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## HOUSED by CHOICE, HOUSED by FORCE - Homes, Conflicts and Conflicting Interests

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Architecture\_MPS, University of Cyprus; Cyprus Institute

### Abstract / Initial Proposal Form:

#### 1. Paper / Proposal Title:

Towards the *Reflective Developer*; design approaches outside the conflictive context of developer-led gentrification, with lessons from the architecture studio.

2. **Format:** Written paper / verbal presentation

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5. **University or Company Affiliation:** Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff University

#### 6. **Abstract (300 words):**

In the UK there is a growing social pressure for older people to downsize and 'free up' familial homes for younger generations struggling to accommodate their families, and on-scale, affect affordability within a high-demand, low-supply property market. But there are few positive choices for older people, particularly for the so-called 'baby boomer' couple that wishes to sustain an active retirement lifestyle. This paper examines a standardized product being offered by a national developer specializing in private, independent-living retirement properties (referred to here as Pink & Knight). Research suggests that this product appeals to 2.3% of the UK population, or two types of Mosaic UK consumer profiles: 'Balcony Downsizers' and those seeking 'Bungalow Quietude'. However, there are 18 consumer profiles that can be attributed to older people, accounting for 24.6% of the UK population.

This paper explores ways in which the 'reflective developer' may appeal to a broader consumer base by offering greater choice within a standard product range. Ideas – borne out of design research involving consumers – are investigated within the academic architecture studio, with student projects taking on some of the ambitions of the developer, whilst responding to the *aspirations* of older people. The 'Ageing Town' studio has adopted a town centre wasteland site purchased by Pink & Knight. Students take up a privileged position, being able to proceed outside the socioeconomic conflictive context of developer-led gentrification; free from conflicts of interest that emanate from development control, public consultation, marketing, construction and commercial concerns, such as return-on-investment calculations and profit margins.

This paper asks what can be learnt from comparing 'commercial' with 'academic' design approaches to the same physical context? How might the aspirations of older people be drawn more into residential schemes? And how might design professionals help to create a space for reflective dialogue between 'provider-developers' and 'user-consumers'?

## **7. Author(s) Biography (166 words):**

Sam Clark is an architect engaged in practice, teaching and research. Sam considers these to be fundamentally interdependent disciplines; all three involving cyclical design processes rooted in making things - artefacts, designs and buildings - and making things happen. Sam is an independent architect and lecturer at the *Welsh School of Architecture*, Cardiff University, where he contributes to design teaching and lectures on housing.

Within the design studio Sam leads students are asked to conduct a town study, involving a holistic assessment of its age-friendly characteristics and potentialities, and prepare designs for housing and 'community rooms' with older people in mind. These activities parallel Sam's PhD by Creative Practice in which he collaborates with a national developer specializing in private, independent-living retirement properties. Through his PhD Sam has undertaken a contextual review of older people and their respective housing options; a historical study of the evolution of UK specialist accommodation offers; designerly forms of post-occupancy evaluation, and a 'product review', including discrete packages of design consultancy.