

SLEUTHS, SYSTEMS AND STORIES: ON HOUSING

Research is a form of sleuthing – seeking pieces and fitting them together to solve a puzzle or mystery or conundrum. As in sleuthing, it is both art and science, personal and public, inspiration and perspiration.

Systems foreground relationships, backstage components. Systems are complex, chaotic, evolving, and cohesive. Sleuthing systems is like slogging through quicksand.

Stories have plots. Stories have scenes. Stories have a point. Stories are craft and content. Stories can be vivid and compelling. Numbers can tell stories, words can tell stories. Really, though, it's people who craft and tell stories.

Doing housing research in a College of Design, Construction and Planning is an adventure in sleuthing in systems and telling stories about it. This presentation is a series of vignettes of doing such housing research – from dredging through hundreds of pages of policy documents and regulations to listening to the crystalline delight of flicker-less lights.