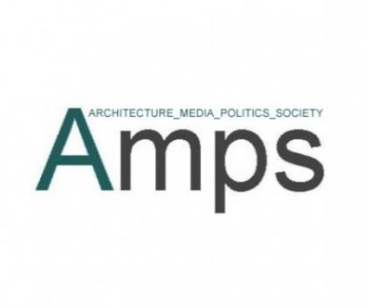

Housing – A Critical Perspective.

08-09 April 2015

Abstract / Initial Proposal Form:

1. Paper / Proposal Title: Rethinking Housing: home as workplace

2. Format: Written paper

3. Author(s) Name: Dr Frances Holliss

4. University or Company Affiliation: London Metropolitan University

5. Abstract (300 words):

Contemporary UK housing is generally based on models developed at the start of the twentieth century in response to both extreme conditions in the East End slums and to Ebenezer Howard's Town-Country Garden City idea (Holliss 2015). It provides space for people to cook, eat, bathe, sleep, bring up children and watch TV - nothing else (Holliss 2015).

In the context of the current rapid growth in home-based work, across the social spectrum and in a wide range of occupations, in the UK and globally (ONS 2014, Sinha 2006), this paper posits this is an outdated approach. It discusses historic 'housing' developments specifically designed to accommodate home-based work, in particular that of the poor, and contrasts these to contemporary social housing designed to prevent, and managed through tenancy agreements that prohibit, this working practice.

This paper argues that ingrained approaches to housing design, procurement and management impact negatively, in the twenty-first century, on the individual, the

family, the neighbourhood, the economy and the environment. Interweaving themes of social, economic and environmental sustainability, and urban resilience, it presents two case studies from the Netherlands where non-standard design and procurement processes have resulted in housing that readily accommodates home-based work. It discusses facilitating conditions and asks whether these may be replicable and scaleable.

The first, a mixed-tenure co-housing scheme for musicians in Rotterdam, consists of 38 family houses, each with an associated music studio buried - for sound-proofing reasons - under a central grassy hill on which children play and residents socialise. The second is a large housing development in Lieden, master-planned by MVRDV, half self-built and half social housing. Homes designed to individual occupants' requirements sit over collaboratively designed ground-works and shared garages. Many include workspace – from furniture repair workshop to photographic studio, corner shop to architects office.

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

Frances Holliss
Architect and Academic, London Metropolitan University, Cass School of Architecture

Frances Holliss is an architect and an academic in the Cass School of Architecture at London Metropolitan University. While training, she received the Sir Bannister Fletcher Prize and Medal for her Diploma at the Bartlett School of Architecture, and was the first female architect partner at Edward Cullinan Architects. Becoming interested in the building type that combines dwelling and workplace through her studio teaching, she completed a partly-ESRC-funded doctorate on the architecture of home-based work ('The Workhome… a new building type?') in 2007. Through a two-year AHRC-funded Knowledge Fellowship (2009-11), she developed an online open-access 'workhome' resource for designers and regulators, including a Design Guide, Pattern Book and Precedent Database (www.theworkhome.com). Holliss received AHRC Connected Communities funding to research home-based work in social housing in collaboration with a large East London housing trust, the University of Warwick and the University of Central Lancashire. Holliss has written widely on the architecture of home-based work, contributing journal articles, and chapters to edited editions, including the Routledge Handbook of Families in Asia (2015). Her sole-authored book 'Beyond Live/Work: the architecture of home-based work' (Routledge 2015) traces the history of the workhome, analyses its contemporary form and assesses its social, architectural and urban potential.