Limits. A limit can be understood as both restrictive (a scarcity, a rule) and expansive (a furthest extent, a frontier). These twinned meanings characterize the architectural challenge of housing. Housing is highly constrained by regulatory, economic and cultural expectations; it is also a medium for architectural debate and radical speculation on the physical and social form of the city. Feedback between constraint and speculation emerges from the fundamental role of housing in the production of the urban environment, which lends housing unique potential among architectural programs to be both prototypical and polemical.

Formal Limits. Architecture establishes physical limits. The material assemblies of a building or lines of a drawing delimit inside from outside, one space from another. The history of housing as a subject of architectural design--which cannot be disentangled from the social and economic transformations of modern urbanization--can be read through the ways in which these limits are defined and perceived to function. We can understand formal limits at multiple scales, and, through diagrams, drawings and models, teams will work deliberately at each of these scales to precisely develop the forms of their projects and of the spaces within and around them. Where does a building stop and the city start? Where does one unit stop and another start? Where does one interior space stop and another start? As becomes clear, the form of housing is bound up in its potential occupation, or program. Are exterior spaces public or private, and what do these terms mean? Do aggregations of units privilege the collective or the individual? Do the interior organizations of units reify normative family structures or lifestyles?

Disciplinary Limits. A discipline is the product of limits--boundaries and frontiers--between itself, adjacent disciplines and the unknown. Debates on housing turn on questions of the disciplinary limits of architecture. Should an architect envision new social structures or accommodate existing ones? Is an architect capable of, or responsible for, influencing the lives of those who inhabit a building? Beyond basic regulatory responsibilities for life safety, the limits of architecture remain open to question, and students will be expected to begin to articulate a position on the role of the architect in projecting the social life of housing. These questions must also be considered in light of the historical limits that constrain what it is possible to produce at a given moment in time. While students will be expected to study prior models of housing and the ways in which they continue to inform the present, teams will concomitantly work in the specific context of the present--with its material, technological and cultural constraints--to investigate what housing is, and can be, for both architecture and New York today.

Material and Representational Limits. We are limited by the tools that we use. We cannot reproduce historical forms or representations of housing simply because the materials and technologies used to achieve previous ambitions are no longer the materials or technologies available today. A similar appearance will mask a radically different substrate. In materializing and representing architectural form, the studio will investigate material limits as a problem of both quantity and performance (how much can be done with how little?) and representational limits as a problem of rhetoric and technique (should an architect represent the projected "life" of a building and, if so, by what means?). Students will be encouraged to investigate the limits of various architectural media--both building or drawing--in order to challenge the contemporary construction and representation, and, through these, the form, of housing.

A Case Study in Limits. The studio will examine Steven Holl's Fukuoka housing project, which is notable, among other reasons, for its framing of open space within its site, its sidedness and typological hybridization, and its complex aggregation of unique reconfigurable units. We will consider the project in light of two of Holl's important early theoretical projects, which in turn reflect on the studio brief: *The Alphabetical City* (*Pamphlet #5*), which examines the constraints that produced American urban infill typologies, notably variations of tenement housing and apartment blocks; and *Edge of a City* (*Pamphlet #13*), which explores the potential of a series of speculative housing projects to frame discrete spaces at the margins of American urban sprawl. We will consider how the Fukuoka project delimits spaces at multiple scales, and how it might suggest an argument for architectural form to act as a model of new urban, and perhaps social, organizations.