



rotch traveling scholarship
preliminary competition brief 2022

Commoning The Triple / Stack and Void

Brief

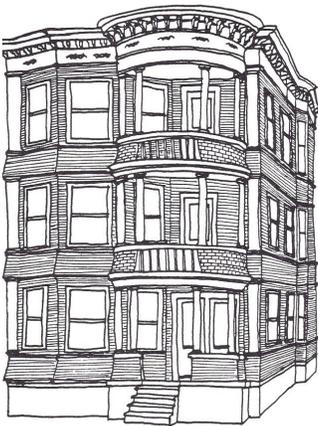
This brief calls for a thoughtful entanglement between long and short-term forms of living. The project encompasses the design of the bell hooks creative residency within the Dorchester Neighborhood of Boston. As a well-known author, activist, professor, and scholar who was an advocate for Black feminism, hooks wrote over 40 books and many scholarly works and lectures over her lifetime. Her work examined American society with a critical lens and a particular focus on intersectionality as a framework to look and think critically about race, gender, class, sexuality, space, patriarchy, capitalism, and white supremacy. In each exploration, her work unearthed how these systems are deeply intertwined and inseparable from each other. In light of her recent passing, The Boston Public Library (BPL) would like to construct a residency in hook's honor. The Residence will serve as a space by which creatives and critical thinkers can engage their work within the context of a historically black neighborhood. As such, one must articulate how you fit an institution within the scale of a house?

In 2014 bell hooks founded her institute at Berea College. It was a means to protect and preserve her legacy and work as a female writer and person of color. For hooks, self-determination and self-actualization are essential in engaging one's potential and honing one's agency within and against systems of oppression. In this example, the idea of the house accommodates both the institutional and intimated gestures found in domestic spaces to reformat how one might engage with a body of knowledge or creative work. In using the triple-decker as an architectural framework to design from, your residency will carve out a space within the neighborhood of Dorchester for three local artists and two-family dwelling units (The designer may define the concept of family). The residency will offer a short-term visiting fellowship for individuals with a specific project to enhance their writing, performing, or Art. Residents will spend up to 12 weeks at the BPL hooks Residency House. In addition to the residency space, the site presents an opportunity to incorporate two single-family dwelling units that will also be housed within the same architectural volume.

Typology

A signature building typology of the Boston housing stock, the triple-decker is a straightforward residential type. Implied by its name, units stack up vertically by three, each self-similar and flanked by a front or rear porch (the deck). It was conceived as a solution to a housing crisis for its time. It provided a solution to densify and expand homeownership. Modest in appearance and construction, the triple-decker was built out of standard two-by-four wood framing, clad in wood siding or shingles and displaying a spectrum of colors; the decker allowed families to own their home and make an income by renting out the other two units. Many attempts have been made to abolish this type of housing, yet it persists. It's tenacious, simple, and inherently collective. It's here to stay.

Today we are faced with another housing shortage. The decker (or some version of it) is apt to engage again critically. As we think anew to make homes more accessible, affordable, and dense, we must also consider the collective models that parallel this cause. As such, typologies are mutable forms open to change and updates. Ruled by vertical succession, a stacking up of self-similar plans, the decker has remained primarily unchanged, occasionally shortchanging a floor to become a double-decker or crowning a gable. What other alterations might it pursue to merge the institutional and the domestic?



Commoning The Triple/ Site

Suppose the triple-decker is driven by the vertical stacking of self-similar floor plans. Alternatively, the given site, a parcel sandwiched between two converging streets, presents a threeness laterally: Front, Middle and Back or Front Middle and Front. The site has a clear center that allows for negotiation between the two single-family dwelling units and the additional residency space. In addition to the stack of three, how might you incorporate an idea of commons within the architectural proposition? The center presents an opportunity for carving out a communal space that all constituents -short term and long term can engage with meaningfully. If the decker is driven by plan, the center should be driven by section.

- The site, 91 Topliff St., exhibits confluences of urban grids seen throughout Boston and within Dorchester, MA. Such situations produce anomalous blocks and parcels.
- Designers may choose to take on the social context of Dorchester as a neighborhood specifically or remain generic to Boston more broadly.

Program

The residence should be 40' in height max and shall include the following programmatic elements:

Two Single Family units: each with the following:

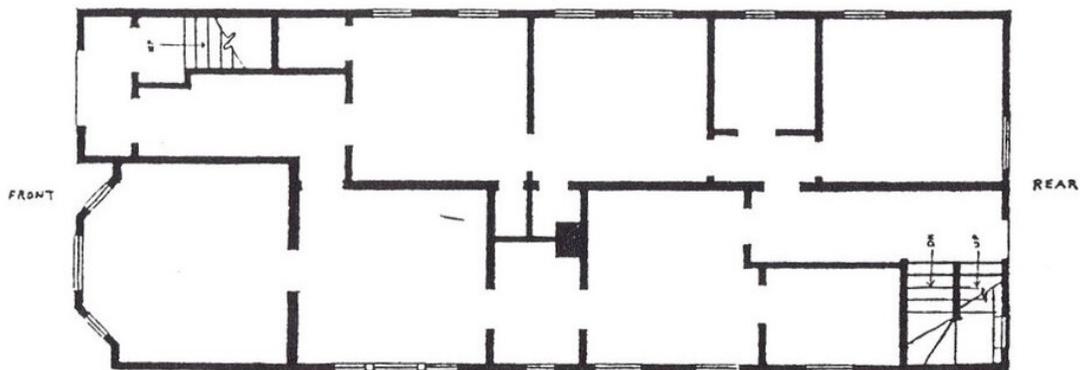
- Two Bedrooms 150 SF min per each bedroom
- One Full Bathroom, 50 Min SF
- One-Half Bathroom, 25 Min SF
- Living Room, 250 Min SF
- Kitchen, 220 Min SF

Artist Residency

- Three Bedrooms, 150 SF min per each bedroom
- Two Full Bathrooms, 50 Min SF
- Communal Living Space includes Kitchen & Dining, 250 Min SF
- Shared Workspace, 150 Min SF
- 1 Flex Studio Space, 150 Min SF

One Communal Exterior Space (Determined by Designer) Submission Requirements:

- One Typical Plan
- One Section (Can be Sectional Axonometric)
- One Interior Perspective
- One Exterior Perspective

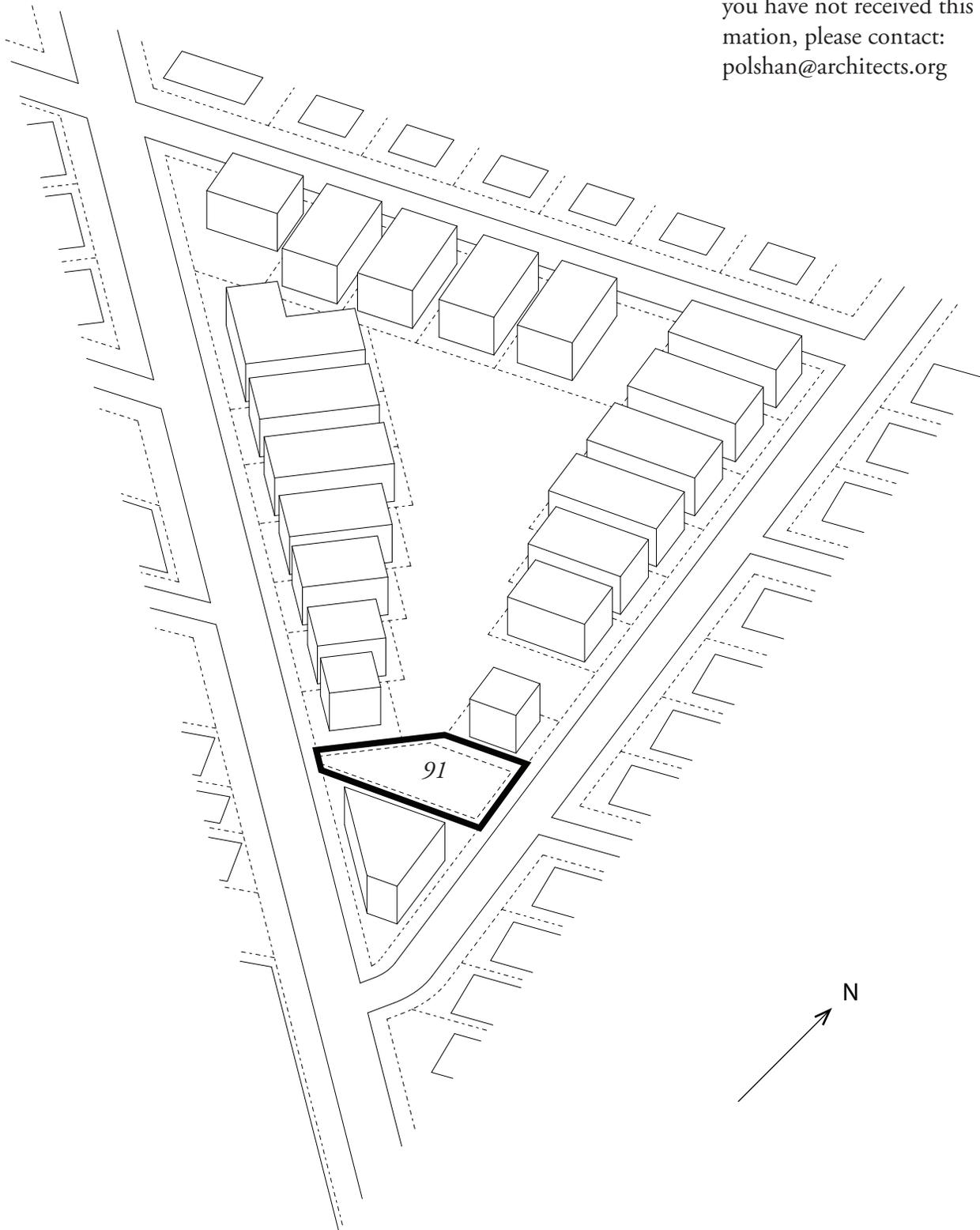


TYPICAL TRIPLE DECKER

FLOOR PLAN

site

The site is located at 91 Topliff Street in Dorchester. The irregular parcel is sandwiched between Topliff Street and Geneva Avenue. 3D model documentation is provided in .dwg and .3dm formats. If you have not received this information, please contact: polshan@architects.org



All entries will be submitted digitally in a single, multi-page PDF in a 16:9 ratio (landscape format). A convened jury will review submitted work digitally. The submission file may be no larger than 15MB. PDFs may be no longer than 4 (four) pages.

- This board must remain anonymous. Do not include your name anywhere on the board. If your name is visible, the entry will be disqualified.
- Competition entries must be submitted electronically to: polshan@architects.org You are welcome to use an FTP service such as 'dropbox.com' or 'wettransfer.com' if necessary.
- Files must be named as follows: Your first initial, your last name, underscore, '2022RotchPrelim' (for example RKoolhaas_2022RotchPrelim.pdf). Once submitted, a third party will rename each entry a random number to ensure anonymity before the jury views them.
- You will receive a reply email confirming receipt of your entry.
- By submitting your entry, you hereby assure the Rotch Scholarship Committee that you are the sole author of your submission for the 2022 Rotch Competition and have not received criticism, suggestions, or help of any sort other than through the use of books and other published literature.
- The Rotch Scholarship reserves the right to use any submitted material in print publications and/or on websites.
- Electronic submissions must be received by 9:00 am (EST) on Sunday, February 13, 2022.

Evaluation Criteria

The jury will evaluate submissions according to the following criteria:

- Clarity and intellectual premise of the overall project, as articulated in the written project agenda and graphic representation.
- Capacity to analyze, absorb, and transform pre-existing precedent or type to meet the current needs described in the project brief.

built context

The block bounded by Geneva Avenue, Holiday Avenue, and Topliff Street are comprised of a mix between triple deckers and single/double family houses, with a single commercial property at the southernmost corner. Together, these are a typologically representative mix of many of Boston's residential neighborhoods

Geneva Avenue



Holiday Avenue



Topliff Street

