

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

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

Community characteristics and the meaning of 'home' for residents in West Hampstead  
A small section of the London property market

- **Format:**

verbal presentation

- **Author(s) Name:**

Robert Lastman

- **University or Company Affiliation:**

Independent Researcher

- **Abstract (300 words):**

The dream of home ownership is deeply ingrained in the British psyche. However in 2016 a tipping point was reached as renters outnumbered owners for the first time in several areas across the UK. Predictions suggest the trend of declining home-ownership is going to increase further during the next few years<sup>1</sup>.

The problem is particularly evident in London where prices and rents have risen the most<sup>2</sup>. With wages stagnating, home ownership becomes a more distant dream. Meanwhile with short-term rental agreements valid for less than one year becoming the norm, the definition of 'home' is changing for many people.

West Hampstead, an area of northwest London, highlights the wider trends of changes to the notion of 'home'. The area has an increasing amount of private renters and an

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<sup>1</sup> Osborne, Hilary "Property rentals to outstrip sales for first time since 1930s"  
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/oct/17/property-rentals-to-outstrip-sales-for-first-time-since-1930s> (17 October, 2016) Accessed 18 October, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Zoopla "Area guide for London" <http://www.zoopla.co.uk/market/london/?q=London> Accessed 1 February 2017.

expanding population which puts pressure on the housing stock and further increases prices. The recently completed major development, by the Ballymore group, provides additional accommodation, but with only a small portion of flats marketed as affordable, questions are raised about the diversity of those attracted to the area<sup>3</sup>.

I will be collating information from the Camden Neighbourhood Profile, latest property data, a quantitative survey completed by residents and government policies, including the 2017 paper "*Fixing our Broken Housing Market*"<sup>4</sup>. With this data, research will be conducted to show the trends and any divisions emerging due to a changing housing market, as well an understanding in which direction we are heading in regards to community, diversity and the concept of home.

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

Robert Lastman received his degrees in Sociology from UCM (University of Central Missouri) and in International Studies from University of Leeds. He previously worked in the US at the Community Awareness section of UCM and later in the NGO sector including the Global Policy Forum in New York. He is currently working at City, University of London since 2008 and holds an administrative role in the Research and Enterprise Office.

After personally experiencing the changes in the property market and its effect on the community, Robert started researching topics concerning housing. Robert joined the Neighbourhood Development Forum which is working actively to influence the planning process of Camden council in London. In December 2016 he presented early findings related to the London housing crisis at the Leeds conference titled "*Struggles over 'home' in a time of crisis*". The presentation included results of a pilot study of Londoners' understanding of home, and data on affordability and living space in the area.

To learn more about housing and new innovative ideas that can be implemented Robert attended a presentation on *Race, Place, Power and Privilege* at the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University, in February 2017.

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<sup>3</sup> West Hampstead Square <http://www.ballymoregroup.com/project/detail/west-hampstead-square> Accessed 4 October 2016.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-white-paper> Accessed 18 February 2017