



## Housing – A Critical Perspective.

08-09 April 2015

### **Abstract / Initial Proposal Form:**

**1. Paper / Proposal Title:** Between History and the Future: Experiments in housing and pedagogy.

**2. Format:** Written paper

**3. Author(s) Name:** Luis M. Diaz

**4. University or Company Affiliation:** University of Brighton

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

This paper starts with the premise that the rich history of spatial experimentation in British housing that runs from the Prince Albert Model Houses (1851) to Neave Brown's Alexandra Road (1979) has stalled. A sketch overview of some of the spatial inventions in housing will form a backdrop for looking at the work of Studio 12 in the School of Architecture at the University of Brighton. The studio's approach, via the theories of Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau, is to work with everyday practices as a way of interrogating existing housing typologies. This is done, not in order to replace them, but to rehabilitate them. As such the studio relies heavily on precedent and history and acts as a critique of contemporary notions of creativity and subjectivity in design studios. The focus on everyday practices and engagement with history form two poles that attempt to counteract the growing emphasis on personal narratives as both pedagogical and design methodologies (which can be seen to smuggle back in the idea of the architect as grand author).

The studio's work builds on my own research into the role of routines (spatial practices) and exterior territories (spatial forms) in the formation of inhabitants' own individual and collective identities. A brief overview of this research will form another backdrop to the presentation of student work.

Taken together the paper seeks to raise a series of questions about the role of architectural education in relation to the current housing crisis (with only 1 in 10 briefs focusing on housing in the last 10 years) and the (difficult and possibly counterproductive) relationship between skilling and research-based pedagogy in undergraduate education.

I will argue that current attitudes towards history and the way in which subjectivity and creativity are utilised in design approaches are not only related but that they also undermine the potential of architectural design to contribute to housing solutions.

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

Luis Diaz

University of Brighton, School of Architecture and Design, Architect.

Luis Diaz has been involved in a combination of practice, teaching and research for 25 years. His research-based practice, Brooklyn Architects Collective, founded in 1993 carried out urban design research for various agencies and was a prize winner in the Van Alen Institute East River Competition.

Luis Diaz studied architecture and architectural history at NYIT (BArch), the Berlage Institute, the New School for Social Research (semiotics), the Bartlett (MSc in History of Modern Architecture), London School of Economics (MPhil/PhD study with Richard Sennett) and University of Brighton (MPhil).

Luis Diaz has taught design, CAD, and history and theory at the New York Institute of Technology, Kent Institute of Art and Design and the University of Brighton.