



Housing – A Critical Perspective.

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Abstract / Initial Proposal Form:

1. Paper / Proposal Title: 'Spontaneous estate evolution': Community, Artistic Practice and Reverie on a 1960s English Council Estate

2. Format: Written paper

3. Author(s) Name: Dr Ian Waites

4. University or Company Affiliation: University of Lincoln

5. Abstract (300 words):

With postwar council/social housing under constant threat in these days of post-public austerity, a more nuanced historical understanding of the council estate is arguably needed more than ever. My research attempts to do this by exploring the history and meaning of a 1960s council estate in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, examining the everyday experiences of the residents there in relation to the way the estate was originally conceived and planned. To this end, I have been intermittently working on the estate with artist collective 'The Poly-technic' on a project called Back to the Future 1965-2015-2016, which combines their artistic practice with my research and thinking. The project has created activities, happenings and situations that are intended to give the estate's residents, young and old, the opportunity to reflect upon space and time on the estate, and of their place in it. These days, such projects are often couched in terms of giving 'hard to reach' communities a collective sense of 'agency' and a 'resilience for the future'. While the general necessity of at least attempting to do this is undeniable, this paper will argue that such imperatives are moralistic, technocratic and

essentially meaningless in estate communities that tend to be made up of people with very different needs, likes, cares and so on. Taking Guattari's (1989) notion of creating new 'microsocial practices' with 'a new gentleness ... a new aesthetic' as a starting point in getting 'social and political practices back on their feet', this paper will show how the Back to the Future project works with the idea of 'reverie', producing situations that aim to 'stop', 'slow down', or 'free up' time, so that residents can at least realise a connection between their everyday lives and the place where they live.

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

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Ian Waites is a Senior Lecturer in History of Art and Design at the University of Lincoln. His research interests centre on landscape, sense of place and memory. Currently, he is researching the history of a post-WW2 council estate where he grew up, examining the original design and planning of the estate in relation to the more phenomenological concerns of spatiality, sense of place and everyday life. The research is particularly defined by his childhood and teenage memories of the estate during the 1960s and 70s, in an attempt to regain a sense of what it 'felt like' to live there. He keeps a blog, 'Instances of a changed society' that chronicles this research, and which you can read from here: <http://instancesofachangedsociety.blogspot.co.uk>