

## FOCUS

The interdisciplinary design-research center advances space-shaping concepts and processes in partnerships with communities through critical examination, design thinking, collaboration, and making. The work strives to explore architectural solutions to contemporary challenges in the built environment while educating, empowering, and preparing the students for future catalytic roles in their communities. Outcomes pursue spatial formations for empathetic and positive social impact, framed by thematic areas of Resilience, Transformation, Placemaking, and Visioning.

## MISSION

The Center for Community Studies is the interdisciplinary research and academic outreach component of the Hammons School of Architecture. The mission of the center is to assist the regional community in exploring and promoting innovative planning, design and development practices that respond to the challenges of our contemporary and future society and foster a healthier and sustainable habitat for our global community.

### RESILIENCE BOUNCING BACK BOUNCING FORWARD

Inquiries address growing capacities for the built environment and build knowledge to inspire change. In times of uncertainty, volatility, and vulnerability, a vital push to shape spaces along paths of resiliency is a new normal in architectural thinking and urbanism. Contemplating natural and man-made exigencies and stressors of climate change, this theme engages in place-based studies with partnering communities to ideate design responses. Ideated solutions aim to mitigate negative impacts and enhance adaptive capacities of environments in preparing for and thriving in times of change.

### TRANSFORMATION TURNING LIABILITIES CREATING ASSETS

Vacant and abandoned buildings in cities, towns, and neighborhoods are opportunistic spaces whose conversions with productivity is a way of mitigating resource consumptions in the built environment. The built constructs already embody a total sum of the energy used in their production, which must not be thrown away. Viewed as eyesores, those residual structures are prime for environmental renewal by ways of adaptive reuse, rehabilitation and salvage. This thematic focus of the center advances feasibility studies and performance-based resolutions. The key aim is to materialize embodied energies into synergetic spaces and places for community connectivity and well-being.

### PLACEMAKING DISCOVERING UNIQUENESS CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

Places have transformative power, shape human experience and connect communities. Better places can build healthier communities by ways of restoring and improving the individuals' and groups' ways of dwelling and sharing spaces. Grounding in fieldwork observation, empirical knowledge and critical examination of cultural landscapes, the focus develops new ways of seeing and engaging the field as a laboratory to harness capacities and potentials of places. Seeing and learning from uniqueness of places, renewed meanings are conveyed to shape positive impacts. At times when divisive spaces tend to perpetuate otherness and grow disparities, places renewed can help connect, reconcile, and heal.

### VISIONING MAKING CONNECTIONS REVEALING VISIONS

A unified and shared vision that is transcending disciplinary boundaries in its formation is more effective in revitalizing places and communities. Over the past two decades, the center has joined forces with clients and assisted numerous Missouri communities with exploring goals, objectives, and methods for future improvement. Ranging in scale, from city-wide studies, to city center and neighborhood renewals, parks, buildings, and trail studies, projects directly engage communities to better understand their contexts, current needs and anticipated trends. Adopting a triad focus on Resilience, Transformation, and Placemaking, accompanied by collaborative processes, projects reveal visionary futures. They draw solutions collectively to a community's ongoing challenges, with the community and from within its context.

