Initiative Liaison: Mary Haskett, Professor of Psychology, CHASS
- University Architect Liaison: Tom Skoiniki RLA, University Landscape Architect
- Students: Maan Alzamel, Keval Amin, Joshua Basham, Ryan Cooper, Caroline Cox, Daniel Garrett, P.K. Hensel, Pat Meiburg, Caroline Towns, Jaci Valino, Tori Vick



Oberlin Road site | Daniel Garrett



King Village site | Caroline Towns

Two university-owned campus sites were used for the demonstration projects. The Oberlin Road site is approximately 0.8 acres and is zoned NX-3-GR Neighborhood Mixed-use. The King Village site is approximately 1.2 acres and is zoned OX-3, Office Mixed-use. Building height on both sites is restricted to 3 floors.

The Project

The Affordable + Supportive Student Housing for NC State Project is an outcome of the Food and Housing Security Initiative's findings and recommendations. During Fall semester 2019, eleven advanced architecture students conducted research on innovative university and multifamily housing, and designed demonstration projects for two university-owned campus sites, which include a range of unit types, community spaces, and supportive services.

The studio envisioned approaches to student housing that were not only about filling real needs, but creating leading-edge, innovative, and timely student housing. Considerations and elements included the following:

- Landmarking – broadcasting the innovative spirit of NCSU and its commitment to serving all of its students.
- Basic Needs Hub – bundling services in one location and making them visible, accessible, and non-stigmatizing.
- Sustainability Strategies – applying certification programs such as the Living Building Challenge and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) to create high performance architecture that also educates students and the public about carbon-neutral, healthy, and beautiful built environments.
- Regenerative Landscapes – incorporating edible, pollinator, and drought-resistant landscapes, bird sanctuaries, and native gardens.
- Providing a range of housing choices – dorm-style halls, micro housing, and a variety of apartment types to serve a diverse student body.
- Facilitating a supportive community – group spaces, shared kitchens, and common courtyards for residents, and town-gown interfaces through retail and public spaces.
- Promoting Health and Wellness – prominent stairs, incorporating nature through biophillic design, prayer spaces, protected bike storage, and other elements that facilitate healthy lifestyles.

Making it Happen

Most affordable housing is financed by Low Income Housing Tax Credits, energy and other tax credit programs, and low-interest and conventional loans. Some include rent subsidies such as Section 8 Housing Vouchers and Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers. Many affordable housing projects are built through public-private partnerships (PPPs) that bundle subsidies, tax credits, and loans. Universities nationwide are also utilizing PPPs to build student housing, which may be an applicable model for creating affordable and supportive housing for NC State students, on or off campus.

The project adopted a non-stigmatizing mixed-income model, where a percentage of units would be permanently reserved as affordable. Overall, it focused on creating housing to serve **all** NC State students – and affordable and supportive housing for the most vulnerable. This is a challenge, and a unique opportunity, for NC State to be a national leader in student housing security.



Landmark architecture | Pat Meiburg



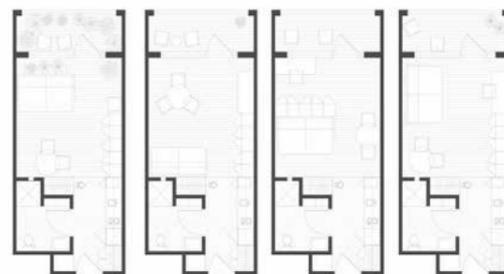
Prominent Basic Needs Hub | Caroline Towns



Passive and active sustainability | Keval Amin



Community kitchen | Josh Basham



Adaptable housing units | Josh Basham



Biophillic design | PK Hensel



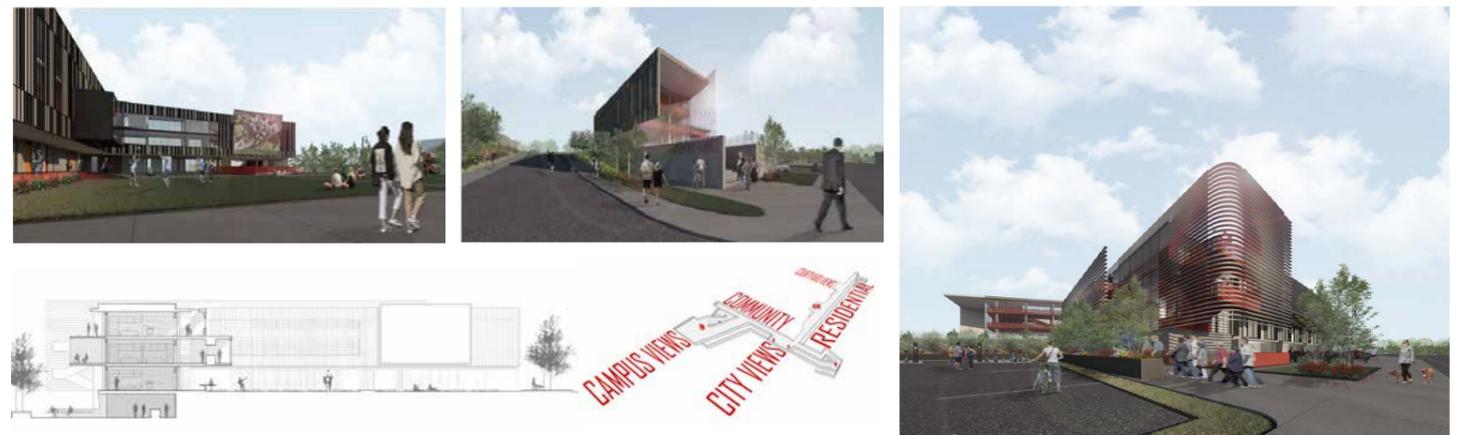
Regenerative, pollinator, and edible gardens, prominent basic needs hub, and a third-floor social hub distinguish Caroline Cox's project.



Ryan Cooper's project features a range of housing types and community spaces. a healthy food market, and a university child care facility.



Daniel Garrett's project aims to integrate with its surroundings, express its social and community functions, and animate its public spaces.



Clusters of adaptable housing and community spaces linked with public plazas, gardens, and support services define Josh Basham's project.