The competition challenges participants to design a mid-rise, mixed-use complex with affordable housing units, a NYC outpost of the Andy Warhol Museum and a new and expanded home for the historic Essex Street Market. The project site is in Manhattan’s lower east side in the former Seward Park Urban Redevelopment Area. In 1967, New York City leveled 20 acres on the southern side of Delancey Street and removed more than 1,800 low-income largely Puerto Rican families, with a promise that they would eventually return to new low-income apartments. Competing forces within the neighborhood and the development community long debated whether the area should be used to develop affordable or market rate housing, for commercial or cultural uses, or all of the above. This debate was waged in the community halls of local public school auditoriums and other city meeting places, in newspaper columns, coop board meetings, and at private strategy sessions in individual homes, and eventually a resolution was reached, leading to the currently planned Essex Crossing development.

The Essex Crossing development as currently planned, however, could be criticized for following a larger bulk zoning than ideal, as well as for not requiring the highest degree of innovative and environmentally proactive construction and energy use standards, this competition elicits responses to correct this critical lack, on at least part of the overall development area.

Entrants will be asked to design places for inhabitation, repose, recreation, and local small scale commercial exchange, as well as the creation of social and cultural exchanges, all while embracing new possibilities of wood. Entrants will be challenged to propose construction systems in scenarios that draw optimally on the performance characteristics of not one but a variety of wood technologies.

**Timber**

The competition will challenge participants to interpret, invent, and deploy numerous methods of building systems, with a focus on innovations in wood design on a real site. For thousands of years, solid wood has been used as a building material. Modern timber products and systems have greatly expanded the potential uses of this historic material. Timber is an ideal green building material: it is well suited for a broad range of structural and aesthetic applications, it offers economical construction and high performance characteristics; and wood is an economic driver to maintain forests and protect jobs in rural communities.


These efforts will be compiled in a 3D lazer cut fabricated detail form as the final graded studio requirement with the digital project presentation submission.