

SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING
[X] Graduate Program in Architecture
[X] Graduate Program in Planning

THESIS ABSTRACT

Title: "Effective Retirement Communities: A Study in Environmental and Physical Design"

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Statement of Issue/Problem:

Holistic community design becomes problematic as a result of development and economic pressures. The elderly in specific seem to be faced with retirement community design that negates their contributions and continued importance in life. Few communities are designed that are wholly effective in their environmental design (site planning, resource conservation, solar benefit and construction detailing). In particular facilities and communities designed to integrate an aging population are not of high priority for developers and governments alike. As our population ages we must consider a means to meet their housing needs and at the same time consider the need for effective environmental design measures to mitigate the ongoing damage that development can have on the environment.

Statement of Significance of Issue:

All developments and proposed communities create significant issues for urban planners. As the development moves from the schematic stage to the proposed stages the influence of architects, urban planners and design engineers have the greatest possibility to make a positive impact on the communities outcome based upon their inherent professionally training. Inevitably economic and developer pressures strive to make decisions based on the projects profitability ratio. Society in North America tends to look in a less positive way at public housing that strives to be created in an economically frugal method. The European model of public housing created in the 1980's seems to not suffer from this negative image but rather becomes a more coherent community. Upon retirement individuals generally expend a greater portion of their disposable income on housing, yet does society realize what they would really like in their housing choices. In the micro-economy of Western New York we have only begun to see developers consider the issues of this sector of the population. Have these developments considered the possible positive environmental benefits that a sustainable design approach can effect on both society and the environment.

