

Cities, Communities and Homes: Is the Urban Future Livable?

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

Creating common ground: the value of participatory design in articulating a common ethos for dwelling

- **Format:**

Written paper / verbal presentation

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- **University or Company Affiliation:**

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- **Abstract (300 words):**

In *The Ethical Function of Architecture*, Karsten Harries highlighted the task of housing as extending beyond physical shelter. Referencing Gideon's assertion that architecture may help us find our place and way in an ever more disorienting world, Harries set out the task of architecture as helping to articulate a common ethos in order to help us dwell.

To understand, activate, engage with and place diverse communities at the forefront of the challenge of dwelling, we begin first with the problem of how architecture may help articulate a common ethos. This paper reflects upon means by which processes of participatory architectural design may act as a catalyst in defining a common ethos and creating conditions by which questions of community and dwelling may be approached.

This process is underway at the Grange Pavilion, a former Bowls Pavilion and Green in Grangetown, Cardiff. In 2012, local residents approached their council to express an interest in renovating the vacant structure as a community 'space for all'. A Cardiff University-Grangetown partnership has supported pop-up architectural installations and

the temporary renovation of the Pavilion, creating a space for community forums, including a youth forum, a philosophy café, and an annual Love Grangetown public forum. These have defined strategic community-led aims which highlighted community meeting spaces, green spaces and safer streets as central to the physical, social and mental health of this ethnically and culturally diverse urban community. Ongoing architectural and appreciate enquiry workshops, supported by a recent Big Lottery Fund CAT2 development award, celebrate Grangetown's strengths and invite visions of how to make it even better. Participatory design processes are analysed in this paper as a catalyst for enabling the articulation of a common ethos, from which the challenge of how to dwell in a disorienting world may be rigorously examined by a community itself.

• **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Dr. Mhairi McVicar is a Senior Lecturer and Director of Engagement at the Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff University, and academic lead of Community Gateway, a multi-disciplinary Cardiff University - Grangetown communities partnership which supports community ideas and research, teaching and volunteering through the mutual exchange of expertise, skills and resources [<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/community-gateway>]. Mhairi's current research with Neil Turnbull into the 'Value of an Architect in a Community Asset Transfer' is supported by a RIBA Research Trust award [<https://www.architecture.com/RIBA/Becomeanarchitect/Fundingyoureducation/Researchfunding/ResearchTrustAwards/2015recipients/MhairiMcVicarandNeilTurnball.aspx>] and investigates qualitative and quantitative definitions of the value of the architect in community-led development. Mhairi's previous research has focused on processes of architectural production, including her PhD on 'Precision in Architectural production' [<http://orca.cf.ac.uk/97224/>] and 'God is in the details'/'The detail is moot': A meeting Between Koolhaas and Mies' in *Reading Architecture and Culture: Researching Buildings, Spaces and Documents*; 'The production of the Commons: Mies van der Rohe and the art of industrial standardisation' in *Industries of Architecture*; 'Specifying intent at the Museum of Childhood' in *ARQ* and 'Passion and Control: Lewerentz and a mortar joint' in *Quality Out of Control*. She worked in architectural practices in Chicago, London and Orkney prior to joining Cardiff University.

Neil Turnbull B.Arch (Hons) DipArch ARB is an architect and academic with a background in professional practice, having seen many projects through from strategic planning to completion stage and an academic with experience in research and teaching at universities in both the UK and abroad. He worked as an academic at the Centre for Territorial and Urban Research (CITU) at the Universidad Andres Bello, Santiago de Chile from 2008-2012 and at the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism at the University of Chile from 2012-16. He has led research projects and participated in state funded projects and co-authored published work on the social impact of urban regeneration. He is developing studies about the emancipatory opportunities of local governance with a

focus on the micro geographies of communal and public space. He is currently studying an MSc in Social Science Research Methods at the School of Geography and Planning and the School of Social Sciences at Cardiff University as part of an Economic and Social Research Council (UK) 3+1 PhD studentship. He works internationally in collaboration with Elke Schlack on urban research projects.