

# AAIA and MIT Architects to Propose Self-Built Housing

Chester Sprague and John Steffian of the Department of Architecture of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology made a swing through the rural areas of Alaska last week and this week.

The two men are studying rural housing under contract with the Association on American Indian Affairs of New York and on a grant from HUD.

Indicating dissatisfaction with the self-help housing concept, Sprague and Steffian suggested that self-built housing concept where the occupant produced his own housing might be a better idea.

They said that although the native poor in Alaska and elsewhere where houses are built through the self-help concept, the builder winds up owing money outside of his own labor instead of establishing the security of a mortgage.

They said that under the self-built housing concept, "we feel that native people would have an opportunity to express their own preferences and needs."

Sprague and Steffian accompanied by Alfred Ketzler, president of the Tanana Chiefs, traveled to Bethel, Grayling, Anvik, Kotzebue, Noorvik, Selawik, Kivalina, Point Hope, Fort Yukon,

Minto and Nenana.

Under the housing study, Al Ketzler will be acting as the field representative. In the Kotzebue area, Dan Lisbourne will act in that capacity.

The general objective of the housing study is to understand and improve and/or to devise a method or methods of technical assistance by which the very poor people can achieve a range of choices in the self-determination of their housing.

The study is known as the occupant-produced housing among Indian and Eskimo peoples.

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# Self-Built

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Sprague and Steffian said that to achieve this, it is necessary to examine a range of family, community, and regional resources to determine if these can be deployed to release funds and/or human skill and energy and/or materials for expanding occupant-produced housing.

They said this must be done within the constraint of a national administration of Indian Affairs.

"What we're hoping for is that small groups of people or villages might suggest the kind of action that we can take," said Chester Sprague.

The results of the study will be submitted to the HUD for study and action.