



Housing – A Critical Perspective.

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Abstract / Initial Proposal Form:

- 1. Paper / Proposal Title:** Do It Ourselves
- 2. Format:** Written paper
- 3. Author(s) Name:** Charles Holland
- 4. University or Company Affiliation:** University of Brighton/Ordinary Architecture
- 5. Abstract (300 words):**

The paper will speculate on the role of self-determination and dweller-control in relation to housing. Specifically it will examine the history of self and custom-build as alternatives to current models of housing delivery. Drawing on the writing of Colin Ward in particular, the paper will argue that as well as offering a valid form of folk architecture through creative interpretation of normative housing, self-build models can be an important part of a collective response to the current housing crisis.

The paper will draw on a history of examples ranging from inter-war Plotlands developments to Viennese settlement communities to houses designed using the Walter Segal method, arguing that the success of these models has often been ignored by architects and planners for reasons of aesthetic or class prejudice. A history of self-build and DIY offers an alternative history of architecture where dwellers adapt, modify, amend and design their own environments. The results offer both aesthetic and philosophical challenges to mainstream architecture, capable of resulting in new models of housing.

Drawing on my own work as an Architect, the paper will suggest ways that the individual creative anarchy of such projects can be tied to wider, more collective ambitions. Following Ward's pioneering studies of self-determined communities, it will argue that these can be part of a wider and more significant response to the problem of how to house people affordably and sustainably today. In doing so, the paper will also attempt to establish a bridge between state provision and individual agency, seeing these as potentially reinforcing rather than oppositional. Current orthodoxies arguing that 'individuality' can only be nurtured via neo-liberal deregulation will be contrasted with examples where the state has enabled creative agency.

The paper will suggest a new role for the state and local authorities in recognizing the importance of dweller-control and self-build models, encouraging new and alternative models of housing.

7. Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Charles Holland

Adjunct Professor, University of Brighton/Architect, Ordinary Architecture.

Charles Holland is an Architect, academic and writer. He is currently Adjunct Professor of Architecture at the University of Brighton where he is researching the relationship of academia and practice.

Charles is also a practicing Architect. He is a co-founding director of Ordinary Architecture and was previously a director of FAT for over fifteen years.

Charles has designed a number of award-winning buildings including Islington Square in Manchester, a development of 23 new houses designed in close-collaboration with the future residents and A House For Essex, FAT's creative collaboration with the artist Grayson Perry. He is currently working on a housing project for a rural site in Wiltshire, as well as others in London and Hereford.

His activities at the University of Brighton cover experimental rural housing and research into alternatives to current housing development and provision. He has written extensively about housing focusing on issues of taste, owner-adaptation and self-build models. He is particularly interested in the relation between political policy and architecture and spatial design.