

# Lyra Kilston - Good Design Is For Everyone: The Evolution Of Low-Income Housing In L.A.



Star Apartments elevation

*kcet.org*. April 2014. The phrases “public housing” or “low-income housing” do not generally conjure thoughts of architectural innovation. Instead, one may envision rows of faded pastel cubes surrounded by dead lawns and tall fences, or looming concrete towers gridded with small windows. Both schemes are typically weighted with a grim institutional air, appear to have been built as cheaply as possible, and often address only one problem, shelter, amid many others.

But it doesn’t have to be that way, as several recent housing developments in Los Angeles prove. Instead, they pose the question: What if low-income housing was perceived as leading the vanguard of innovative, responsive architecture?

Take the recently completed Star Apartments, located in the heart of downtown’s Skid Row. Commissioned by Skid Row Housing Trust, and designed by renowned L.A. architect Michael Maltzan, it provides permanent housing and social services to the formerly homeless. Star Apartments is also breathtaking architecture, consisting of a staggered row of four-story white blocks hovering over the existing ground level. Between these two levels is a large terrace, providing communal outdoor space away from the street. To save on cost and construction time, the 102 housing units within the blocks were prefabricated and lifted by crane on top of each other like blocks. Maltzan states that it’s the first multi-unit housing to use this method since the mid-20th century, a time when prefabrication was celebrated as a modern, mechanized solution to the housing problem.

Read more: <http://www.kcet.org/public-low-income-housing-history.html>

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# Cruise Ship Terminal In Port Of Seville Deploys Shipping Containers

Shipping containers continue gaining popularity in architectural circles. In the Port of Seville, architects Hombre de Piedra and Buró4 have designed a new cruise ship terminal, recycling used shipping containers. This trend is looking quite stylish.



The architects write, *“The Port of Seville needed a new Cruise Ship Terminal with a flexible character, multipurpose, extendable, easily removable and even movable. This would permit to accomodate the unpredictable number of passengers in the port and*

*it would not limit the possibilities of the urban-port valuable space of the Muelle de las Delicias. Re-using shipping containers was proposed. On the other hand, the place, near the historic centre, was claiming an object of architectural quality to dialogue with its urban environment.”*

*Read*

*more:* <http://sustainablecitiescollective.com/port-seville-deploys-shipping-containers>

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## The Hollow Tower - Johannesburg

In the heart of Johannesburg, there is probably no building more notorious than Ponte City. The cylindrical tower with a hollow core was built in the 1970s as luxury apartments only for whites. In the ensuing decades, as whites decamped to

the suburbs, Ponte became a symbol of urban decay, overrun by drug dealers and gangs and dubbed “suicide central” because of the number of people who chose to end their lives by hurling themselves off the tower.

Watch the trailer:

*Full* *documentary:*  
<http://www.vocativ.com/video/culture/society/south-africas-tower-trouble/>

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# **Benjamin De La Pena - How To Solve Metro Manila's Housing AND Traffic Problems - At The Same Time**



*interaksyon.com. Benjamin de la Peña is the director for community and national initiatives at the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. He has a masters degree in urban planning from Harvard University and he has worked around the world on urban development issues.*

Republic Act 7279 or the Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992, also known as the Lina Law, is controversial for decriminalizing squatting. (For detractors, please note that Marcos’ anti-squatting law didn’t really produce any results.) But 7279 also sets out our most comprehensive policy on housing and urban development. It created the funding mechanisms for our community mortgage program. It also required national and local agencies to cooperate on housing and urban development.

RA 7279 mentions “mortgage” twelve times. It mentions “rental” just once. The last line on Sec. 12 says: “Consistent with this provision, a scheme for public rental housing may be adopted.” (This section was amended in 2007 by RA 9397 but the amendments didn’t add anything to the discussion of rental housing.)

That’s it. As far as I know, we haven’t issued any law or scheme for public rental housing.

The law that governs rental housing is RA 9653, the Rent Control Law. This law does nothing to expand the rental housing market. In fact, it probably limits the growth of quality rental housing for the low and middle-income households. It also discourages landlords from upgrading their housing stock. (That’s for another article.)

Read more: <http://www.interaksyon.com/benjamin-de-la-pena>

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## REEEP And Sanedi Push For Energy Efficient Housing In South Africa



*reeep.org. April 4, 2014.* REEEP and SANEDI (South African National Energy Development Institute) hosted an exciting workshop in Johannesburg recently covering the status of Energy Efficiency (EE) in the South African housing sector.

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key challenges and needs, drawing on their experiences in contribution and discussing possible pathways for stimulating forward movement of EE for housing.

Over fifty delegates gathered from key international and local hubs, including government representatives, scientists and researchers, financiers and foundation leaders, international organizations and the private sector, among others. With the international spotlight shining on an energy efficient future for South Africa, key entities such as the Swiss Agency for Development & Cooperation, German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the Green Building Council contributed expertise along with private organizations regards achieving EE Housing aims and goals. The group represented the core Champions for Energy Efficiency in South Africa.

*Read more:* <http://www.reeep.org/news/>