

RDA

**Rice Design
Alliance**

**2021
Architecture Tour
UPWARDS**

**Online
June 5-19**

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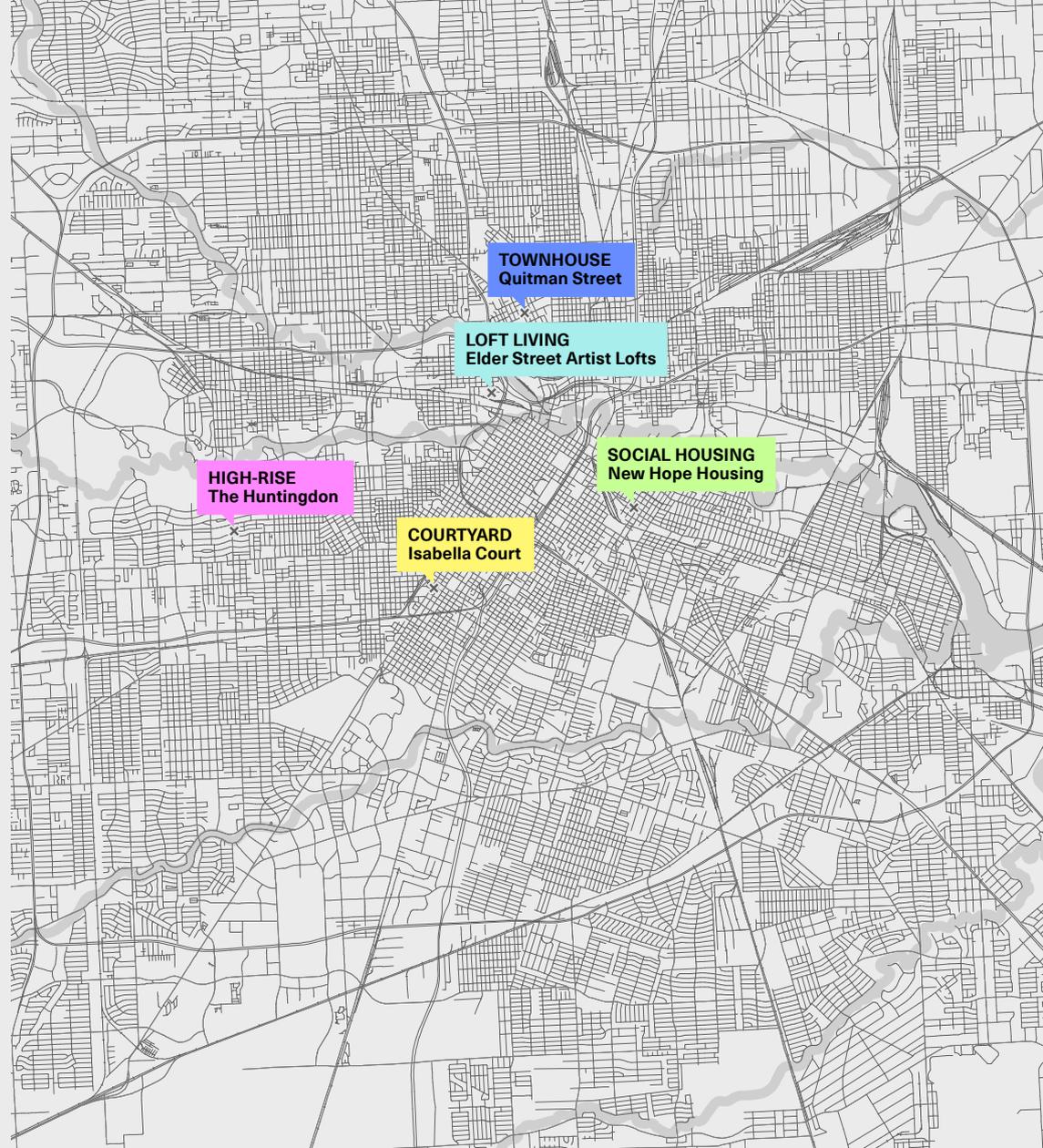


2021 Architecture Tour UPWARDS

For our 2021 Architecture Tour, RDA is looking UPWARDS and highlighting examples of urban density in Houston's housing stock. The circumstances of our pandemic year enable access to unique residences that wouldn't be possible under other circumstances. The online videos featured on RDA's website showcase each location through insights from the project's architects, owners, residents, or developers. These features offer a deeper look into our city's transition towards urban densification and their stories showcase some of the different examples of housing types that exist in Houston.

Each of the five locations champions the denser urban fabric that our city needs as we face population growth and increasing climate challenges. Examples come from buildings old and new, with varying numbers of units and models of ownership, which demonstrate that density has been an important part of Houston's architectural ambitions in the past as well as today.

While not the only examples of dense urban living, the homes on this tour represent five distinct housing typologies: Courtyard; High-Rise; Loft Living; Social Housing; and Townhouse. All of them offer possible alternative living scenarios that move away from the single-family home and instead showcase the power of collective living.





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Quitman Street
SCHAUM/SHIEH
2015
Number of units: 4

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**Quitman Street
SCHAUM/SHIEH
2015
Number of units: 4**

Just east of the I-45 highway and north of downtown, the Near Northside mostly consists of single-family homes and a trio of public schools. METRORail's Red Line runs along Main Street and the Little White Oak Bayou threads through the neighborhood.

Given its desirability, many new homes have been built in the area, including this quartet of metal-clad townhouses, which were developed and constructed by Revolution Homes. Three of the units share walls while one is freestanding; each has three floors and a roof-top deck that overlooks downtown. They are set back from the street and share a common driveway. A blue gradient and similar roof cuts connect the structures.

The homes were designed by architect Troy Schaum of SCHAUM/SHIEH. Schaum is currently an Associate Professor at Rice Architecture and serves on the RDA's Board of Directors. While the room organization of the townhouses is largely dictated by the two-car garage, the design is enhanced with thoughtful window locations and internal openness between floors. Close collaboration ensured that items like steel railings and window details could be affordably realized.

The townhouse is a much-maligned type of housing in Houston given the typically poor quality of construction. This property demonstrates it is possible to deliver a townhouse that is both economically viable and handsome.





**BIBLE DAYS
CHURCH**

PASTOR Anthony W. Wilcott M.D.

















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Isabella Court
William D. Bordeaux
1929
Number of units: 15

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Rice Design Alliance

Isabella Court William D. Bordeaux 1929 Number of units: 15

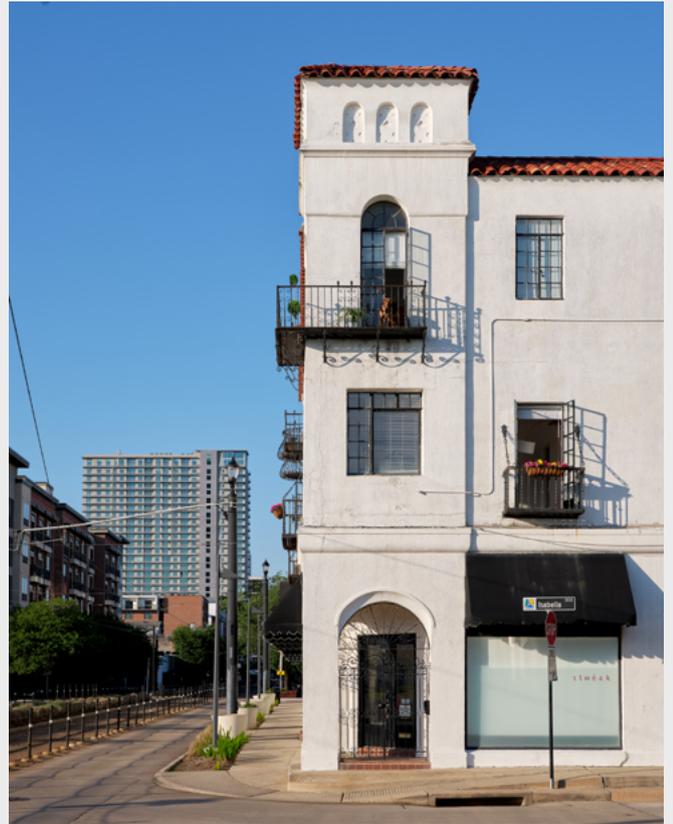
South Main Street in the 1920s was a shopping district and its centerpiece, according to Stephen Fox, was Isabella Court. It was designed in the Spanish Revival style by William D. Bordeaux, a New York-born architect who briefly practiced in Houston before relocating to Miami.

The building has been mixed-use since its completion. Two floors of apartments ring a courtyard above ground-floor retail, mostly art galleries. This was true historically: a 1.5-story photography studio along Main Street introduced an offset in the floorplan, creating split-level floors above.

This courtyard is a truly unique space in Houston, as it transports people to a bygone era. Protected by a clay tile roof, residents can gather on the leafy patio, which has hosted weddings, holiday meals, and parties over the years. Apertures promote visual access throughout the building, shaping an environment where neighbors know each other.

Isabella Court's rental units are accessed via open-air walkways. While there are a handful of floorplans, each apartment has two walls of operable windows, essential for cross ventilation, and retains many original features. The property is owned and managed by Herolz Square Assets, which is committed to preserving this historic building. The Midtown locale remains attractive for creative residents amidst the neighborhood's busts and booms. Today, METRORail's Red Line runs by out front.





















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Elder Street Artist Lofts
W.A. Dowdy
1924
Renovation completed by W.O.
Neuhaus Associates in 2005
Number of units: 34

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Elder Street Artist Lofts

W.A. Dowdy

1924

Renovation completed by W.O. Neuhaus Associates in 2005

Number of units: 34

Located in the First Ward, this building was built in 1924 as Houston and Harris County's first public hospital. It was dedicated to Jefferson Davis, as it was partially located atop a Confederate cemetery. Given the city's rapid expansion, a replacement facility opened in 1937, and this building changed functions before being abandoned. Just north of a railroad and west of the I-45 highway, the building is oriented towards downtown and retains a commanding view of the skyline.

In 2002, Avenue CDC and Artspace USA purchased the building from Harris County. Architect Bill Neuhaus, now with Studio RED Architects, led its renovation. Space was previously reserved for artists, but that occupational requirement has been lifted. Still, the facility supports a sense of community among its residents, with regular events and shared use of an outdoor garden.

Other loft-style offerings exist in Houston, some converted and others the result of new construction. Loft living typically suggests the adaptation of an older non-residential building into occupiable units, resulting in rougher interior finishes, open-plan layouts, and exposed mechanical systems. It is ideal for lifestyles where minimal separation between uses is desirable, and where a fusion of activities is a cherished source of creative collision.















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**The Huntingdon
Talbot Wilson
1983
Interior completed in 2004
Number of units: 120**



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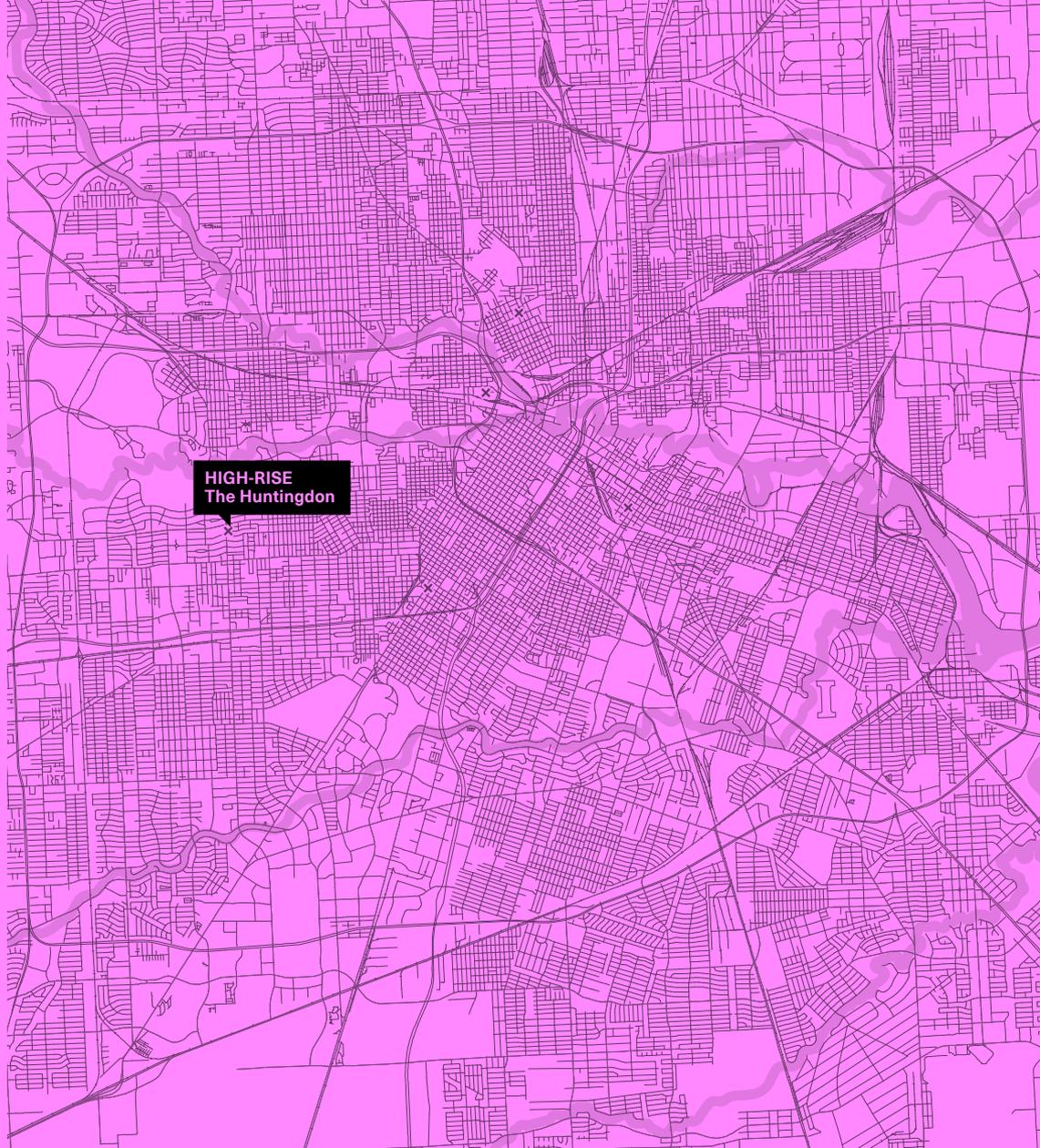
The Huntingdon Talbot Wilson 1983

Interior completed in 2004
Number of units: 120

Fred Talbot Wilson graduated from Rice Architecture in 1935. He was a founding partner of Wilson, Morris, Crain, and Anderson, which was responsible for many Houston landmarks. The firm ceased operations in 1972. Completed independently, the Huntingdon was one of Wilson's last buildings prior to his death in 1988.

Located in River Oaks, the Huntingdon was one of the first luxury high-rise condominiums in Houston. Its gridded exterior is accented with sculpted trim and scalloped corner balconies. In the 1990s it became Houston's "power tower," according to architectural historian Stephen Fox, as it attracted nearby residents interested in downsizing.

The northern penthouse on the thirty-fourth floor remained unoccupied until Sara and Bill Morgan built out its interior. By that time, the Morgans had amassed a sizeable art and craft collection. The collection became the driver for the design of the interior, which is organized around spaces for viewing outstanding pieces, artifacts, carefully curated furniture, and art. Niches are sized according to specific works; a dark, textured black paint is used as a backdrop; textiles are used throughout; and lighting was coordinated for appropriate illumination. Supported by kitchen and bedroom spaces, the highlight of the unit is its exquisitely decorated suite of dining, living, and working spaces. Here, residents live in close harmony with their art, overlooking the Houston skyline beyond.









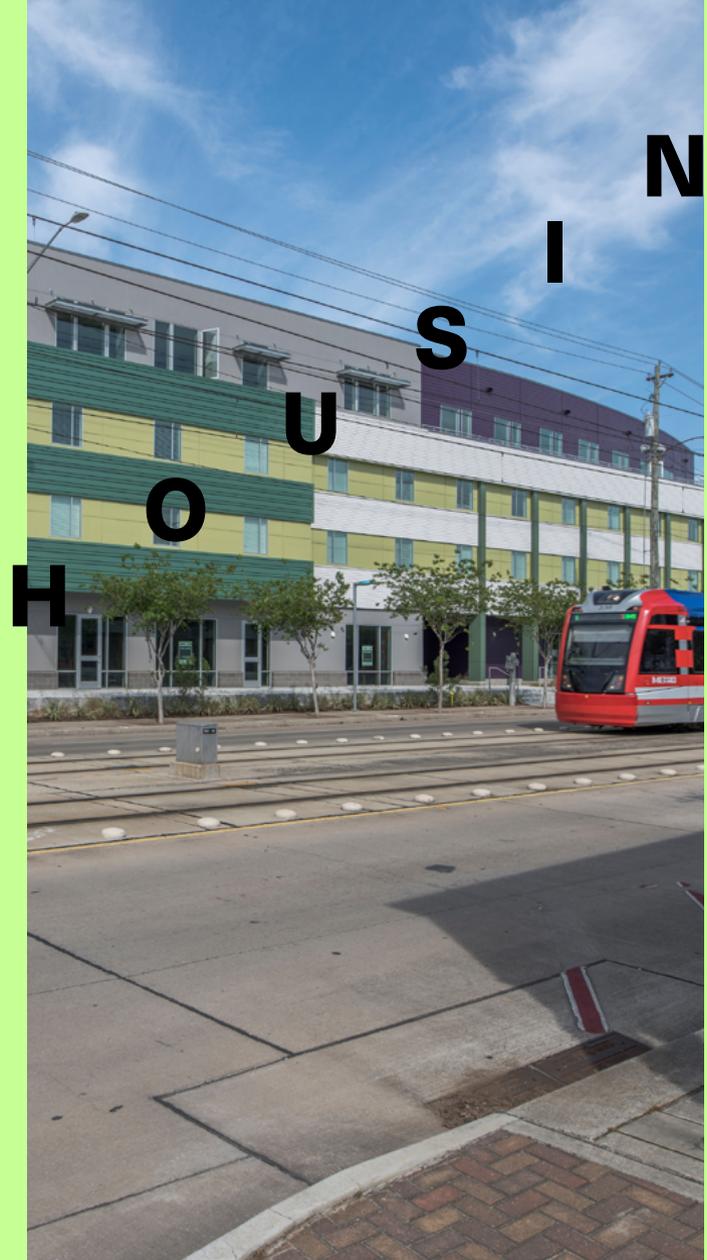




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New Hope Housing, Harrisburg
GSMA Architects
2018
Number of units: 175

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**New Hope Housing, Harrisburg
GSMA Architects
2018
Number of units: 175**

The Second Ward, part of Houston's East End, is a mix of industrial operations and residential blocks. While much of the historic fabric of the neighborhood has been maintained, the area is gentrifying.

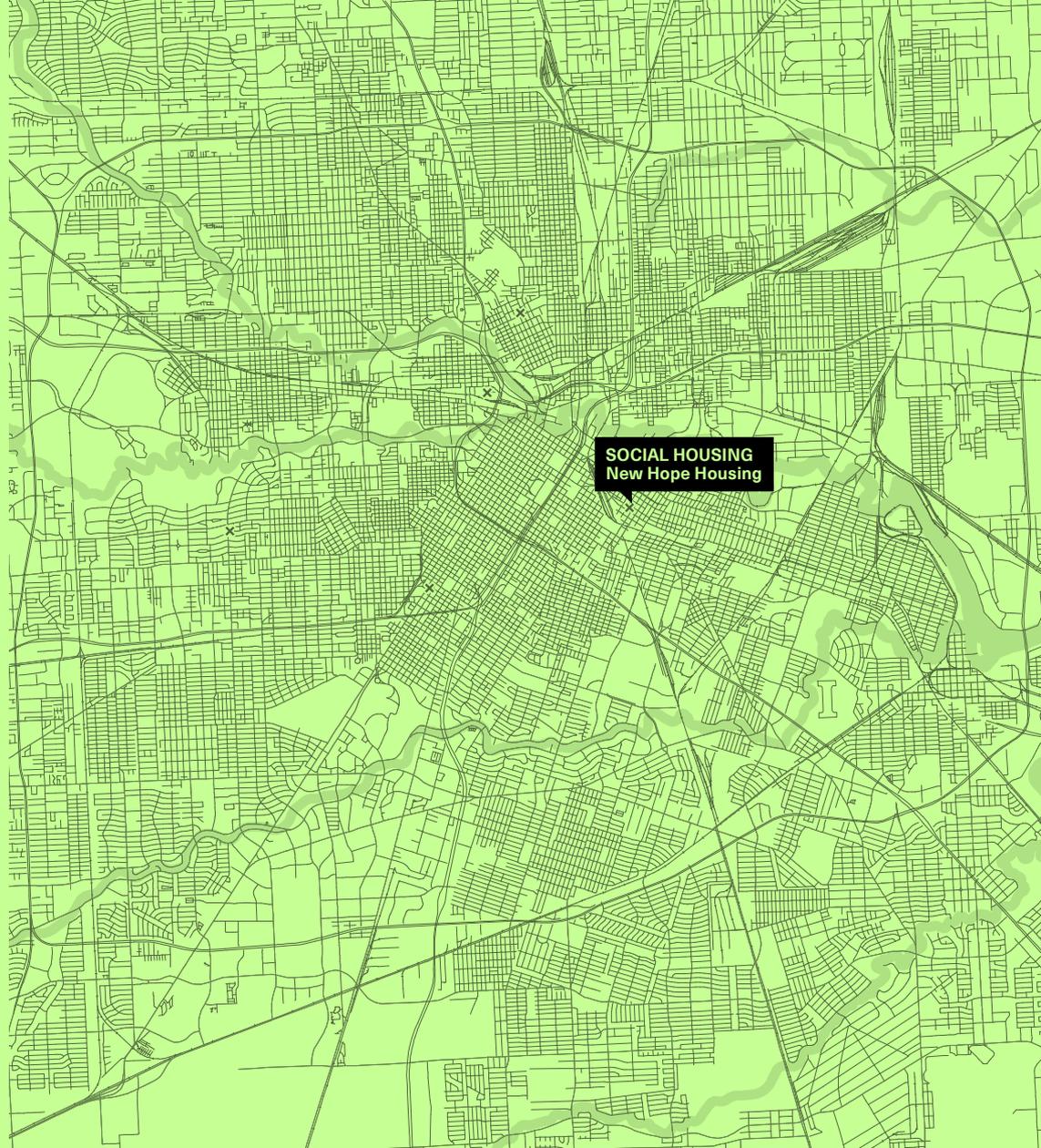
Founded in 1995 by the People of Christ Church Cathedral-Episcopal, New Hope Housing provides life-stabilizing, affordable, permanent housing with support services for people who live on very limited incomes. They operate nine housing locations, with an additional project under construction.

Their Harrisburg property is on Harrisburg Avenue, adjacent to the METRORail Green Line. Each unit is a fully furnished single room occupancy (SRO), complete with a private bathroom. The building replaces the organization's Hamilton SRO, Houston's first SRO offering, which was downtown near Minute Maid Park.

The residential units, located on upper floors, are organized around a central courtyard. Additional spaces include a community room and areas for social services. The mixed-use building also hosts 4,000 square feet of retail space on the ground floor and 7,000 square feet of commercial space for nonprofit organizations, including New Hope Housing's office headquarters.

The building, designed by GSMA Architects, is certified as LEED Platinum. The colorful exterior was built with durability in mind, as the goal is to provide forty years of affordability to Houstonians.

Photography by Mark Hiebert, Hiebert Photography.

























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2021 Architecture Tour UPWARDS

RDA is grateful to **Barbara Amelio, Scott and Judy Nyquist, and Walter P Moore** for their support of the 2021 Architecture Tour.

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Rice Design Alliance is the public programs and outreach arm of Rice Architecture. We curate public programs, architecture tours, design competitions and publications that communicate the importance of design in our everyday lives and its ability to make our lives better. We are based at and work from the Rice Architecture school as an advocacy group that believes that multidisciplinary and research-based design can improve our cities and the way we live in them.

RDA was established within Rice Architecture in 1972 by the school's first dean, David Crane, together with alumni and other civic-minded community members who believed that quality design thinking should be available to all in our community and that Houston's citizens—experts and non-experts alike—should feel empowered to act and transform our city through design.

Connect with us
ricedesignalliance.org
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