



HOUSTON DESIGN RESEARCH GRANT

HDRG:
Urban Visions for Houston
and the World

Guidelines and Application
Form 2023

Sponsored by The Mitsui U.S.A. Foundation

Grant Summary

With its vast, complex, and diverse territory, Houston faces many of the environmental, architectural, and urban issues now affecting cities worldwide. The goal of the Houston Design Research Grant (HDRG) is to promote quality design research for Houston-specific urban conditions that can also inform urban discourses and debates more broadly. The grant is open to U.S. university students and faculty looking to work on research projects that contribute to the improvement of Houston's urban environments and urban life for all its citizens. Winning proposals in both categories (faculty and student) should demonstrate potential to catalyze a Houston-based design project that is relevant both locally and globally.

The grant is open to a broad array of urban topics, scales, and methodologies, providing seed funds for further research and expansion of the topic. All applications must address Houston's built environment, its history, present condition, and future development and show specific connections to architecture, design, and spatial thinking. Potential areas of research could include but are not limited to: design innovation, preservation, gentrification, climate change, affordable housing, environmental issues, public space, and urban transportation.

2023 Grant Details

Applications will be accepted from students and faculty who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the United States.

Proposals should be submitted in the form of a research paper, supported by visual materials.

- Completed application form (form included separately and can also be found at arch.rice.edu/HDRG);
- Written proposal for the project (1,000 words max.), describing its relevance, its expected impact on the community, and, if applicable, possible next steps for implementation in collaboration with other Houston-based organizations;
- Visual materials: photographs, archival materials, drawings, and/or AV materials;
- Student or faculty resume;
- Letter of support from a faculty advisor (student applications only).

Jury and Winning Proposals

Submitted applications will be reviewed by a jury of five to seven members comprising a diverse mix of individuals representing the Houston community, academia, city governance, and/or local and international experts and practitioners in the fields of architecture, design, engineering, and urbanism.

The jury will assess and judge all entries with transparency and fairness, selecting one winning proposal per category. Proposals will be evaluated for their research strength and depth, the potential to make a significant contribution to our understanding of the city, and/or the region and their ability to draw connections with similar examples happening globally. While grant funds are provided solely for the research component of a project, additional consideration will be given to proposals that demonstrate potential for future implementation with local Houston organizations.

Grants will be awarded in two categories: **student** and **faculty**. The winning proposal for each category will:

- Receive a \$6,000 grant
- Present their award project during the public programs series at Rice Architecture
- Receive an award announcement in the next *Cite* publication
- Be featured in an e-flux architecture announcement of the award

Timeline*

**Timeline subject to change. All changes will be promptly communicated via the email address provided on the submitted application form.*

August 2023: Initial call for proposals

November 15, 2023: Submission deadline

Late November/early December 2023: Jury deliberations

December 2023: Grant winners announced

August 31, 2024: Grantees submit final papers

Fall 2024 (dates TBD): Grantees present a lecture

Past Grantees & Acknowledgement

For past grantees and awarded projects, please visit:
ricedesignalliance.org/programs/grants.

The Houston Design Research Grant is made possible thanks to a generous gift from The Mitsui U.S.A. Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Mitsui & Co. (U.S.A.), Inc. ("Mitsui USA").

About Rice Design Alliance

Rice Design Alliance was established within Rice Architecture in 1972 by the school's first dean, David Crane, to develop the school's outreach and public programs. He worked collaboratively 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 nonexperts alike—should feel empowered to act and transform our city through design. During the 2023/24 academic year, our key legacy programs—including the annual Civic Forum and Houston Design Research Grants—will focus on RDA's original mission of design advocacy and the advancement of urban life for all Houstonians. We are committed to community engagement—both in the city and on the Rice University campus—and to mission-centric programs that advance the university's priorities and values of community and diversity.

About Rice Architecture

Known globally for its unique size and rigor, Rice Architecture is situated within a top-tier research university, allowing individual attention with the breadth of study afforded by a major university. Located in Houston, the nation's fourth-largest city, Rice University is committed to fostering a strong intellectual environment for the next generation of leaders and thinkers. The school draws extensively from other disciplines and cultural institutions in the city to forge new territories of design practice. This is demonstrated by our faculty's leadership in interdisciplinary minors; our cross-listed courses with other schools and departments, particularly humanities, business, and engineering; and numerous collaborations with the other arts groups on campus and in the city. The school is committed to community engagement and partnerships—both locally and globally—and to the advancement of design as one of the key agents of a more just, sustainable, and beautiful world.

About The Mitsui U.S.A. Foundation

Established in 1987, The Mitsui U.S.A. Foundation is the philanthropic arm of Mitsui & Co. (U.S.A.), Inc., for active social contribution programs in communities where the company does business. Currently, it supports more than fifty initiatives across the United States in the areas of education, community welfare, arts and culture, and employee matching and volunteerism.