

Housing Diversity in Coal Company Towns: An architectural exploration of building types

Abstract

The history of American housing has always included the planned company town. The coal company town in Appalachia is a particular variety of that and embodies varied forms. Generally planned to fulfill an economic model, these communities had a rich and complex community life. This presentation will present research that reviews the way people lived in these communities from an architectural perspective. The focus of the work is on the family home, garden and immediate environment. The research questions if particular themes and design directions emerge from the analysis of how families inhabited these homes and towns.

The co-authors, as architects, will present an analysis of housing and neighborhoods in selected company towns utilizing standard analytic models of town planning to determine patterns of how people lived in these towns to see if relationships exist with current town planning trends. The goal of the presentation is to frame the research work and present text, images and diagrams that explain the findings. Audience feedback through subsequent discussion will be solicited to refine the work.