Architects for Social Housing

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FOR A SOCIALIST ARCHITECTURE

LECTURES AT 221A, VANCOUVER

DECEMBER 2019

'Communism for us is not a state of affairs that is to be established, an ideal to which reality will have to adjust itself. We call communism the real movement that abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the premises now in existence.'

— Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

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Preface

Over the summer of 2019, as part of ASH's research fellowship with 221A, we took up a month's residency in Vancouver, Canada. Over four lectures held on Friday afternoons between 19 July and 9 August, we presented our thoughts about the necessity and possibility of a socialist architecture under capitalism. 221A invited individuals based in Vancouver to co-present with us at each of these lectures, each of which attracted around 50 visitors. These lectures were conceived as a forum in which we could present to and hear from residents, campaigners, academics, students, architects, environmentalists, planners, economists, developers, politicians and others affected by or involved in the housing crisis, both local and global.

In tandem with these lectures, and by the end of the residency, ASH produced the draft text for a book to be titled For a Socialist Architecture. Our aim, with the financial support of 221A, is to publish this book, and make it available not only to people who are threatened by the crisis of housing affordability, but also to policy-writers looking for alternatives to the selling off of public land and housing to private investors, as well as to architects looking for an alternative to the orthodoxies of contemporary architectural practice.

After four-and-a-half years of continual practice since we founded ASH in March 2015, these lectures were also a welcome opportunity for us to reflect on what we had and hadn't achieved, to learn from our successes as well as our failures, and to think about where we wanted to go next and under what guiding principles.

The texts published here are based on and expanded from the recordings by 221A of the four lectures we gave in Vancouver, taking into account some of the questions and comments made by the audience, as well as the contributions of our co-presenters. These included Am Johal, the director of community engagement at Simon Fraser University's Vancity Office of Community Engagement; Daniel Roehr, who teaches landscape architecture at the University of British Columbia; and Ross Gentleman, the former Chief Executive Officer for CCEC Credit Union, a community development credit union in Vancouver. Since each lecture was delivered to a changing audience, there are some repetitions in the text that, given its length and complexity, we have thought it best to retain. We have also responded to developments in housing and architecture since our return to the UK.

This text is published on Friday, 13th December, 2019, the day after the UK's fourth general election this decade, and which like all the others has returned a Conservative Party politician to the office of Prime Minister, but this time with the largest majority in Parliament in over 40 years. We hope this disaster will mark the end of the flirtation of socialists, anarchists and even communists with the Labour Party, which has had its worst electoral defeat since 1935, and that they will now turn to building a political movement of and for the working class. This text is offered as ASH's contribution to the direction a socialist practice must take in order to build that movement.

Lecture 1. Part 1. Social Principles

Q. *'Social and environmental issues really matter to me. I want to have real influence but, as an architect, I don't.*

A. *'Many architects contact me expressing a similar sentiment. Our profession tends to attract and develop idealists, and that can make some of our work little more rewarding than working on a factory production line. The important thing is to harness your feelings and convert them to a useful energy, rather than harbour frustration. Ideally, the aim should be to align them to your real world of work.*

'Idealism is great but, mixed with naivety, the danger is it will remain unrealised. An architect who, as a student, explored an enticing proposition such as the impact of driverless cars might think they are in a good position to solve these issues in the real world. But architects aren't normally the people single-handedly entrusted to envision such complex projects. You are more likely to be closer to the action as a politician, planner, campaigner or engineer than an architect. All of these are possible career routes for architects.

'The other mindset you could develop is to think and act small. What we do is way more results-focused than most professions. Your view may be coloured by the kind of practice you work for and its workload. The everyday can be humbly influential. Even with a simple extension you can aim to develop a highly energy-efficient house, or directly help improve the quality of life of a family. Sure, you can think big and — who knows? — be the

next Steve Jobs. But to do this, you are more likely to need to work alongside, rather than in, architecture.'

— Matthew Turner, architect and careers consultant, *Architects' Journal* (2019)

Within the overall political and economic context of capitalist democracies today, in which there is a cross-party consensus from the political establishment on the marketisation of housing provision, and whatever party forms a government there is no longer the political will to make the state responsible for housing its citizens, how do we meet the housing needs of an increasingly homeless global population? Is a socialist model of housing provision unsustainable and impossible within capitalist economies? And in the absence of a socialist government — let alone a socialist revolution — on the horizon, what would a socialist architecture look like?

Faced with our current global crisis of housing affordability, whose financial roots reach deep into the world economy, can architects do more than bury their heads in the limitations of a developer's brief, confine themselves to purely formal interpretations of housing typologies imposed to maximise land values, attend award ceremonies to their own complicity in the failed and failing policies of capitalism, and become just another cog in the building industry? Are the fêted ideologues of Neo-liberalism in the architectural profession doing no more than accurately describing the economic and professional conditions under which architects must work, and which they'd better get used to sooner rather than later? Or — to the contrary — can an informed understanding and factual knowledge of the fallacies of Neo-liberal housing policy, rather than blind belief and cynical trading in the myths told to justify it, open up the possibility for a socialist architecture, even under existing economic conditions?

We want to make clear from the start that by 'a socialist architecture' we don't mean the architecture of the past: of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, of the Eastern Bloc in Europe, of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, of the People's Republic of China, of the centrally-planned city of Chandigarh in the Republic of India, of the post-colonial Federal Capital of Brasilia in the Fourth Republic of Brazil, of the National Arts Schools in the post-revolutionary Republic of Cuba, or even the post-war architecture of that most absurd of historical anachronisms, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. That doesn't mean these historical examples of socialist architecture don't offer us models from which we can learn and take. But what we're interested in producing is the socialist architecture of the future, whose principles we need to start practicing in the present if it is ever to be brought into existence. Architects for Social Housing is an architectural practice first and foremost, and although we engage in areas other than the design work to which most practices limit themselves — including written research and advocacy, resident advice and support, and proposals for housing policy — our primary concern is how to turn architectural principles into practice.

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1. Contexts of a Socialist Architecture

I want to start by outlining our proposal for the book we're writing under the title *For a Socialist Architecture*. It has a couple of potential subtitles so far, including: *Ask these questions*, and *Under Capitalism*; but it begins by addressing four contexts of a socialist architecture, the first one of which we'll be focusing on today:

1. *The Social*. To situate architecture within the totality of relations of its production, distribution, exchange and consumption, and propose new practices for a socialist architecture under capitalism.

One might think that, by now, we wouldn't have to reassert the context of this totality, but architecture today is still thought about, and written about, and used as if it were isolated from this totality. One of the characteristics of Neo-liberal housing policy is that it sees architecture as a form of real estate or a means of exchange, and ignores the totality of the social, environmental, economic and political relations within which it is produced and consumed.

Alternative cycles of production, distribution, exchange and consumption
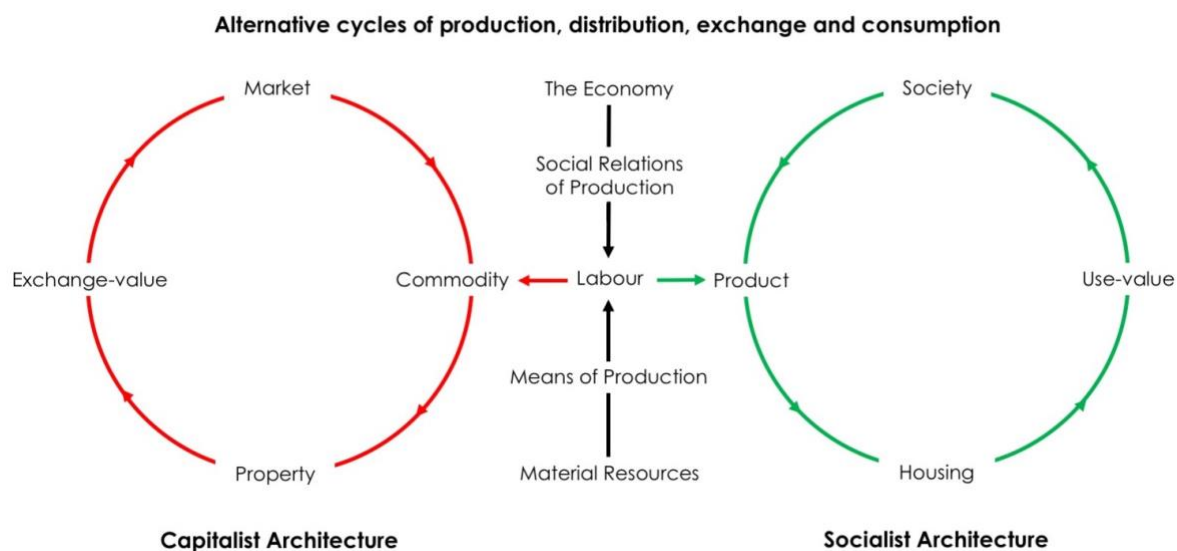
In the UK at the moment the word 'socialism' is creeping back into public discourse. We're once again able to use this term that one couldn't ten years ago without being laughed at, or dismissed as an extremist, or even arrested. However, the idea still persists that one can only produce a socialist architecture under a socialist system. In maintaining this idea, the potential agency of the architect, or housing professional, or politician, or indeed activist is displaced into an infinitely deferred future that never arrives. How many Neo-liberal architects find comfort in this convenient excuse for their collusion with the obscenities of capitalism? What we want to propose, in contrast, is that one can practice a socialist architecture as a professional architect even under existing policy and economic conditions — which are, of course, Neo-liberal through and through.

2. *The Environmental.* To understand and reduce the totality of consumption within the finitude of global resources.

In the UK right now, and across capitalist democracies, the environment has become a large framework for thinking about what we want or have to do with the world, and how or if we are going to continue into the future. 'The environment' is, I think, another word we can all understand for what we mean here by 'the totality'. At the moment, the primary way in which the architectural profession is responding to its contribution to the continuing rise of carbon emissions around the world is through so-called 'green architecture', which includes photovoltaic panels, improved insulation, and green roofs and walls. What it doesn't consider is the environmental cost of construction or demolition, or the social cost of the tenure types and sale prices of the residential dwellings it is designing, or the economic costs to both residents and the public sector of doing so, or the political agendas it is serving. In other words, architectural discourse is isolating 'the environment' (in inverted commas) from the totality of relations in which architecture exists, which includes its social, economic and political dimensions.

3. *The Economic.* To design for and implement economic de-growth within the context of global housing demand.

'The economy' is another word for the totality that everyone can grasp, if few of us can fully understand, and provides the next context for a socialist architecture. In this respect, it's important to understand that de-growth is not a choice anymore: it is something we know we have to do if we are to continue as a civilisation, a species, on an inhabitable planet. But we need to do so within the vast context of global housing demand. Across the globe, we need to build around 2 billion new homes by the end of the century, most of them in the southern hemisphere. Architecture, for us, is first and foremost about one thing, and that is how to house people in secure and comfortable homes in which they can afford to live. The vanity projects that litter the glossy magazines of the architectural press, and to which the prizes of the profession are invariably handed, are irrelevant to the historical task architecture faces in the present. The question — which is a question to which historical socialism has to respond if it is to return as the model of our future — is how we balance meeting this housing demand against the environmental, economic and perhaps social costs of doing so. As an economic system, socialism is not associated historically with either de-growth or environmentalism. Quite the opposite. Historically, after the Second World War, socialism across the globe had to house tens of millions of people very quickly, and in economies that had only recently undergone, or were still undergoing, industrialisation. But the political context in which socialist architecture housed populations made homeless by poverty and colonialism and war in the second half of the Twentieth Century is different from the contemporary context. We will, perhaps, soon be facing as great a crisis in housing provision; but, in addition, we need to meet it under the threat of environmental collapse and in the grip of Neo-liberalism.

4. *The Political.* To reclaim the political dimension of architecture and bring about progressive change within the totality of social, economic and environmental relations.

Finally, in our last lecture we'll be looking at the political dimension of architecture. One of our mottos is that architecture is always political, a self-evident truth that Neo-liberal architects continue to deny even now. It seems to us that precisely the social dimension of architecture — particularly in the UK in the post-war period when the bulk of our council housing was built under the new welfare state, and more generally across Europe and the world — was not simply about building blocks of homes in order to house people. It was also about coming up with a different vision of how people live together, in communities, in cities, in countries. We called this 'modernism', and it could be argued that, of all the forms in which modernism transformed the arts, its legacy stands or falls on its architecture, which embodied like no other art form the tasks of modernism. Today, when modernism is subject to wholesale denigration by the champions of Neo-liberalism, one of the things ASH does is try to encourage architects into reclaiming the social and political dimension of architecture that has been taken over by — or perhaps more accurately conceded to — the agents of Neo-liberalism.

2. Theoretical Foundations for a Socialist Architecture

Now I want to move on to talking about the contents of the book we're working on, *For a Socialist Architecture.* As part of our residency here, Architects for Social Housing has been asked by 221A to provide a bibliography of books for the Pollyanna Library in order to give some context to our lectures. Most of the books written about the crisis of housing affordability are academic texts. These analyse the housing crisis and, in some cases, try to identify some of its causes; but very few — if any — propose a solution. In contrast, the books that do propose solutions to the housing crisis are written by think-tanks, by municipal authorities, by building lobbyists, by real-estate firms, by housing associations, by architectural practices and by other housing professionals, and the solutions they propose are, without exception, to continue doing more of the same but at an increased intensity of production across a wider scale. So far, it is the latter texts that are winning the battle for housing policy and legislation in the UK; while the former are gathering dust in academic libraries, where their primary contribution is to the *curriculum vitae* of their authors and the research rating of the academic departments that employ them.

What ASH wants to do, in contrast, is produce a practical volume that will be used by the people who are suffering the housing crisis as well as those who are its agents: not only residents, therefore, but also councillors, architects, policy-makers and others. To this end, rather than a single, continuous narrative, we imagine the book to be composed of different registers of writing interleaved with each other, into which readers can dip for the information they are interested in or need. One of these sections, composed of a series of short essays, will constitute the theoretical foundations — and practical necessity —

for a socialist architecture. These essays will include, but are not limited to, the following topics.

- The global failure of Neo-liberal housing policy.

Before coming to Vancouver, ASH has had exchanges with housing professionals not only in the UK but also in New York, Toronto, Paris, Berlin, Barcelona, Sydney and in many other cities across the world. The housing crisis is global. And yet, these cities are in different countries with different histories, composed of different housing typologies built at different housing densities under different principles of urban planning across very different landscapes; but they all suffer from the same crisis of housing affordability. The origin of that crisis is the same: Neo-liberalism. This is a fancy term to describe the new and emerging stage of capitalism over the past forty years or so, which has led, among many other disasters, to the financialisation of global property markets, the marketisation of housing provision, and the political hegemony of Neo-liberal housing policy. Quite clearly, what we're doing now and have been for some time is not working, if by housing we mean the provision of a social need of the population rather than a commodity for investment and speculation by international capitalism.

- The inadequacy of human rights as a model for affordable and secure housing provision.

Just before we came to Vancouver, in April 2019, the government of Canada passed the National Housing Strategy Act declaring that housing was a human right. This is a right we don't have in the legislation of the UK, which only defends our property rights; so on the face of it the Housing Act looks like a positive thing. However, this rights-based approach, which is founded on the recommendations of reports produced by civil society but has no legal requirements or enforceable court orders, is meant to provide recourse to anyone wrongfully denied a home for reasons such as their ethnic, religious, sexual or gender identity. The 'right to housing' it advances, therefore, does nothing to ensure either the affordability or security of tenure of that housing. This example reveals the limits of human rights as a model for good governance and social justice. Human rights are a set of principles that don't take into account how they are implemented in practice through the legal system, which is subject to economic and political pressures that — certainly in my experience — supersede those principles. As a model for housing provision, human rights are fundamentally flawed; but they are also, I think, part of the Neo-liberal system. This is something I'll return to at the end of this lecture; but the inadequacy of human rights as a model for achieving housing justice is one of the foundations for the necessity of a socialist architecture.

- The insufficiency of individual ethics as a framework for the practical agency of architects.

The same inadequacy pertains to the ethical model, another liberal construct. In June 2016, in response to ASH's criticisms of the collusion of the architectural profession in the UK's estate demolition programme, the Royal Institute of British Architects published a report titled *Ethics of Estate Regeneration.* Unsurprisingly, it concluded that whatever moral issues this collusion raised were a matter for the individual conscience of the architect, and not a consideration about the social role of the profession. However, this is a completely meaningless conclusion when most architects, like nearly everybody else, are trying to pay their rent. In other words, their ethical agency is limited by, precisely, capitalist relations of production that make most architects workers on a low wage competing for a limited number of positions in companies themselves competing for contracts from the building industry. To talk of 'ethics' under these conditions is to ignore the social, economic and political context in which most architects work, and to which only a socialist architecture can offer an alternative.

- The inability of so-called 'green architecture' to compensate for the environmental costs of new development.

I mentioned this before when describing the environmental context of architecture and how the window-dressing of solar panels, green walls and improved thermal performance isolate 'the environment' from its social, economic and political context. This is something we'll come back to in greater detail in our third lecture on the environmental dimension of a socialist architecture.

- The possibilities of a socialist architecture under capitalist relations of production.

At ASH, we're fed up with people saying that we can't do anything until we vote the right party or person into government. That isn't going to happen. There is no parliamentary road to socialism. At the risk of sounding like a communist, Leon Trotsky had this idea about what he called the transitional period. In Moscow there is, still, a wonderful example of Constructivist architecture called the Narkomfin building. It was built in 1930 as a building in which the bourgeois family unit in which most urban dwellers had lived prior to the Revolution was superseded by individual maisonettes composed of a living space and bedrooms, but in which the kitchen and dining room, located in an annexe to the main building, were communal. It was a transitional building in that it was designed to change people's practices of living with each other. We believe that socialism isn't something that is handed down from above by a government, even if the one elected calls itself 'socialist'. The history of the Twentieth Century is littered with examples of 'socialist' governments that have either remained capitalist and imperialist or fallen into dictatorships. Socialism can only come about if we change our practices — our practices of living together as well as working together. A socialist architecture is a change in architectural practice as well as in housing provision. Over the past five years, Architects for Social Housing has been able to practice a socialist architecture under even the most

restrictive Neo-liberal conditions of economics and policy, and we have done so at the heart of that Great Whore of Babylon called London.

- The necessity of architects reclaiming the social dimension and political agency of their profession.

Finally, there is a real desire among young architects to reclaim this agency. Most of the architects who come and work with us are young architects in large practices, and they are quite aware that they are forging the chains of their own oppression. In their daily practice they are contributing to a housing crisis that they are experiencing first hand not only in their inability to get onto the fabled 'housing ladder' of capitalism, but in their housing precarity, their housing poverty and, in some cases, their homelessness. They know from the exploitative work practices under which they labour just how inadequate individual ethics is as a model for responding to their situation. And some of them, who have worked with ASH in the past, have recently joined the United Voices of the World trades union as the <u>Section of Architectural Workers</u>.

3. Practical Advice for the Agents for a Socialist Architecture

The above are just some of the bases for the urgent necessity of a socialist architecture now. However, only a part of what we do at ASH can be called 'architecture'. A lot of what we do before we get anywhere near producing a feasibility study or designing a scheme is advising residents on how to save their homes from demolition, how to propose a financially feasible alternative for their refurbishment, and how to build the homes in which they can afford to live. The procedure by which councils, developers and architects go about trying to demolish and redevelop residents' homes is, by now, a fairly standard one, using the same arguments and employing the same tactics. Because of this, we find ourselves giving out the same advice over and over again. We thought it would be useful, therefore, to write this advice down within a framework that residents and housing campaigns can use without necessarily having to contact us. And in a spirit of optimism perhaps justified by the complete moral bankruptcy in which our current housing policies have left us, we also want to make this information available to councillors, architects and — why not? — even developers and politicians who are looking for a way out of our current impasse. To do this, we want, in our book, to provide the following information.

- A map of the development process through its various phases:

  a) Strategy and Preparation
  b) Drawing up the Brief
  c) Design and Planning
  d) Procurement and Construction
  e) Management and Maintenance

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We're going to look at this in greater detail in Part 2 of this lecture; but our primary concern is that, within this long and drawn-put process, architects are currently only brought in at phase 2 at best, and most often at phase 3. What we want to do is get them involved far earlier in the process, when all the big decisions that determine the agency of the architect are made. Doing so, however, is not only a task of architects, but of all the agents for a socialist architecture.

- The options available for housing provision and their social, financial and environmental costs.

For example, you're living on a council or social housing estate and your landlord, whether the local authority or housing association, tells you they want to demolish and redevelop your estate. What does that mean for the residents? What are the social, financial and environmental costs of demolition and redevelopment? What consequences do those costs that have for the tenure and price of the new residential property built in their place? How does that effect the ability of residents to return to the new development? What are the alternative options? And what benefits do they have for both existing and future residents — socially, environmentally and economically? At present, little or none of this information is made available for residents facing this all-too-common situation, and what they are told are lies. We want to make the truth about their situation available to as wide a range of people as possible: not only to residents but also to architects and councillors.

- The questions residents should be asking local authorities, developers (including housing associations) and consultants (including architects).

The centre of the book, in many ways, are a series of questions that residents and other would-be agents for a socialist architecture can and should ask of the landlord, their private development partners and the consultants they employ to misinform residents about their situation. Residents are invariably told, quite early in the development process, that demolition and redevelopment of their homes is the only financially viable option. What we want to do is give residents the questions they need to ask about how this decision has been reached, and to challenge what they have been told. This means giving residents the knowledge they need — which they often acquire themselves but usually too late — to ask these questions. Not only on the estates for which ASH has produced design alternatives to demolition but on the many more we have advised, we've found that residents asking the right questions slows the whole development process down. It places the organisations trying to rush the process through as quickly as possible on the back foot. And it helps to arm resident campaigns with the tools they need to defend themselves and their homes. In this aspect, *For a Socialist Architecture* will be a practical manual for combating the considerable legislative, financial and propaganda power behind the estate demolition programme and the housing crisis.

- The questions architects should be asking themselves, residents, clients (including local authorities and developers) and policy makers.

However, in addition to arming residents with information, ASH believes we also need to talk to and convince architects. In the UK, at least, across the development process, it's very hard to talk to councils, who are all but totally unaccountable to either residents or campaigners. It's even harder to talk to developers, who have neither interest in, nor obligation to consider, the social value of their product. Architects, however, do have a duty that derives from their Code of Conduct under the Architects Registration Board. As we'll examine in detail in later lectures, it's a greatly diminished one, and it is rarely if ever upheld by the ARB; but in principle, at least, it binds architects to something like a medical professional's Hippocratic oath. From the very beginning of our practice, therefore, ASH has reached out, in both protest and comradeship, to put pressure on architectural practices to observe and honour not only its codes of conduct but the wider reach and responsibility of the profession. This means questioning who, exactly, is the client of the architect. Is it the council or developer that employs them and writes their brief; or it is the users of their product? These are questions architects need to start asking of themselves, first of all, but also of their clients and, we would say, policy makers too. Again and again, we are told by architects that, yes, they agree with what we are saying, but then they plaintively ask us what can they possibly do within the current policy and funding framework? There are things we can do, and ASH is not alone in demonstrating that in practice.

- The questions councillors, civil servants (including planners) should be asking themselves, residents, developers and their local, municipal and governmental authorities.

This questioning of the logic — and certainly of the results — of Neo-liberal housing policy extends beyond residents and architects to individuals, at least, if not the institutions in which they work, within the development process. There are councillors, there are planners, there are even politicians who are dismayed at the housing crisis they are complicit in producing, and are looking for what is commonly called a 'solution', but would be more accurately described as the practices of what they would probably be horrified to call a socialist architecture.

- The available financial, management and ownership models for housing provision.

When confronted with the single option for the demolition and redevelopment of their homes, residents are told that it is financially unviable to do anything else. This has led many resident communities to explore not only alternative financial models for infill housing on their estates without demolition, but also to look at ways to take management and even ownership of the estate out of the mismanagement of the council and into their hands. The most popular means has been through applying for the Right to Transfer the

management of their homes into a Tenant Management Organisation, and/or taking ownership of their homes into a Community Land Trust; but there are many other financial, management and ownership alternatives that are being kept from them by councils and the consultants and architects they employ. We mean to make this information available to residents, and show them that there is always an alternative to the disastrous estate regeneration programme that is demolishing and privatising council housing in the service of property developers and investors.

- The changes we need to make housing policy and legislation serve housing need.

Ultimately, what we're trying to do is change the capitalist framework within which all of us are forced to operate. For the moment, we'll leave the revolution to another day — perhaps another five or ten years; but what we can change today is housing policy and legislation. Certainly, in the UK — and I'd imagine around the capitalist world — Neo-liberal housing policy is quite clearly not working, if by housing we mean a home in which the population can afford to live. Everybody can see that. Even the companies making a fortune out of the housing crisis can see how unsustainable it is. The question is: what should replace it? Answering that is difficult, not least because of the huge amount of disinformation and outright lies told by the ideologues of Neo-liberalism about the viable alternatives. To combat these lies, ASH also writes housing policy proposals that we promote whenever we can, and which we'll look at in a later lecture.

4. Glossary of Housing Terminology and Procedures for Residents

'The truth', as Oscar Wilde once quipped, 'isn't quite the sort of thing one tells to a nice, sweet, refined girl'; and the capitalist state takes the same condescending attitude towards us. Within the ideology informing housing policy, the truth isn't slightly at variance from its justifications; nor is it a corruption of the facts: it is, in fact, the exact opposite of what we are told. One of the ways the makers of policy get away with this is through the terminology in which housing policy is phrased. A lot of what ASH does in advising resident and housing campaigns is to translate the lies with which the local authorities and their contractors are trying to deceive them into the very real consequences those lies will have for them should they believe them. For this reason, another section of *For a Socialist Architecture* will be composed of a glossary of terms that are used again and again in the arguments, promises, justifications, reports, policies and legislation through which the housing crisis is produced. In the UK, seemingly generalised phrases such as 'affordable housing' and the 'right to return' have very particular, policy and legislatively defined meanings that are very different from — and indeed the opposite of — what most people would understand by them; and it's the former that will define their application to the development process. Informing residents what these precise meanings are can help them in the process of questioning everything they are told by the agents of a capitalist architecture, all the lies with which they are being deceived. This glossary of housing terminology includes, but is not limited to, the following phrases:

- Joint ventures, special purpose vehicles, wholly-owned companies, and other means of privatisation.

The most recent example of this is the Stirling Prize-winning Goldsmiths Street redevelopment in Norwich, which was celebrated not only by Norwich City council but by every architect and journalist as council housing when it was, in fact, developed by the Norwich Regeneration Company, the council-owned development, management and lettings vehicle. Although Norwich council owns the company shares, the company itself is a commercial venture. This means it will operate at best as a housing association; the tenancies, under existing legislation, will at best be assured tenancies, not the secure council tenancies they have been described as; the company will be compelled to make a profit for its private development partners and investors; and, as a housing association, there's nothing to stop the company raising service charges or converting what are currently homes for social rent into affordable rents in the future, as so many housing associations are currently doing as a matter of policy. This is by far and away the most benign of the examples of special purpose vehicles being used to implement estate demolition schemes, with most being used to develop overwhelmingly market-sale properties; but all are a means of stealth privatisation, and residents told that such vehicles are public housing need to understand what the difference will mean for them.

- Place-making, gentrification and social cleansing.

While 'placemaking' is the developer's euphemism for the enforced displacement of existing communities and their replacement with a different class demographic, 'gentrification' — which was coined in the 1960s by the British sociologist Ruth Glass to describe the influx of the suburban middle classes into working-class urban neighbourhoods with the same but more gradual result — has gone from a social phenomenon to be studied to an ideological model to be implemented. And while academics continue to use the latter term, among housing campaigners both terms have been supplanted with 'social cleansing'. This has two benefits. First, this term more accurately describes the state-led process through which our cities are being evicted of their no-longer wanted residents to clear the land for equally unwanted residential developments. And second, while the middle classes have reacted to their role in the negative effects of gentrification by arguing that their greater disposable income brings much-needed investment into neighbourhoods abandoned by the state, 'social cleansing' makes the class dimension of their complicity in the state's actions explicit, and has, consequently, drawn vehement denunciations of its use from journalists, academics, architects and other spokespersons of the middle classes. Replacing the former two terms with the latter is an example of estate residents who are fighting for their homes appropriating the language employed to deceive and silence them to their own ends, and is, as such, a model of ideological struggle.

- Tenures and costs of so-called 'affordable housing'.

'Affordable housing' is probably the greatest and most successful of the lies through which the current phase of Neo-liberal housing policy has been implemented. Introduced in 2010 by the Homes and Communities Agency, a quango of housing associations, affordable housing includes affordable rent at anything up to 80 per cent of market rate, rent-to-buy schemes, and shared-ownership and shared equity properties far beyond the reach of most Londoners. The almost total replacement of homes for social rent by affordable housing as the recognised form of public housing is testified by the latest figures to come out of the Greater London Authority. These reveal that, of the 31,851 completions of residential units in London in the year 2017-18, 4,703 were classed as 'affordable housing'. Although this represents less than 15 per cent of the total — with the remaining 85 per cent, 27,148 units, for market sale or rent — and therefore far short of the 35 per cent targeted by the London Mayor, only 433 units, an extraordinary 1.3 per cent, were for social rent. Indefensible as these figures are a decade into a crisis of housing affordability in one of the wealthiest cities and in the fifth strongest economy in the world, the truth is the exact opposite of what most people would understand by the term 'affordable housing'. In furtherance of this doublespeak, this is the last time these figures will be available, as last year the GLA announced that from now on it would be combining its data on social rent and London Affordable Rent into a single category, effectively erasing social rent as a category even of affordable housing.

- The consultation process, resident ballots, and the manufacturing of resident consent.

The consultation process — which only begins long after all the big decisions have been made by the local authority or landlord and their private development partners, including the architects and consultants — is not about informing residents of the available options and helping them to make the best decision for them; it is about manufacturing resident consent for the demolition and redevelopment process that has already been decided. We challenge anyone to find a single estate community that thinks this process has been either open or transparent, and a number of campaigns, including Save Cressingham Gardens, have taken councils to a Judicial Review for the numerous failings of their consultation. To avoid this course of resistance, in 2018 the Greater London Authority introduced resident ballots on the demolition of their homes. However, the terms of these ballots, which includes the stipulation that they be held before a private development partner is chosen, means that residents will be voting on nothing more than promises to which neither the council nor their future partners will be contractually bound. Nor are councils obliged to offer residents an alternative option, such as the refurbishment of the estate funded by infill development, meaning they are forced to choose between the continued managed decline of their homes or their demolition and redevelopment. Far from being a means of resident empowerment, resident ballots are a means of manufacturing resident consent to which councils, developers and architects can point

when the true consequences of the residents' constrained choices become apparent. Once again, therefore, the truth of this housing policy is the exact opposite of how it is being presented.

- The role of financial viability assessments in increasing developer profit at the expense of housing provision.

In principle, such assessments are there to determine whether a proposed scheme is financial viability for the developer. In practice, however, they are used to drive down the provision of anything that detracts from a developer's profits, such as the percentage of even affordable housing, let alone homes for social rent; the measures taken to reduce the carbon emissions from the construction and performance of the development; as well as the Section 106 agreements and Community Interest Levies that contribute to the infrastructure of roads, clinics, hospitals, nurseries, schools, parks, community amenities and commercial facilities that are required to turn a property development into a residential community. Extraordinarily, these financial viability assessments are produced by the developers themselves, run to many thousands of pages, and invariably conclude that all of the above must be reduced to the bare minimum or removed altogether if the scheme is to go ahead. Councils, even when their cabinets are not composed of lobbyists for the same developers and the same consultants employed by the planning authority, have neither the expertise nor the political will to challenge these assessments. Research by housing campaigners has shown that developers repeatedly use all manner of <u>manipulations</u> to reach their conclusions, such as calculating profits on current house prices without taking account of inflation. Rather than establishing the financial costs of various options, viability assessments are there to manipulate planning authorities into agreeing to an outcome that has already been decided in advance between developers and cabinets. Again, like residents' ballots, financial viability assessments are doing the exact opposite of what they claim to do, and residents need to be given the information they need to challenge their use in the development process.

- The 'right to return' and other empty promises.

The final, desperate lie told to resistant residents, and the one that goes to the heart of the fallacy on which human rights are founded, is the right to return. Brandished by everyone from government minister and borough councillor to community consultant and contracted architect, the right of existing residents to return to the redevelopment — and to nothing less than a 'like-for-like' replacement for their demolished former homes — is in truth entirely contingent upon their financial ability to afford the considerably increased rental and service charges if they are a council or housing association tenant, and hugely increased house prices if they are a leaseholder. The figures on just how few residents are able to enact this right reveal that this financial contingency is sufficiently prohibitive to make it nothing more than an empty promise. But even for those few who are able, this right to return also means the right to lose their

security of tenure as a council tenant, and in the case of leaseholders offered shared ownership of a new property, to lose their status as homeowners for nothing more than the legal status of an assured tenant. All of this is contained in the housing policy of the 'right to return'; and residents undergoing the consultation process need to be informed by some other source than the consultants and architects paid to withhold that information from them. *For a Socialist Architecture* will lay this out clearly and in plain language, together with references, should residents and campaigners wish to substantiate these truths, to their documentary, policy and legislative proof.

5. The Inadequacies of Human Rights

I want to end by returning to the perhaps well-meaning but fundamentally misguided struggle to have housing made a human right. This is a struggle that dominates so much of our thinking about housing provision; but it is based in human rights that guarantee, in principle, nothing more than our right to compete in the market free of that old bugbear of liberalism, 'discrimination'. In the UK this 'freedom' is guaranteed in legislation by the Equality Act 2010, which offers legal protection from discrimination based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation — but not on economic status. Applied to a human need that also constitutes, for the vast majority of the population, our largest single expenditure, the supposed guarantee of a 'right' to housing is close to useless as a model of housing provision. So how is it that human rights are held up as the ideal to which not only housing justice but all capitalist legal systems should aspire?

Human rights arose in the aftermath of the Second World War as the favoured ethical framework of capitalism in its defence against the perceived threat of socialism across the world. This was erected, first, through the centralisation of economic and political control in the hands of an unelected leadership that would become the European Union; and second, through the ideological championing of human rights in opposition to the ethical framework provided by socialism. To this end, the European Convention on Human Rights, administered by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), came into force in 1953, under Article 8 of which:

> *'Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence. There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.'*

The UK granted individual citizens the right to petition the ECHR in 1966; and the Convention itself became a part of UK law through the Human Rights Act 1998, which

adopted Article 8 verbatim, and was passed by Parliament under Prime Minister Tony Blair's Labour Government.

A decade before this, however, following the collapse of the Eastern Bloc in 1989, human rights had replaced socialist principles with an ethical order based on the illusions of free-market capitalism and representative democracy imposed on the rest of the world by the military power of the USA with the acquiescence, if not direct support, of the United Nations. With the hope of political revolution and an economic alternative to capitalism apparently crushed forever, the language of human rights described the putative 'supersession' of politics by single-issue campaigns focused on the politics of identity, which was administered by the new orthodoxy of political correctness. This erasure of difference by the Neo-liberal ideology of multiculturalism in practice imposed the most homogeneous consumerist culture the world has ever seen, and one ideally suited to the colonial and imperialist aspirations of monopoly capitalism. Any country not embracing this economic, political and cultural orthodoxy was threatened with invasion and so-called 'regime change' — not, of course, for its rejection of capitalism or democratic election of socialist governments, but for its violation of the human rights of individual citizens to pursue the 'American Dream'. This liberal agenda, like that imposed by the missionaries of European colonialism, conveniently concealed the economic inequality systemically produced by monopoly capitalism beneath universal ethical and cultural norms imposed by powerful political and financial individuals and corporations in the service of their private interests.

To this end, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, rejected 'the right of political rebellion' but enshrined 'the right to own property' (Article 17). It granted 'the right to equal pay for equal work' (Article 23), but said nothing about what makes some forms of work less equal than others under capitalism, and thus without the means to attain 'equal pay'. The Declaration also stated that: 'Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including . . . housing' (Article 25). It is from this 'right to housing', which Canada recognised in 1976 when it ratified the UN's International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, that the 2019 National Housing Strategy Act draws its framework.

Human rights have been drawn up as principles without regard to their practical implementation through a legal system that, as I said before, has repeatedly shown itself to be subordinate to political and financial pressures that override those principles. Recent examples of this in the UK are the findings of United Nations Special Rapporteurs Raquel Rolnik on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living in December 2013; of Philip Alston on extreme poverty and human rights in November 2018; and of Nils Melzer on the torture and extra-territorial extradition of Julian Assange into the gulag of the US justice system in May 2019 — all of which have been casually and even contemptuously dismissed by the UK Government, despite it

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being a signatory to both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights. These are only the tip of the iceberg of the failure of UK courts and governments to uphold the human rights of its citizens, as well as their passing of legislation in contravention of those rights, most especially over the past twenty years. Yet these examples demonstrate the limits of human rights as a model of good governance and social justice.

But even leaving aside the question of their upholding by the state in practice, human rights, even in principle, guarantee nothing more than the right to compete in the market from a position of unequally remunerated work and hugely unequal inheritance. The framework of property-ownership in which these rights have been written is made explicit in Protocol 1 of the European Convention of Human Rights, which reads: 'Every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions'. And in the UK, we have repeatedly seen the inadequacy of this framework when applied to the housing crisis: of the unequal right to compensation for leaseholders' homes demolished to make way for new developments they cannot afford to purchase; of the financial contingency of residents' right to return to the new, far more expensive properties built in their place; of the government's arbitrary and politicised rejection of an estate community's right to take over the management of their own homes from the state; of the denial of their right to transfer the estate into their ownership; of the denial of their right to see the financial viability assessments by which the demolition of their homes is justified; of the legal prosecution of their right to assemble in protest against that demolition; and of the financial contingency of their right of access to the law itself to contest the local authority's decision in court. Faced with the repeated failure of these rights to defend residents and their homes from the overriding demands of capitalism, it is necessary to formulate the principles and practices of a socialist architecture beyond the limitations of human rights.

After forty years of Neo-liberal propaganda, most architects — and certainly the vast majority in the UK — equate socialism either with the bogey-man of totalitarianism propagated by the US culture industry or, alternatively, the social-democratic Neo-liberalism of the European Union. But at ASH we aren't interested in identities (Labour-voting activists who identify themselves as 'anarchist' or 'socialist'), but in social practice. And over 5 years of practice we have demonstrated that a socialist architecture is not dependent for its practice upon a socialist government, a socialist economic system or even upon socialist architects. And while a socialist architecture must campaign for all of the above, its existence is manifested through practice alone. So, whether or not an architect, resident or campaigner identifies as a 'socialist' (whatever that may mean to them personally), we believe that formulating the principles of a socialist architecture will show that it is possible to practice architecture as something other than the obedient instrument of capitalism.

Socialism, in principle, grants equal pay for equal work. But this in itself does not create equality between individuals with very different means, needs and abilities. Only under a communist distribution — which in Karl Marx's classic formula takes from each according to their abilities and gives to each according to their needs — is an equal standard of living possible. What we are faced with, however, is neither a communist nor a socialist society, but a capitalist one, in which human rights, even in principle, guarantee nothing more than the right to compete in the market from a position of hugely unequal means. Our present task, therefore, is to articulate the principles of a socialist architectural practice within capitalist relations of production, and in doing so lay one of the paths for the transition — perhaps the revolution — to a socialist future. But in the absence of anything resembling even a pre-revolutionary society in capitalist democracies, this is a manifesto for a socialist architecture struggling to free itself from the chains of capitalism.

Lecture 1. Part 2. Social Practices

Alternative cycles of production, distribution, exchange and consumption

Capitalist Architecture   **Socialist Architecture**
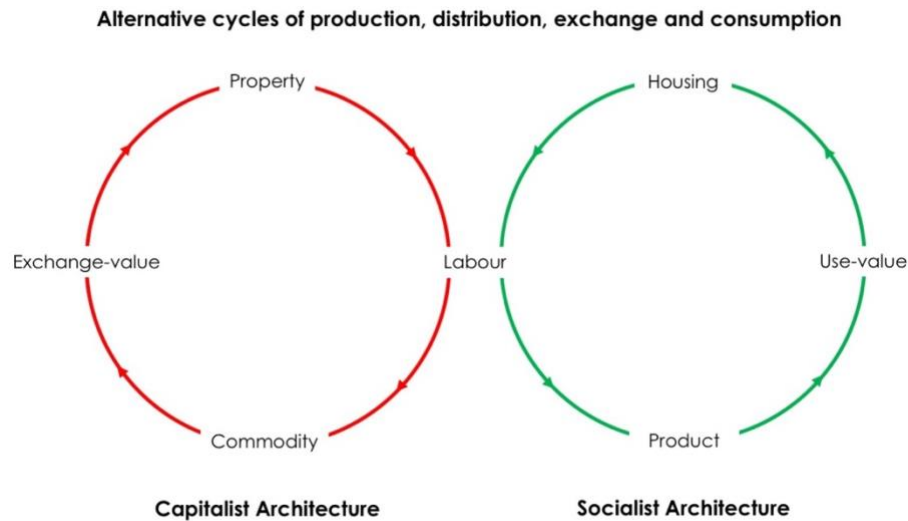
1. Agents for a Socialist Architecture

Let's start with some basic questions, which I want to pose in relation to this diagram of the different cycles of production, distribution, exchange and consumption for a capitalist and socialist architecture (*above*). What does a socialist architecture produce? Who produces it? For whom is it produced? How is it produced? What value do its products have?

A socialist architecture is one that engages with the totality of its social, economic and environmental contexts, and is, because of this, socially, environmentally and economically sustainable. A socialist architecture is produced by and for those who do and will inhabit it, not as a commodity for those who want to buy and sell it. A socialist architecture is one that meets the housing and civic needs of its citizens. A socialist architecture is never produced for profit, but in order to meet these needs. It's value, therefore, is always its use-value as housing or other asset of community value, never it's exchange value as property. These are some of the principles of a socialist architecture, and over the next month we'll be exploring and formulating more in relation to the environmental, economic and political dimension of architecture.

A socialist architecture cannot be separated from the processes of its production, including its funding, procurement, design, construction, maintenance, use and re-use. These processes, which for a socialist architecture take precedence over the purely formal and material qualities of the architectural object endlessly fetishised in architectural magazines, extend back before and continue beyond the production of a building.

A socialist architecture is produced collectively by everybody: by those who pay for it and those who inhabit it; by those who design it, those who build it, and those who use it; by those who argue, lobby and legislate for it; by those who manage it, those who maintain it and those who refurbish it; those who dismantle and those who reconfigure it. These are all the agents of a socialist architecture.

When thinking about how a socialist architecture can be produced, agents of a socialist architecture must first address the existing — capitalist — processes, consider how they currently participate in them, and invent ways in which they can intervene in and disrupt those processes. All processes of urban development for the provision and maintenance of public housing, the public realm and amenities are cyclical — moving from design and construction to inhabitation and maintenance to refurbishment and reconstruction. We need to start by acknowledging, therefore, that all these processes are always already taking place simultaneously, that every project is at one or another stage of that process, and that we must enter into and act at every one of these stages.

Unfortunately, however, by the time an architectural practice is typically commissioned by a client, a huge number of decisions have already taken place — from city-wide urban and planning policies defining what can and cannot be built and how, to a client making the individual decision to develop a site. Part of the argument *For a Socialist Architecture* is making is that architects, built-environment professionals and residents — all of whose agency is being suppressed under current 'top down' orthodoxies of practice — need to start engaging with each and every stage of this process, as well as with each other. What I'll be looking at in this lecture is the various ways in which the agents for a socialist architecture can start to do this. This book will be for all these agents, all of whom must take the opportunities that are available to them individually to collectively produce a socialist architecture.

Before we get into the specifics of this process, I want to talk about context. Part of the point of delivering these lectures in Vancouver is to see if we could draw conclusions that are both locally and internationally applicable. We have tried to identify broad categories whose terminology is not exclusively specific to particular cities, states or countries. The content is not exhaustive, and is based mainly on our own experiences of London's development processes; but in order to address a global audience we have tried to set out common principles of the process, rather than dwell on specifics.

The conversation around terminology is also something that needs to be explored, as the opacity of the language used to describe the development process can be an impediment to non-professionals engaging with the process. Terminology, moreover, is specific to language, place and policy. So although we will discuss the development process within the professional and policy context we know best — that of the UK under a Conservative Government — how this can be applied to different contexts is something we'll address at greater length in the book.

2. The Development Process

The first thing I want to do is to map the development process. Before we can act on it, we need to understand, and educate all potential agents for a socialist architecture in, what this process is and how it works. Then I'm going to give you examples of ways in which Architects for Social Housing and other agents for a socialist architecture have intervened in, disrupted and interfered with the ways in which this process works for capitalist architecture. Each of these examples has disrupted the normal running of the capitalist development process. The creation of alternatives to this process is a crucial way not only of slowing it down and enabling more engagement, but also of shifting the debate from *'There is No Alternative'*, demonstrating that there are alternatives at every stage and in many different forms. Ultimately, we want to instigate policy that will change these processes, but the housing situation is so grave that we can't afford to wait for that change to come about. We have to act now within the constraints of Neo-liberal housing policy and the development processes it accommodates.

As I said, the development process doesn't have a beginning, properly speaking. The process is cyclical, without end, and each of its moments is happening all of the time. Every house or building in which we live, work or that we otherwise occupy is at a different stage in this process. But for the point of clarifying these moments as possible points of intervention, through which we can engage with and disrupt the existing process (*above*), this is a schematic layout of the phases of the development process.

A. Strategy and Preparation
A.1. Policy and Legislation
      A.1.1. Re-zoning and Infrastructure Projects
      A.1.2. Neighbourhood Plans
      A.1.3. Right to Manage and Right to Transfer

A.1.4. Compulsory Purchase Order and State Aid

A.1.5. Asset of Community Value

A.2. Propaganda, Cultural Policy and Cultural agency

A.2.1. Negative Perceptions of Council and Social Housing

A.2.2. Proposing Alternative Narratives

A.3. Education and Institutions

A.3.1. Codes of Conduct

B. Drawing up the Brief

B.1. Works to Existing Housing Estates

B.1.1. Arguments for the Demolition of Housing Estates

B.1.2. Questioning the Brief

B.2. Other Public-realm and Urban-design Projects

B.3. Ballots

C. Design and Planning

C.1. The Design Process

C.1.1. Questions for an Architectural, Design or Consultancy Practice

- The Client: Who is a Socialist Architecture for?
- The Form: What does a Socialist Architecture look like?
- Refurbishment versus New-build
- The Layout: Social Spaces
- Construction Costs
- Environmental Impacts
- Construction Methods

C.1.2. Stakeholders

C.1.3. Community Participation

C.2. The Planning Process

C.2.1. Consultation

C.2.2. Objections

D. Procurement and Construction

D.1. Construction

D.1.1. Self-build

D.1.2. Apprenticeships

D.1.3. On Site

E. Management and Maintenance

E.1. Managed Decline

E.2. Management Structures

E.2.1. Housing Co-operatives

E.2.2. Tenants' Management Organisations

E.2.3. Community Land Trusts

A. Strategy and Preparation

At this stage, architects, residents, planners, lawyers, councillors, contractors and all the other possible agents for a socialist architecture need to start participating in the making, scrutiny of, and contribution to housing and planning legislation, national and local planning and policy guidelines, municipal and local area plans and national strategies and programmes. These are the frameworks that codify the legislative and policy boundaries of our urban environment; and it is to these that every local authority, developer and housing association will have to refer if and when they are challenged later in the development process.

Normally, these documents are extremely and intentionally vague, with a large amount of jargon, ambiguity and small print to allow changes to the plans further along in the development process, when they become subject to 'viability assessments' and other get-out clauses. How, then, can we hold planning authorities and developers to account when they continue to get away with the privatisation of public land and assets?

A.1. Policy and Legislation

Planning and policies around large-scale public projects are more or less proscriptive, depending on the particular urban context; but in most cases they can always be appealed, challenged and changed. It should be the role of a socialist architecture to participate in the ongoing process of challenging local and national guidelines and frameworks. In the UK in 1976, 49 per cent of all architects worked in the public sector. Now that figure is 0.7 per cent in England, and 0.2 per cent in London. This is not to suggest that planners and policy makers don't have the right skills for the job, but it is not surprising that the decisions they make prioritise investors and developers — who through aggressive lobbying, often by councillors, have their interests heard in local and central government — over local communities or those with an interest in social infrastructure over profit.

Developers always manage to find loopholes in, or to buy their way out of, policy requirements, and this needs to be held in check; but this does show the flexibility and interpretive nature of any policy stipulation. The difference is that developers and those profiting from the current situation can afford to buy their way into the offices of our government, and employ lawyers to push through appeals. To combat this, a socialist architecture will need to call on the services of lawyers with a social vision, and are prepared to donate some of their time to support local communities in their campaigns.

A.1.1. Re-Zoning and Infrastructure Projects

Designation of special areas or zoning, such as Opportunity Areas, Enterprise Zones or Simplified Planning Zones, as well as new infrastructural development, such as transport

routes, will inevitably herald the onset of large swathes of new development, with corresponding rise in land values and rents. To ensure this is to the benefit of the local and wider community, proposals such as Land Value Capture or other mechanisms for socialising value uplift need to be explored and proposed.

A.1.2. Neighbourhood Plans

In the UK, Neighbourhood Plans are — at least in theory — a way for interested communities to produce their own visions for specific areas. This is a clear opportunity for architects and other built-environment professionals and local residents to come together to devise a community-led proposal that is in the best interests of their neighbourhood. However, in most cases, such plans rely on voluntary contributions, have no legal authority or democratic support, involve a lot of work, and more often than not are totally ignored by the planning authority.

Consultation with Newham Council: Greater Carpenters Neighbourhood Plan

Plan from AECOM Site Options Report, October 2017

An example of this is the Carpenters estate in Newham, East London, which contains 710 council homes. These have been gradually emptied of residents by Newham council over the past 13 years, preparatory to the estate's demolition and development as part of the so-called 'legacy' of the Summer Olympics that were held in London in 2012. However, the council has been unable to find a private development partner, so the redevelopment

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scheme has stalled in the face of a long campaign of resistance. Despite this, around half the residents have been evicted, leaving 395 council homes empty in a borough in which over 13,600 people and 1 in every 25 constituents is sleeping rough or living in some form of temporary accommodation. In response to this situation, a group of residents and members of the local community formed the Greater Carpenters' Neighbourhood Forum, and in 2017, working with AECOM engineering firm, they published the Greater Carpenters Neighbourhood Plan. This proposed refurbishing all 710 of the existing homes on the estate up to the Decent Homes Standard, as well as developing six brownfield and commercial sites on and around the estate in order to build between 508 and 658 new residential dwellings (*previous page*).

The council, which has set up a commercial development, management and letting company called Red Doors in order to build properties for market sale and shared ownership, has been resistant and obstreperous, and refused to supply either ASH or the GCNF with the feasibility study for the refurbishment of the estate or the viability assessment of the financial cost of demolishing and redeveloping it. It has also failed to produce impact assessments of the social, environmental or economic costs of demolition and redevelopment to either residents or their immediate neighbours, which includes a primary school of nearly 500 children whose playground will border a building site for the next 10-20 years. Moreover, the London Legacy Development Corporation, to which planning authority over the land was passed after the 2012 Olympics, has responded by revising its Local Plan to require a minimum of 2,300 residential dwellings gross in the Greater Carpenters area. This is typical of the collusion between public authorities and private companies that would-be agents for a socialist architecture have to face; but the Greater Carpenters Neighbourhood Plan is a good example of campaigners engaging with the development process at an earlier stage than that at which architects and residents are typically involved.

A.1.3. Right to Manage and Right to Transfer

The Right to Manage and the Right to Transfer are both mechanisms recently brought into UK legislation that facilitate community management or ownership of their estates. Although potentially a form of privatisation, this is often one of the only recourses a community has when their homes are threatened with demolition by the local authority.

As an example of which, the Cressingham Gardens estate in Lambeth, South London, is currently threatened with demolition by Lambeth council. In response, residents made an application to the Secretary of State for the Right to Transfer the estate into their own management. To support this application they produced a People's Plan (*overleaf*) that proposed an economic model through which they could transfer the estate into their ownership as a Community Land Trust; and after a long campaign that included two judicial reviews, in July 2019 the Government granted residents the Right to Transfer all 306 homes on the estate into a community-owned organisation outside of council control.

By the community. For the community

THE PEOPLE'S PLAN

NURSERY

A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO DEMOLITION

- Up to 37 homes at council rent levels
- Contributes to council's 1,000 homes pledge
- Support network retained
- No community displacement
- Financially more cost effective

PEOPLE'S PLAN REPORT

Another example is the West Kensington and Gibbs Green estates in Hammersmith and Fulham, West London, whose residents have been living under the threat of the demolition of their homes since 2012. Architects for Social Housing was first approached by their not-for-profit representative, West Kensington and Gibbs Green Community Homes (WKGGCH), in July 2015, when they asked us to suggest an architectural practice that would produce a feasibility study and design alternatives to the proposed demolition of the two estates. This was to be part of the residents' application to the Secretary of State for the Right to Transfer both estates into their ownership. In the event, the application was rejected in July 2019 — presumably because to grant it would be an implicit criticism of the decision of a Conservative-run council by a Conservative Minister; while the same application, in contrast, was granted to residents on the Cressingham Gardens estate, which is threatened by the Labour-run Lambeth council. In November 2019, however, it was announced that both estates will be sold back to Hammersmith and Fulham council at the same price they originally sold it to the developers.

We hope that the council, which has been run by Labour since 2014, will now discard the plans for its demolition and enable the transfer of the estate to WKGGCH and implement the design options proposed by ASH for the refurbishment and infill development of additional homes for social rent on the two estates. But even if they don't, the production of a design alternative to demolition and the application for a Right to Transfer played a key role in saving both council estates from what for many years looked like certain demolition.

A.1.4. Compulsory Purchase Order and State Aid

Compulsory Purchase Orders are typically used against leaseholders and freeholders of properties within areas outlined for development, such as Opportunity Areas or council estates targeted for 'regeneration', to enable the local authority to buy back properties at the market rate from the owner in order to facilitate works 'in the public interest'. Aside from the negative consequences they can have when used on individual households living on council estates condemned to demolition, CPOs can also be put to use for the benefit of local communities.

Following a long campaign by StART Haringey Community Land Trust to take community ownership of the St. Ann's Hospital site in Haringey and develop it themselves, the Greater London Authority purchased the land from Barnet Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust in 2018. During the campaign, planning permission for the redevelopment for the St. Ann's site was awarded with only 14 per cent affordable housing, which had the effect of setting the development value of the site. Unfortunately, due to the European Union prohibition on State Aid, which stipulates that a public body cannot sell its land and assets for less than the market price, the cost of the land was now so high that the community's wish to develop the land as '100 per cent affordable' housing was deemed financially unviable.

This reveals a fundamental problem with State Aid, a legal term within EU law to describe any state investment (or 'subsidy' in the language of Neo-liberalism) that 'distorts' the so-called 'freedom' of the market. This means that only the financial value — and no other environmental or social value — of the potential development of a site can be taken into consideration. This automatically creates significant difficulties for community groups or other agents for a socialist architecture that wish to bid for these sites, since they will be competing with mainstream developers whose intentions are exclusively for the profit they can extract from the site. The StART Community Land Trust is currently trying to circumvent this by working with the GLA on a community-led vision for the site.

The first principle for a socialist architecture is that public land should not be sold into private hands, but should instead be used by the local authority to maximise facilities for local and public benefit. However, if we are to engage with the existing processes, the creation of a Community Land Trust is one way we can at least prevent the land from entering the private market and the consequences this will have in perpetuity. Local authorities must be made to revise their criteria for the sale of public land under their stewardship, and be compelled to find ways that take into account the social and environmental value of a development, rather than its purely financial value for property developers.

A.1.5. Asset of Community Value

The listing of an Asset of Community Value means that the particular use of a building or community asset is protected. This can help a community retain certain facilities and resources that have social value, such as a public house, and can be strategically useful in the prevention of the destruction of community spaces, and restrict over-development of certain areas.

A.2. Propaganda, Cultural Policy and Cultural Agency

A.2.1. Negative Perceptions of Council and Social Housing

Negative perceptions about council housing are perpetuated in a number of ways, not only through the managed decline of their housing and infrastructure, but also through the cultural reinforcement of negative stereotypes about council estate tenants in television documentaries, so-called 'reality TV' shows, journalism, news programmes, politician' interviews, council statements, developer promotions and other forms of propaganda.

A.2.2. Proposing Alternative Narratives

Agents for a socialist architecture have a duty to counter this cultural stereotyping, and in its place propose alternative narratives in whatever medium is appropriate to their skills and means. This should be done, as much as possible, in collaboration with other disciplines, such as film, photography, writing, painting, music, theatre or performance, utilising a whole range of media to disseminate alternative histories and ways of thinking in different disciplines. These counter-narratives should ideally be introduced into school curricula, and through all teaching opportunities at every age. In addition to interventions in legislation and policy, it is important that we disrupt the cultural perceptions on which the estate regeneration programme relies for its success in demolishing and privatising council and social housing in the middle of a crisis of housing affordability.

To this end, between 2015 and 2017 ASH organised Open Garden Estates. This was a London-wide event held in June to coincide with the National Trust's Open Garden Squares weekend; but instead of visiting London's manor houses and stately homes the public was invited to visit the capital's vanishing council estates. This was an opportunity for a public otherwise instructed to avoid council estates as 'no-go areas' to explore them through guided tours by residents around the gardens of individual homes, communal courtyards and other green spaces. The aim was to help dispel some of the negative images about estates that are promoted by councils, developers, architects, estate agents, think tanks and in the media. The very idea of a garden on a council estate goes against everything we are constantly told is wrong about London's council housing, and in particular the myth of estates as 'concrete jungles' that are home to 'troubled families',

'anti-social behaviour' and 'criminals'. It was also an opportunity for individual campaigns to publicise the threat to their estates through leaflets, petitions and conversations with both the public and fellow residents, as well as making links with visitors from other estates also under threat of demolition.
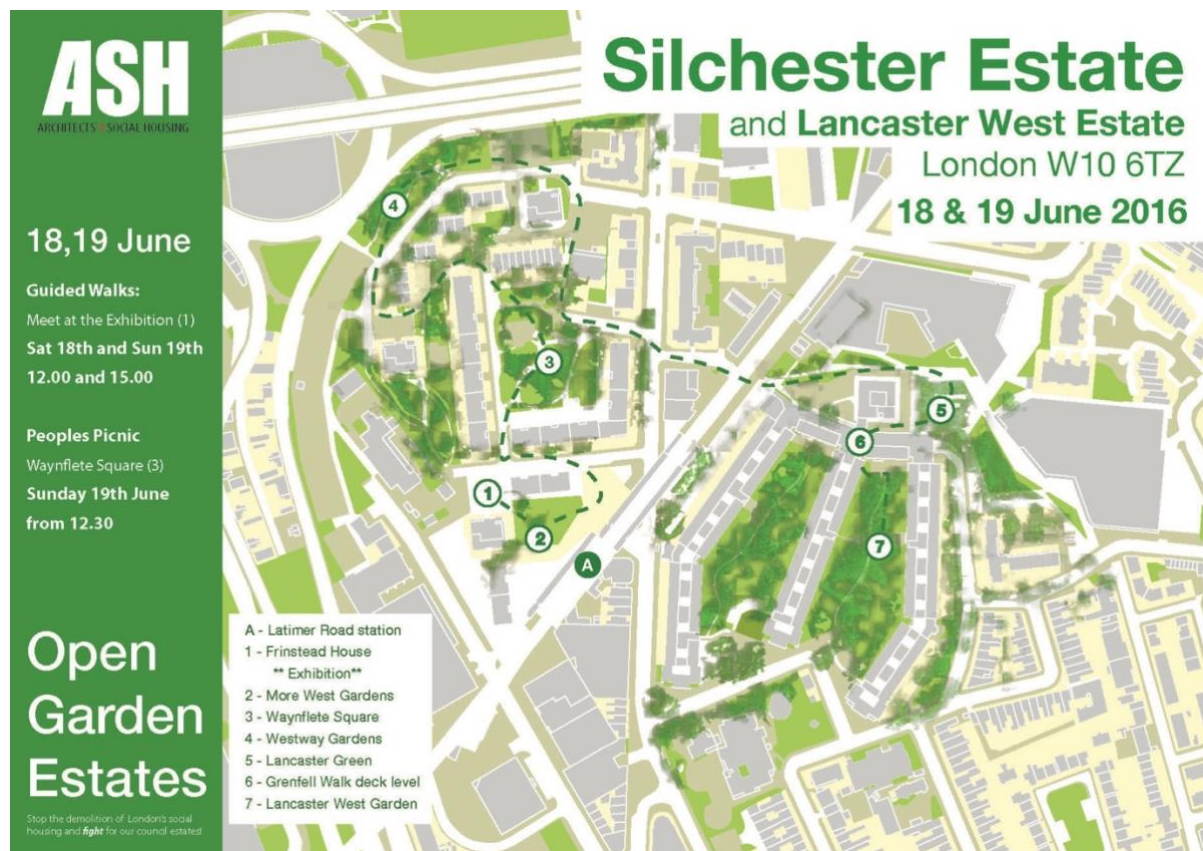
In addition to the tours, for which ASH produced maps of each estate (*above*), activities organised by the estate communities included talks by residents, architects and campaigners; barbeque picnics and guerrilla gardening to repair the vandalism of the estates by councils; a naming ceremony for Macintosh Court, a sheltered-housing estate never given more than an address by the council; film screenings about the effects on residents of the so-called 'regeneration' process; a variety of performances, including a puppet show, a street orchestra and art workshops; exhibitions of paintings and photographs celebrating estate communities, as well as, on Central Hill estate, the designs alternatives to demolition produced by ASH.

Over the three years we organised this event, 18 estate campaigns hosted Open Garden Estates. It received considerable coverage in the press, as well as being listed in the London Festival of Architecture, and a number of documentary films were made of the individual events. In effect, this was a way of turning estates inside out, and showing the public the reality about the architectural qualities of their design, and the strength and variety of the communities that live in them.

A.3. Education and Institutions

Education is essential for a socialist architecture, but extends beyond the education of the traditional agents of capitalist architecture — that is, architects, planners and engineers — to residents, users and potential clients. Education must therefore go beyond the traditional establishments and institutions into broader cultural spaces, onto social media and the street. Mechanisms for doing this will be explored further in our final lecture on the political dimension of architecture.

A.3.1. Codes of Conduct

Formal codes of conduct for architects exist, but not only are they becoming increasingly weak, they are simply not enforced. An architect's code is something that distinguishes them from any other member of the building industry, and in theory imposes upon them a duty of care beyond their client and the contract. These codes need to be both rewritten and reinforced if trust is to be rebuilt between the architectural community and the public. In the same way that local authorities are only stewards of public land for future generations, and should look after it in the public's best interest rather than sell it to the highest bidder, an architect's duties toward the wider environment and the communities who live in it cannot be matters of choice. Again, we will explore this further in our second lecture on the environmental dimension of architecture.

B. Drawing up the Brief

Before an architect is commissioned, a decision will have already been made to develop a site. The exact extent to which the architect's brief has been clarified will differ from project to project, and an agent for a socialist architecture should make efforts to take part in the policy-making and briefing process leading up to this stage, and try to engage with local communities in order to help them guide the briefing process. This is the stage where policies become proposals, visions become options, and principles become master-plans.

B.1. Works to Existing Housing Estates

An example of this type of engagement is ASH's work with the Patmore Housing Co-operative, which manages an estate of around 860 homes in Wandsworth, South-west London. The Patmore estate is located in the middle of the Vauxhall, Nine Elms, Battersea, Opportunity Area (VNEBOA). An Opportunity Area is typically formed from neighbourhoods with different planning authorities, which are thereby brought under a single authority, which in this case is the Greater London Authority. This gives the London Mayor the ability to 'call in' planning applications for developments over a certain size or considered to be of strategic importance to the London Plan. One of the key principles of the VNEB Opportunity Area, which straddles the London boroughs of Wandsworth and

Lambeth, is to deliver 16,000 new homes. This makes it the largest building site in the UK, located on some of the most valuable land in London, where some of the worst architecture in the world is currently being thrown up in the apparent absence of either a masterplan or planning considerations by successive London Mayors in thrall to the building industry. As such, the Patmore Co-operative is under considerable threat of demolition, and in 2017 they asked ASH to draw up a 'vision' for the future of the estate.

Following a series of workshops with residents (*above*), we proposed the refurbishment of the existing housing up to the Decent Homes Standard, the renovation of the rubbish bin stores, a programme of tree planting and allotments, improved play areas for the estate's many children, the removal of the dividing fences that were added in the 1980s, the creation of a wildlife reserve, improved lighting and path and road surfaces, a children's centre with new housing above, the return of resident access to the estate's privatised community centre, and the conversion of the disused laundry rooms — originally social spaces for the estate's residents made redundant by household washing machines — back into community use.

In response to this last proposal, Patmore residents suggested a variety of uses for these individual rooms, including as a dog-grooming club, a DIY workshop, an arts and crafts workshop, a cooking club and soup kitchen for the growing number of homeless people in the area, a plant-growing workshop, a young mothers' club, a fitness centre and a boxing club for the estate's teenagers — whom the council has identified, following standard practice, as a source of 'anti-social behaviour' in the area. As a member of ASH recently observed during a presentation on his practice's refurbishment of the community hall on the Kensal House estate, what is called 'anti-social behaviour' is in fact social behaviour, but not in the 'appropriate' place, and typically arises from the removal

of community amenities by councils and landlords. Our proposals were designed to restore and expand those amenities. Finally, although it wasn't in our brief, ASH identified opportunities for infill housing on land around the edge of the estate. This document is therefore intended as a 'vision' document intended to form the principles and basis of any works to the estate that may take place.

Although the Patmore estate is owned by Wandsworth council, the Patmore Housing Co-operative is our client for this project, and this presents the chance to turn the Opportunity Area designed to maximise the latent value of the land on which the estate is built into an opportunity to improve the living conditions of the residents who live on the Patmore estate. This raises the important question of who the client is. Under capitalism, he who pays the piper calls the tune. This is a relationship that was responsible, among other disasters, for the Grenfell Tower fire, and deliberately suppresses the architect's responsibilities to the users of the architectural product, which in the case of existing housing estates are the current and future residents.

B.1.1. Arguments for the Demolition of Housing Estates

If a local authority or housing association wants to demolish existing housing, a significant case must be made for its demolition. In our experience these arguments are typically concealing the actual argument, which is the financial gains to be had from building high-value property on potentially lucrative land. Such arguments are almost never supported by evidence, and almost always disintegrate under scrutiny. Some of the more transparent arguments are:

- That the existing housing stock is structurally unsound;
- That the homes are 'past their sell by date' (a falsehood unfortunately propagated by architectural consultants who know better);
- That the existing public realm is poorly designed;
- That the design of the existing estate encourages anti-social behavior;
- That refurbishment will not address the underlying 'social problems' on the estate;
- That the housing typology is not sufficiently dense;
- That the developer is responding to the need to build more 'affordable' homes for a growing population.

Each and every one of these claims must be scrutinised and challenged at every stage. In every estate whose residents we have worked with, and on nearly every estate for which we have produced a case study, these claims are without substance. Instead, they rely on commonly accepted myths such as those we've already discussed.

For example, none of the estates with which have worked are structurally unsound, and indeed most can take roof extensions. Reinforced concrete buildings built between 50

and 70 years ago are not past their sell-by date, though the components that hold them together, and like any other building periodically require replacing, may be. No demonstrable link has ever been made between crime and the design of council estates, where crime rates are in fact consistently lower than the surrounding areas. The most recent statistics on population growth show that more people are leaving London than are arriving, so the population of London is in fact decreasing; yet the housing policy of every Parliamentary party in the UK is based on the need to accommodate a supposedly growing population. 50 per cent of all new-build residential developments in Central London are currently standing empty. The housing that meets demand is homes for social rent, which is the one tenure type we are not building. So unless a development is providing a considerable number of social-rented homes, it is contributing to, rather than alleviating, what is a crisis of housing affordability, not supply.

B.1.2. Questioning the Brief

In order to expose the motivations behind such proposals, and to lay the ground for a design alternative to demolition based on the principles for a socialist architecture, agents for a socialist architecture must:

- Demand that the developer provide evidence from a survey proving that the housing is structurally unsound, or, failing that, that an independent structural engineer chosen by the residents be paid to assess the blocks;
- Demand that the landlord produce independently verified evidence or research that demonstrates that the area is poorly designed or encourages anti-social behaviour that can be attributed to the architecture alone, and not to other social or economic factors;
- Demand to know what are the underlying problems with the area that cannot be addressed through correct maintenance and refurbishment;
- Demonstrate that refurbishment can address problems arising from material degradation of the homes, flaws or obsolescence in the original masterplan and social behaviour on the estate, and insist that design alternatives to demolition are explored by an architectural firm chosen by the residents;
- Question what criteria, other than the profit margins of developers and investors, constitutes a judgement of insufficient housing density;
- Drawing on ASH's report on *The Costs of Estate Regeneration*, demonstrate that the cost of demolition and rebuilding is so high in today's market that, without massively increased state investment, it is impossible to increase the number of homes for social rent on any estate once it has been demolished;
- Demand that the landlord or developer produces a social, environmental and economic assessment of the impact of redevelopment on those directly and indirectly affected by the scheme?

- Demand that the developer commissions and pays for an independently produced and costed design alternative to demolition that explores in detail a refurbishment and infill option.

B.2. Other Public-realm and Urban-design Projects

Even if it's not demolishing existing housing, a proposed development can still have a negative effect on the existing community in a number of ways. It can result in the increase in rents and rates as a result of so-called 'gentrification'. If the developer is making payments towards their Community Interest Levy in lieu of providing even so-called 'affordable housing' on site, this money can be, and often is, used to fund an otherwise unviable estate regeneration scheme off site. Such cross-subsidisation — as in the case of the multi-million pounds properties in Neo Bankside in the London borough of Southwark — is often not identified as such, and is instead passed off as the council finding the funds, when in fact it is part of a developer's required contributions. More often than not, these payments disappear into the local authority coffers, and any direct relationship to where that CIL is spent is notoriously difficult to track. These inter-relationships between the private and public sectors describe the totality of the social realm in which all works to the urban environment are connected.

As further examples of urban design projects that have a negative effect on the local community, both the demolition and redevelopment of the Elephant and Castle shopping centre in Southwark, and the redevelopment of the Brixton Arches in Lambeth, will result in higher rents that will exclude most, if not all, of the existing traders from returning to the new venues; while the proposed provision of even 'affordable' housing is well below the local requirement. In both these examples, a socialist architecture would scrutinise the development proposals and engage with the democratic planning process as much as possible, and raise awareness of the consequences of such development through publicity campaigns, as in fact has been done by a number of local campaigns against both schemes, although without success.

B.3. Ballots

It is at the end of this stage that, in London, residents living on estate targeted for demolition are, in theory, entitled to a ballot on the future of their homes. However, this is a fundamentally flawed process, designed primarily to manufacture resident consent for a scheme that, once given, cannot be taken back. We have analysed in detail the numerous flaws and deliberate deceptions in the GLA policy on resident ballots, which we mentioned in Part 1 of this lecture, but our key concerns are:

- That ballots are only held on redevelopment schemes that result in the construction of 150 or more new residential properties, regardless of tenure, leaving smaller communities without any recognised vote on their futures;

- That ballots must be held early in the development process, and before a private development partner has been chosen, a feasibility study proposed or a viability assessment produced, meaning residents vote on nothing more than promises to which neither the council nor their future business partners are contractually bound.
- That councils are not obliged to offer residents an alternative option, such as the refurbishment of the estate funded by infill development, meaning residents are forced to choose between the continued managed decline of their homes or their demolition and redevelopment.

To stop ballots being used, as they already are, to silence any future opposition to a scheme when the promises of councils and developers vanish in the face of subsequent viability assessments, residents offered a ballot should demand that refurbishment and infill options are properly explored, with funds made available to residents to commission independent consultants, and that these options are included in the choices offered to residents in the ballot. They should also demand that viability assessments of the proposals be made available to the public prior to any voting for them being held.

C. Design and Planning

Once the brief has been interrogated and defined, the next stage of the design process will begin, and proceed towards the planning (or pre-planning) application. It is important to clarify that the brief is not fixed at this point. Certain aspects, such as the budget, are likely to be reasonably well fixed, as well as certain knowable things, such as the minimum housing density required or maximum building heights permitted; but even these are rarely set in stone, and it is through the design process that these limits become solidified in a concrete design proposal.

C.1. The Design Process

The design process is a continuation of the previous stages of the development process, and involves the ongoing accumulation of information and knowledge with which to make increasingly refined proposals. It is frustrating for residents who want to understand the options available to them quickly, and who do not understand why significant changes often take place during this process. Again, this is another good reason why a single binding ballot mustn't take place before this stage in the development process. But at the same time, residents also don't want to be given a set of designs that have already been completed without their input. Statutory 'consultation' with residents and future users is, in theory, intrinsic to this process; but, as we have argued, current practices of consultation are fundamentally inadequate, and should happen far earlier in the development process.

The design process will inevitably reveal issues and constraints that can significantly affect the potential for the site and the project. These include the physical properties of the site and its limitations, both physical and legislative; the opinions and needs of local residents and neighbours ascertained through the consultation process; statutory authorities, such as planning requirements and regulations; building regulations (for example on fire safety); plans for highways; environmental influences (the threat of floods, etc.); transport requirements; heritage considerations, and so on.

C.1.1. Questions for an Architectural, Design or Consultancy Practice

As with any stage of the process, the agents for a socialist architecture must engage with the process whenever possible, and however their skills or position allow. An architectural practice, for example — if commissioned to a project — must ensure that the brief will result in the minimum negative social, environmental and economic impact on the existing community and environment, beginning with insisting that all appropriate impact assessments being produced. This means that the first presumption must be to retain all buildings that are structurally sound, with the default design position to explore a refurbishment option in full.

A commissioned architect or building industry professional — including quantity surveyors, structural and services engineers — must interrogate the brief-making process, and assess the extent to which it reflects and addresses the needs of those directly and indirectly affected by the proposal. If it does not, then agents for a socialist architecture should challenge the client, educate them why this is the case, and if necessary decline the commission, making it clear why, and ensuring that any future practice accepting the commission is aware of their decision. This also applies to architects, quantity surveyors and engineers commissioned for public realm or infrastructure improvements, including associated urban schemes such as 'place-making', which we discussed in Part 1 of this lecture, and which can have an indirect negative effect on the social, economic or environmental well-being of existing residents.

- **The Client: Who is a Socialist Architecture for?**

For an architect or building consultant, this is a fundamental question. Most architectural appointments stipulate that it is the client that pays the architect, that instructs them, and that ultimately decides what happens. Most of standards in the *Architects Code* reinforce this subordinate relationship between architect and client, and indeed it is central to the whole process. Codes of practice — including those overseen by the Royal Institute of British Architecture and the Architects Registration Board — might make some allusion to an architect's duty of care to the wider population or the environment, but these are minimal compared to the pages devoted to the need for financial jurisprudence. This reflects the lack of attention given to the wider social impact of architects' work, and needs to be rewritten.

In addition, a commissioned architect must consider the form of their appointment or consultancy contract, and how they will address the needs of a client whose interests and goals for the project may conflict with the needs of residents, end-users, neighbours and the wider population. Architecture is always a process of balancing decisions; but the only way this can be done transparently is by clearly identifying priorities from the outset. Occasionally, residents are allowed to choose the architect for the project — although typically from a pre-selected group — but ultimately, under capitalism, the responsibilities of the architect are to the main client, and not the residents. This, too, needs to change.

- **The Form: What should a Socialist Architecture look like?**

At this stage of the development process the brief and content of the project are formalised into mass and materials. Functions are allocated space, spaces are given edges, boundaries are drawn, and divisions and relationships are written into concrete. Even at this late stage — the stage at which architects are in the driving seat — the politics of space are manifested in built form.

Of course, architects will argue that so many of the decisions will already have been made — such as the budget allocated more often than not based on a viability assessment that has already identified how many homes of what tenure need to be constructed for the project to return the required investment or profit; but there are still a huge number of things a socialist architecture can address at this stage.

The processes of production and construction will, to a great extent, define the materiality of the development of a socialist architecture. The sustainability of these processes will be local and specific, both in their materiality and their employment of skills and access to technologies. The form they take here necessarily intersects with environmental principles and practices, dictating that local materials and construction methods and recycled materials be used over ones requiring significant transport costs. At this stage, research into material and construction processes that have the least environmental impact will inevitably dictate the form of the building to a considerable extent, and as a result we may see the return from international architectural styles to a local vernacular.

The design principles for a socialist architecture are not prescriptive, but arise from local solutions — ideally using locally-sourced materials — applicable to individual schemes. A socialist architecture is not based on creating a brand 'style' recognisable in a capitalist market, but founded upon the principles for a socialist architecture. It is up to the architect — in consultation with the users of her designs — to turn these principles into practice. An individual design solution must be the product of this practice, not imposed on it to create a commodity brand — as is the case in the homogeneous and instantly recognisable schemes of such Neo-liberal architectural practices as Foster + Partners, Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners and Zaha Hadid Architects — or in accordance with typologies imposed by developers, such as the so-called New London Vernacular, which has been designed specifically in order to realise the latent value uplift in London land. Indeed, a socialist architecture should take care to resist its recuperation into the commodity form through the appropriation of its principles as a 'style', which has been the fate of constructivist, brutalist and modernist architecture in general.

- **Refurbishment versus New Build**

Firstly — and some of these practices will be covered in our second lecture on the environmental dimension of architecture — re-use of existing buildings must be the default design position. In ASH's experience, there is not a single building we have worked with that had to be demolished for health and safety reasons, and we strongly believe that there are few reasons for demolition that cannot be addressed through refurbishment and improvement.

The reasons for advocating the reuse and refurbishment of existing buildings are numerous. Doing so retains the existing community, retains the embodied carbon in the existing buildings and doesn't require a hugely wasteful rebuilding of perfectly good structures, so environmentally is vastly preferable to demolition. Finally, and contrary to what residents are told by their landlords, it's far, far cheaper. The only valid reason for demolition is to drastically increase density beyond even the possibilities from infill and roof extensions; but if that increase in density doesn't increase the number of homes that meet housing need, then this is not a valid reason, as such redevelopment will only serve

to reduce the number of homes for social rent and therefore make the crisis of housing affordability worse. Not one of the full demolition and redevelopment schemes we know about has increased the number of social-rented homes sufficient to warrant the vast environmental and social costs of demolition; and since it is the provision and retention of social-rented homes that meets housing need, refurbishment and infill options — as we demonstrated on the Northwold estate in Hackney, North-east London (*below*) — is the only way to increase their number.

Northwold Estate — Alternative to Demolition
Overhead View from the East — ASH

- **The Layout: Social spaces**

Architecture is always political, and the layout of dwellings, the arrangement of communal spaces, or the orientation and positioning of front doors can all work to create opportunities for social spaces. For example, the Narkomfin building built in Moscow in 1930 was designed by the constructivist architect, Moisei Ginzburg, specifically with social relationships in mind; and a socialist architecture should have the communal and collective life of its residents as its priority.

Flexibility and access are other aspects that must be considered at the very outset of a design process, as this will have an effect both on the lifespan of the building and the ability of the community to be able to continue to live there over time as their lives and needs change. Design based on social and economic exclusion obviously has no place in a socialist architecture, so equality of access to facilities and spaces is obligatory. The

segregated entrances and private facilities increasingly being designed into so much capitalist architecture as standard practice are anathema to a socialist architecture.

- **Construction Costs**

The lower the cost of construction, the more social homes we can build. However, the owner of a building can easily spend one-third of the cost of its construction on its maintenance over a 30-year period. Cheap up-front costs, therefore, might not be the most cost-effective in the long run, and a holistic approach to the whole-life costs of a project needs to be adopted. Cheap and poor-quality construction may be financially profitable for the investor and developer, but it is not economically sustainable, and a socialist architecture must take a long-term view. Construction costs also have a considerable impact on the project's viability, so cannot be explored in isolation. We will look at this equation in greater detail in our third lecture on the economic dimension of architecture.

- **Environmental Impacts**

Although we also address this separately and in greater detail in the second of these lectures, it's important to mention it here, as the environmental composition of the building is an essential component of a socialist architecture. Where capitalism is structurally committed to exponential growth founded on the consumption of finite resources, a socialist architecture must be committed to de-growth, to ways to reduce its carbon footprint, and to the reduction of the energy consumed both during its construction and throughout its life.

The use of recycled materials, locally-sourced materials, and low-carbon materials are the core material ingredients of a socialist architecture. This will encourage both regional diversity and an increase in the skills of the local workforce. Timber is becoming a very popular 'sustainable' building material, but the products needed to treat it for fire resistance are lagging behind, and care must be taken with its use, as an building is built primarily for the safety and security of its inhabitants.

Understanding that a building is part of a circular economy must lead a socialist architecture to concern with its dismantling and the reuse of its components; so the choice of materials is endless, and the resulting architecture accordingly varied. Where possible, a socialist architecture should be designed for low maintenance, and any maintenance that will need to be carried out should be designed with residents, costs and contractors in mind.

'Poorer' environments — which is to say, less diverse, less environmentally beneficial — are less desirable. They will also tend to deliver higher rates of pollution, and the

cumulative effect is a negative impact on the well-being of users in general. A socialist architecture is one in which all environments are invested in equally.

- **Construction Methods**

Although I'll return to this later in the development process, I want to mention construction briefly here as part of the design stage, because the method of construction will have a significant effect on the design of the project, and must not be considered as an afterthought. The scale of a project has enormous consequences for a socialist architecture in determining the way it can be produced, and prefabrication is undoubtedly going to play a big part in providing high-quality, low-cost housing at scale. The detail of what that might look like is research that a socialist architecture must undertake.

C.1.2. Stakeholders

What can an agent for a socialist architecture who is not directly implicated in or commissioned in the production of the design do in such cases? In theory, residents who are directly affected, as well as their neighbours and other 'stakeholders', should have a certain amount of input during the design and planning process through statutory consultations and engagements; but in practice these are mainly used as tick-box exercises to obtain consent for proposals that have already been drawn up. Residents and sometimes their neighbours are sometimes consulted during the design process prior to the planning application being submitted; but the extent to which their needs can be addressed within the design at this stage will have been defined by earlier stages.

C.1.3. Community Participation

Processes of engagement must be properly established to ensure residents' needs are taken into account. This means considering timing and locating events for when and where residents will be able to attend, educating those who want to understand more about the process, and working to communicate transparently all the options available to residents and stakeholders in order to allow them to make informed decisions. Many of the questions from the previous section ('Drawing up the Brief') are still relevant at this stage. This is mainly because it is often only at this stage in the development process that some of the decisions become available for public scrutiny.

C.2. The Planning Process

C.2.1. Consultation

Planning permission is one of the last stages at which the public and local stakeholders can contribute significantly to the outcome of the project. A number of consultation

events will be held during the design process and before the application is submitted, the intent of which should be to make the proposals available for comment and contributions. More often than not these events are not intended for the wider dissemination of information, or to listen to the opinions of those affected, but are designed to manufacture consent with the use of vague terminology, seductive artistic renderings and promises that have no contractual obligation.

Before a large project is submitted to a full planning application, the developer is likely to make a pre-application submission for outline planning permission. This will roughly fix the principle and massing of the project, its height and function. A successful application implies that, subject to details, the proposal meets local planning regulations and policies on such details as height, impact on neighbouring properties and function; but it's important to remember that this does not guarantee the proposal will pass the more detailed planning application.

For detailed planning applications, certain small and uncontentious schemes will be decided by what is called 'delegated powers', meaning a planning officer will make the decision. Most large housing or urban-scale projects of the kind we are discussing here, however, will need to be decided at a committee hearing overseen by the local authority.

Committees in the UK are made up of locally elected councilors; but due to our first-past the-post Parliamentary system, this often results in profoundly undemocratic and unrepresentative committees whose responsibilities — first and foremost — are to their political party, and second to powerful lobbyists representing business interests, with the needs of constituents coming a distant third. If this is to change, we must agitate for fundamental changes to our political and planning system, and argue for some form of proportional representation that will enable a much more diverse representation of the constituency, or for a representative citizen's assembly to oversee such decisions.

C.2.2. Objections

Objections to planning applications must be made at this stage, and can have considerable effects. For example, in 2018 members of the Sanford housing co-operative in Deptford, South London, opposed a local development through the use of an interactive website. This website explained in clear terms the consequences of the development for the local area, as well as the specific ways in which the application failed to meet local policies and guidelines on such things as the provision of social housing, parking and accessibility, and in doing so enabled interested people to understand the issues and make objections accordingly. This concerted opposition succeeded in forcing the local planning committee to refuse permission for the development.

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A developer will always lead with more than they want in the expectation that they will be negotiated down, so everything needs to be challenged. An agent for a socialist architecture must always demand that the development at least meets the local plans, or actually improve on them. Always come forward with suggestions for improvements, such as the ways a particular developer could, for example, hand over the 'affordable' housing provision to a local community co-operative or Community Land Trust.

It is important to note that each subsequent stage in the development process can — and more often than not does — revise the 'promises' made at earlier stages. In the case of Knights Walk, for example, what residents reluctantly agreed to regarding the tenures of the new dwellings on their redeveloped estate proposed at the cabinet decision stage were almost unrecognisable in the planning permission documents, with social rents turned into 'affordable' rents, and market-rent tenures become market-sale properties. Such sleights of hand are the norm, and serves to undermine what little trust there is left in our local democracy.

D. Procurement and Construction

A socialist architecture is one produced by and for those who live and will live in it. Resident control of the design, construction and management of their homes is — as the Grenfell Tower fire demonstrated to terrible effect — essential for their safety and security. If the resident is also the client, then this makes life easier for a socialist architecture — if the client is so inclined.

The significant involvement of residents of large housing estates in the procurement and construction of their properties is rare. This ranges from housing co-operatives that operate effectively as private owners but with co-operative principles — and whose involvement ranges from hands-on participation in the running of the housing development to something akin to lifestyle choice; to a resident-managed organisation that manages the site but doesn't own it; to a council, social or private housing estate in which residents have a more or less distant relationship to the management of, and works carried out on, their homes.

Involving residents and local people as core members in the construction team is crucial for a socialist architecture. Whether advocating for self-build at one end of the process or ensuring community participation in all stages of the design and, where possible, construction of the project, a socialist architecture should be embedded in the community. Many people in London are now holding down three jobs to support their family, and the idea of devoting rare free time to a construction project may seem absurd; but when social rents are sufficiently low to free up some of their time, members of such a community might find time for more participation in a project. Indeed, in our experience of working with them, residents who live in co-operative or council housing are able to contribute voluntarily to their community only because their rents are low.

Procurement — which is the mechanism by which a team of contractors is selected to carry out a given project — is typically offered under a traditional or design-and-build contract. These are usually created through a competitive process endemic to capitalism, fostering adversarial relationships between architectural practices, as well as encouraging builders to undercut each other's budgets in their bid for the contract, with correspondingly negative consequences for residents and other end-users of their products. There are, however, other types of procurement processes that are more collaborative, such as partnering contracts, which have the potential to create a more equitable redistribution of both financial risk and reward, as well as a more participatory construction process for all concerned.

D.1. Construction

D.1.1. Self-build

At one end of the spectrum, self-build is the most hands-on way for residents to get involved in the future design and construction of their homes, as organisations such as the Rural Urban Synthesis Society, a Community Land Trust, has in Lewisham. Not all residents will have the desire or ability or time to get actively involved in self-build development, but it can be a good way to acquire all sort of useful skills, as well as provide what is known as 'sweat equity' when a financial contribution is replaced by that of labour. This can substantially reduce development costs; but also increases risk and often time, and potentially requires the necessary expertise to be bought in. That said, self-build can be a very empowering experience, and an effective way of creating local jobs that have a clear benefit to the community.

D.1.2. Apprenticeships

Rather than just existing residents getting involved, there are also opportunities for members of the wider community to participate in development projects through apprenticeships. Again, this could contribute to the wider community both financially and with skills, reinforcing and enlarging the existing community. For a model of such apprenticeships, we recommend Black Country Make, a group of young adult residents working on the Heath Town estate in Wolverhampton.

D.1.3. On site

Construction is disruptive, and anyone who has ever lived on or near even the smallest of building sites will tell you that it can have a disproportionate negative effect on the well-being of residents who remain living on the site. as well as the local community Extreme care must be taken to minimise these negative impacts, which include noise, dust and other pollutants produced during the construction process.

E. Management and Maintenance

E.1. Managed Decline

A deliberate lack of maintenance, which is so widespread a practice that it has come to be known as 'managed decline', is the process by which a landlord — whether local authority, housing association or private management — allows a building or development to decline through neglect of upkeep, a lack of repairs, a refusal to carry out rubbish disposals, poor or damaging maintenance, and even deliberate vandalism. The deterioration of a housing estate leads to an increased negative perception of an area, and arguments for demolition quickly follow, with local neighbours and residents themselves being convinced that, for example, damp and mould in their homes from poor ventilation or badly fitted windows can only be solved through their demolition.

To combat this, agents for a socialist architecture need to involve themselves in the ongoing maintenance of their neighbourhoods. Residents of the Cressingham Gardens estate, Macintosh Court and the Central Hill estate in Lambeth, South London, all of which have been targeted for demolition, are acutely aware that the withholding of proper maintenance of their homes by the council is a contributing factor in the worsening not only of their living conditions, but also of the perception of residents and neighbours of their respective estates. Such managed decline, which often leaves vulnerable residents in appalling living conditions, reinforces negative stereotypes about council residents and the communities they form, all of which supports the council's cynical arguments for their demolition. Residents whose homes have not been looked after properly, and who rightly complain about the conditions they are living in, must not be afraid that such complaints will lead to proposals for their demolition. Problems with mould, leaky roofs, rodent infestations, exposed electrical wiring, uneven walkways and the like can all be addressed with the maintenance for which residents' service charges pay, and agents for a socialist architecture should initiate campaigns and petitions demanding to see where that money has gone and why it isn't being used for its purpose.

This is where maintenance contractors and others involved in the production and maintenance of their product can become agents for a socialist architecture. Where possible, a socialist architecture needs to address and embrace all those who are involved in its production, including their employees, clients and contractors. Residents too need to be involved as much as possible with the maintenance and improvement of their homes. This does not, however, guarantee they will be listened to. In the catastrophic example of Grenfell Tower in North Kensington, West London, residents repeatedly raised concerns about the maintenance and refurbishment work being done to their homes and were ignored for years by the council. To avoid a repeat of this disaster, residents must be at the heart of the maintenance and refurbishment process, and be given adequate funds to oversee the work themselves, or to pay for an independent body to scrutinise its stages and sign off its completion.

E.2. Management Structures

Certain management structures can create stronger relationships between the resident, landlord and management team than others, and an agent for a socialist architecture should explore each of these different structures to establish which is most appropriate for their particular project.

E.2.1 Housing Co-operatives

One of the useful aspects of co-operative housing is that it is very flexible and can accommodate a range and a mixture of housing tenures, with the key component being the co-operative principles. The housing co-operatives with ASH has worked range greatly in size, with the Patmore Co-operative having 860 homes, the Brixton Co-operative (*below*) having 86 homes, and the Drive co-operative a single house with 10 residents. Depending on their size, the governance structure will differ greatly, from consensus decision-making in the Drive, for example, to a board with elected members making decisions on behalf of the residents on the Patmore estate.

A housing co-operative is a private organisation, which means it can provide homes for any income level, and doesn't necessarily need to provide homes for social rent. However, housing co-operatives can also become registered providers of social housing,

which means they can receive funding to help provide homes for social rent; but many have resisted this route — possibly because of the co-operative principle stating the need for 'Autonomy and Independence'. But another co-operative principle is 'Concern for Communities', and many housing co-operatives are starting to recognise their potential role in providing low-cost housing as the enactment of this principle. Co-operatives that own their housing stock also often have the advantage of having of considerable capital, and therefore of being able to raise funds against their assets. In this respect they are in a strong position at this moment in the reduction of public funding to be able to develop or support others to do build homes for social rent. The co-operative housing movement in the UK, however, is still tiny compared to the rest of Europe, and the culture historically has been inward looking and self-contained; but this is changing.

E.2.1. Tenants Management Organisations

A Tenants Management Organisation (TMO) is a governance structure for the management of a large housing estate that is run by the residents but owned either by a housing association or the local council. Typically, this occurs as the result of a successful application for the 'Right to Manage', which we looked at earlier. The extent of the decisions that can be made by the residents are limited, and will typically cover the day-to-day running of the estate such as cleaning and repairs but not major works. In 2013, the Leathermarket Joint Management Board in Southwark became the first TMO in the country to become self-financing — meaning that they retain and spend the rents and service charges of residents; and having set a 30-year business plan are therefore able to develop new housing; but again, this is very rare.

E.2.2. Community Land Trusts

A Community Land Trust (CLT), like a housing co-operative, is structurally very flexible. Essentially, it is a mechanism by which land is held in trust, and therefore cannot be sold on the open market, effectively suppressing its value. However, like co-operatives, Community Land Trusts have no obligation to provide any homes for social rent; and in the UK CLTs have historically provided mostly homes for sale. These are not for market sale but sold at a reduced rate, due to the not-for-profit nature of the organisation. Under UK legislation this qualifies them as 'affordable housing', but in real terms they are usually anything but, and therefore does nothing to address the current crisis of housing affordability.

However, in our ongoing collaboration with the Brixton housing co-operative, ASH has proposed to use the CLT mechanism to purchase and develop sites, but to use the housing co-operative model to manage social-rented homes, combining the benefits of both models. This is a model of community ownership and collective management that is being used successfully in British Colombia, Canada, but has not yet taken off in the UK.

The huge debts we can incur, and the amount of time we must work, in order to raise enough money to buy or rent our home in London and other UK cities has turned most of us into wage slaves to landlords. They and other capitalists are the only ones benefitting from the property ladder whose rungs we are seemingly intent on climbing in this country. Alternative models of housing — in which we do not give the majority of what we earn to line the pockets of a landlord or bank but channel it back into the community — will provide more security of tenure, less housing poverty and a greater responsibility over the places in which we live, and a socialist architecture must explore and develop their possibilities.

3. Social Principles and Practices for a Socialist Architecture

Architects and other agents for a socialist architecture can no longer sit on the fence when it comes to tolerating and being complicit in practices they know will have a detrimental impact on a community or environment. The ways in which such 'impact' is assessed, moreover, are inadequate and far too limited in their temporal and spatial reach. We need to find other ways of measuring social and environmental value, not only to demonstrate the extent of the destructive effects of demolition and overdevelopment, but also to argue for a re-evaluation of our built environment for the people that live in it and for the socialisation of the whole development process. To this end, a socialist architecture:

- Must be not-for-profit;
- Must never displace existing communities;
- Must be produced in collaboration with residents and other end-users of its product;
- Must disrupt the existing capitalist structures of development;
- Must propose and promote alternative models of development, ownership and management;
- Must contribute to improving the environment, health and mental well-being of existing residents;
- Must meet the housing and communal needs of the population;

A. Strategy and Preparation

Agents for a socialist architecture must:

- Promote the socialisation of land;
- Oppose all forms of privatisation of public land'
- Support developments that increase the provision of social housing;
- Challenge the use of misleading terminology such as 'affordable housing';
- Contribute to creating a more democratic and participatory planning and urban-design process;

- Demand that the landlord or developer produce social, economic and environmental impact studies at the preliminary stage of the proposal;
- Disrupt the existing development processes where they lead to negative social, economic and environmental impacts;
- Scrutinise all re-zoning and Opportunity Area designations, and oppose those that will have a negative impact on the existing communities;
- Work with local communities to propose alternatives to demolition;
- Assist in producing alternative community-led visions for the future and benefit of those communities;
- Participate in the pre-planning and planning stages of every development;
- Produce alternative narratives that promote the benefits of social housing and the communities that live in it;
- Lobby for changes to the *Architects Code* that enact socialist practices;
- Promote the principles of a socialist architecture in schools and universities.

B. Drawing up the Brief

Agents for a socialist architecture must:

- Scrutinise all development briefs;
- Demand that all financial viability assessments be made public and where necessary challenge their findings;
- Correct all false myths propagated about social housing to justify its demolition;
- Ensure that any brief you are working on conforms to socialist architectural principles.

C. Design and Planning

Agents for a socialist architecture must:

- Engage with the planning process to ensure the project achieves the goals of a socialist architecture;
- Oppose all developments that include socially segregated entrances, spaces or facilities;
- Ensure the resident, end-user or community has a leading role in the procurement, design, construction and management of the project, and that the housing and communal needs of the existing residents are met by the brief;
- Demand that a refurbishment option is explored as the default option;
- Re-use, extend and improve the existing architecture;
- Ensure the layout of spaces encourages social interaction and community engagement;
- Maximise shared resources and the use of recycled, local-sourced and zero-carbon materials and construction methods;

- Design for inter-generational and long-term communities and try to anticipate future changes;
- Design with the construction process, prioritising the health and well-being of those working on the project at any stage in the process;
- Create equality of access to all amenities;

D. Procurement and Construction,

Agents for a socialist architecture must:

- Ensure residents are involved at every stage of the procurement process;
- Promote and use partnership contracts that work towards a less adversarial and more participatory construction process;
- Explore self-build as a means to involve the local community in the construction process;
- Encourage apprenticeships to create engagement with the project and the local community.

E. Management and Maintenance

A socialist architecture must:

- Encourage and promote housing management structures that facilitate community ownership and collective management;
- Ensure that residents have the ultimate say in the design, maintenance and management of their homes.

Understanding a socialist architecture from a 'social' perspective demands that we engage with the mechanisms of its production, and involve all those affected by it within that production. It is impossible to understand the social dimension of architecture in isolation from the environmental and economic pressures and demands made of it; and it is only through an adherence to these practices in all these dimensions that a socialist architecture will emerge.

Although, ultimately, a fully socialist architecture demands a socialist economy to support it, we recognise that we have to start by operating within the current capitalist system if we are going to build an alternative that will help move us forward. As a result, some of these practices may seem to conflict with our broader long-term principles, but this is inevitable if we are going to act now, at what we can call a transitional period within the current system, in order to start changing that system.

Lecture 2. Part 1. Environmental Principles

'We want a say in how the resources are managed in our territory, to remind those who seek to benefit from them that they aren't a commodity to be sold. Every resource is a part of the system. Each part that is taken out, or over-harvested, affects everything that depends on it. If we don't take care of it today, it won't be there in the future. Those who are just after the commodity will move on. But those of who will be left here because we are tied to our land by ties of blood and history will have to work harder to survive.'

— Wuikinuxv Treaty Office, *We are the Wuikinuxv Nation* (2011)

Between our first lecture on Friday 19 July, which looked at the social dimension of a socialist architecture, and this one, on its environmental dimension, there has been a political coup in the UK. Our new Prime Minister is Boris Johnson, who was immediately hailed by the US President, Donald Trump, as the 'UK Trump'. I think this is significant, because where the US guard-dog leads the UK lapdog inevitably follows, and the rest of Western world obediently falls in line. Through a combination of the three-and-a-half-years of deadlock on Brexit and our antiquated laws on appointing new leaders to a political party in government, Johnson was voted Prime Minister by a majority of the members of the Conservative Party, but by only 0.2 per cent of the UK electorate. In his own version of Hitler's Night of the Long Knives, Johnson has replaced the holders of almost all the key ministerial appointments, including the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Minister for Housing. This has resulted in what is, without a shadow of a doubt, the most right-wing government we've had since that of Margaret Thatcher. However, when Thatcher was voted into power in 1979 the

Neo-liberal revolution was in its infancy. Forty years later it is entrenched in every aspect of our economy, our society, our politics and, as we will go on to argue, of our environment. In response to which, ASH formally declares our defiance to both this government and the political system that has so undemocratically allowed it to seize executive power over the British people. But we also want to draw that people's attention to what should be obvious: that the necessity of a socialist architecture — and not only an architecture — is becoming more and more urgent. If we thought — as we have been encouraged by liberals to think — that following the financial crisis of 2007-2008 the Neo-liberal programme was at an end, we should think again.

1. Opposed Economies of Architecture

This is the second of our four lectures on a socialist architecture. In the first lecture we looked at its social dimension, the context of which is:

1. *The Social.* To situate architecture within the totality of relations of its production, distribution, exchange and consumption and propose new practices for a socialist architecture under capitalism.

As the election of Donald Trump and Boris Johnson strongly suggests, anyone waiting around for a socialist, or even social democrat, government to save us from Neo-liberalism will be waiting a very long time. This makes it necessary for us to start articulating what socialist practices are now, particularly given the lack of understanding of what socialism is among young voters who have only ever known different brands of Neo-liberal government in the UK. But today we're looking at the environmental dimension of a socialist architecture, the context of which is:

2. *The Environmental.* To understand and reduce the totality of consumption within the finitude of global resources.

I want to start with this diagram (*overleaf*) in which we're opposing economies of architecture. This diagram opposes the economies of architecture within a capitalist economy and a socialist economy. The diagram on the left will hopefully be familiar and self-explanatory: it's a pie-chart; and within this chart, the different aspects of architecture — which in the capitalist economy are limited to the social, the environmental and the financial — are allocated a portion of resources. Within this economy, the financial considerations of building a new development are almost entirely dominated by its financial viability for the developers. And it's not surprising that the assessments produced to establish a scheme's viability invariably show that it's simply impossible for developers to build social housing, and barely possible for them to afford even affordable housing. As a consequence, in London at the moment, about 5 per cent of new residential properties are for social rent, which is always calculated as a financial loss of revenue (therefore indicated in red on the chart) that should be reduced as much

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as possible. The equivalent financial concessions made to reducing carbon emissions at present I would guess receive a slightly greater piece of the financial cake. And like the social dimension of architecture, the environmental dimension, which is ameliorated through so-called 'green architecture', represents a financial loss that should be reduced as much as is politically possible.

Opposed Economies of Architecture

Capitalist Economy

Socialist Economy
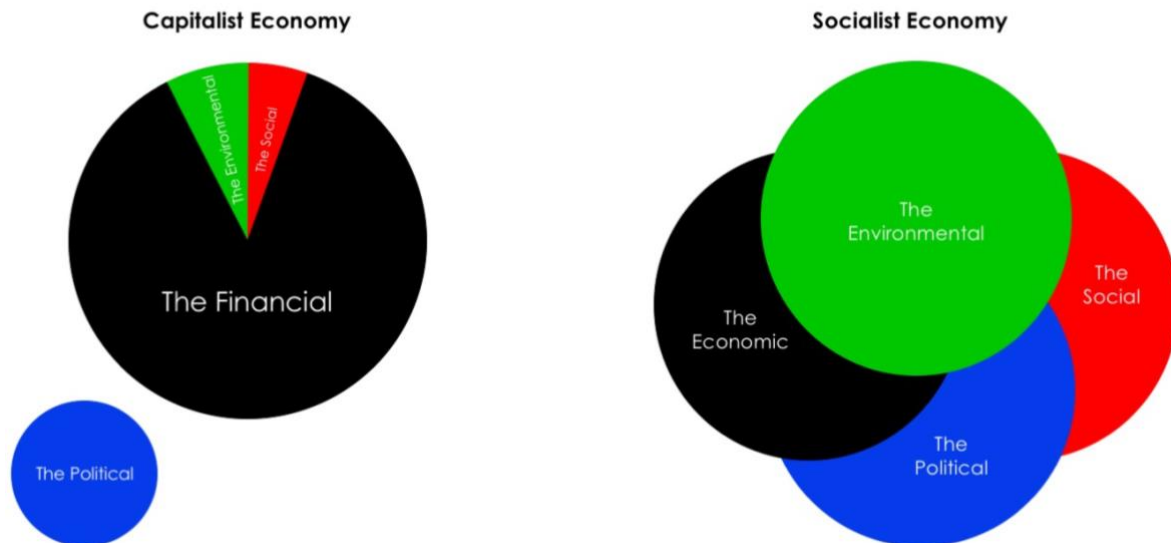
The key thing in this diagram, however, is that under capitalism the political occupies a separate sphere of practice. Of course, in practice it occupies nothing of the sort. But one of the ideological principles of a capitalist society is that capitalism is just the way the world is; that capitalism is not a historically contingent economic system that emerged a few hundred years ago, but an expression of the abstraction it calls 'man'. It's an anthropological model of history, in which, for example, feudalism represents a necessary but surpassed moment in the movement of history; while socialism, by contrast, represented an altogether wrong turn. With such fictions has capitalism convinced us that the entire history of the world has led us to this inevitable and necessary end, and that the hegemony of capitalism is the triumphant end of that history. Given the environmental disaster to which capitalism is leading us, perhaps it's more accurate than it thinks. Within this teleological model of history, therefore, the political present, which is global capitalism, occupies a separate sphere from the economic, the social and the environmental.

Comparing this to a socialist economy, I should point out that this is not a Venn Diagram, and that these are not overlapping spheres. I also want to point out that while, under our capitalist economy, the economic is reduced to a financial pie chart, in a socialist economy the financial sphere is expanded to the totality of economic exchanges. The social, the environmental, the economic and the political spheres are all metonyms, therefore, for

the totality. They are not components of the totality, which would make this another kind of pie-chart; rather, they constitute different perspectives on that totality, and they function as different discourses. Language by its nature abstracts the totality into discrete objects of knowledge (capitalism then goes and sells that object as a portion of its financial budget); but in our social practice, in our economic growth, in our political policies, and in the environmental consequences these will have for us, they are indivisible. A socialist architecture must therefore understand each perspective, each dimension of its practice, within the totality of its relations.

I think we all understand by now that the environment is a very good word for the totality of relations that make up the whole. The economic, which is about all exchange and not only — as it is in the capitalist economy — financial exchange, is as well. As is the social totality that those relations compose. Is the political? I would say the fact that, under the fundamentalism of the market, the political sphere is excluded from the financial pie chart as an unquestionable given shows that, in practice, our economy is a political economy, and one that composes (and imposes) the totality of our world.

2. The Erosion of the Social and the Rise of Environmentalism

In 1997 the UK Conservative government of John Major passed the Architects Act. The ruled that the Architects' Registration Board (ARB) would 'issue a code laying down standards of professional conduct and practice expected of registered persons', which is to say, architects. As far I can work out, it took the ARB 5 years to come up with what these standards would be, which is fairly representative of the pace at which the architectural profession embraces change. There are 12 standards in *The Architects Code: Standards of Professional Conduct and Practice*, and those laying out an architect's obligations to their client or how to manage their business have up to 8 clauses. But there is one standard, numbered 5.1, which might be said to have anything to do with the social and environmental dimension of architecture. It is titled: 'Considering the wider impact of your work', and it has a single clause, the only standard that does. This is how it has been revised between its first appearance in the 2002 version of *The Architects Code* and its configuration in the latest edition:

> *'In carrying out or agreeing to carry out professional work, architects should pay due regard to the interests of anyone who may reasonably be expected to use or enjoy the products of their own work. Whilst architects' primary responsibility is to their clients, they should nevertheless have due regard to their wider responsibility to conserve and enhance the quality of the environment and its natural resources.'*

This is the first time that a reference to the environment was brought into the code of conduct of architects in the UK. But importantly, this conduct was laid down in the context of the architect having due regard to the wider impact of their work on its users, which includes its inhabitants. This brief moment in UK socialism passed by 2010, when the first

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part of this statement was completely erased, and Standard 5.1 was reduced to the following:

> *'Whilst your primary responsibility is to your clients, you should take into account the environmental impact of your professional activities.'*

Two years ago, in 2017, this was reduced again to the following mish-mash of get-out clauses in which the architect is no longer the self-regulating guardian responsible for the social impact of their professional work but servile adviser to their client:

> *'Where appropriate, you should advise your client how best to conserve and enhance the quality of the environment and its natural resources.'*

Again, this is pretty representative of the way legislation gets made in the UK, and how increasing ambiguities are allowed to creep into our laws. Over 15 years architects have gone from having 'regard' for their wider responsibility, via taking 'account' of the impact of their work, to 'advising' their client where appropriate on maybe not destroying the environment as long as it doesn't interfere with their profit margins.

3. Green Architecture

What this has led to is something that, with its usual lack of imagination, the profession has called 'green architecture'. An example of this are the design proposals by Vincent Callebaut Architectures, Paris Smart City 2050, in response to a commission from Paris City Hall, which asked the practice to envision 8 prototypes for 8 districts of 'positive energy towers eco-conceived to fight global warming'. These sky-scraper greenhouses are what they came with for the 4e arrondissement (*previous page*).

Now, if you think, as many people did, that this is a joke, this sort of stuff is already a reality on the developments around the Battersea Power Station in London, which has been entirely dismantled and is now being faithfully reconstructed by a Malaysian consortium of investors. This is part of the Vauxhall, Battersea, Nine Elms Opportunity Area (*below*), which is one of the largest development sites in Europe; and as you can see, so-called 'green roofs' are plentiful.

I haven't seen the environmental impact assessments — if indeed any have been produced — but I'd be very surprised if planting a few green roofs will do much to offset the vast carbon emissions from the demolition, removal, disposal and reconstruction required for these buildings, the energy they will use as functioning buildings, or the increased traffic and other consumption of resources they will induce in the area. This may have been acceptable if it was offset by the use-value of this vast development as housing for Londoners, but it isn't. These are deposit boxes for global capital, investment opportunities for overseas investors, real estate speculations for offshore accounts, using

up rare public land in the centre of the capital that could and should have been used to address London's crisis of housing affordability. The entire Vauxhall, Nine Elms Battersea Opportunity Area, which could have been used to meet the housing needs of every Londoner for a generation to come, has instead been squandered on the profits of developers and investors. It's the clearest image of why liberal window-dressing to capitalism, of which 'green roofs' are an example, will do nothing to stop the climate crisis we're facing. This is tokenistic rubbish, as serious about addressing carbon emissions as a percentage of so-called 'affordable housing' provision in luxury market-sale developments is about addressing housing needs. And as an image of Inner London, or indeed of Central Paris, it makes Le Corbussier's much maligned *Plan Voisin* look almost sensitive to its surroundings.

But what's also interesting to us is that, to the immediate south of the Battersea Power Station development is the Patmore estate, which is run by a housing co-operative. This is an estate that ASH has been working with over the last few years. As can be seen, any Inner London estate built on this incredibly lucrative land so close to the Thames is under threat of demolition and redevelopment. So at the request of the Patmore Co-operative, we've produced what they've called 'A Vision for the Future of the Estate'. This begins by asking the question: if this is an opportunity area, should it not also be an opportunity for the current residents, and not only for property investors? In response, we have drawn up designs that propose bringing disused laundromats on the estate back into use as communal amenities, making the privatised community halls available for residents, coming up with solutions to the some of the design flaws of the original estate such as the housing of bins and rubbish disposal, as well as improving access to the estate's plentiful and verdant gardens. All these design proposals will extend the use of the estate as social housing, and in doing so sustain the existence of the residents whom we tend to forget are every bit as much a part of the environment we are trying to save as the water and air 'green architecture', such as that on the luxury residential developments to the north, is supposed to be saving.

4. Environmental Lobbying and the Grenfell Tower Fire

In contrast to which, environmental lobbying, much like *The Architects Code*, has erased people, and in particular residents, from its proposals to reduce carbon emissions and save the environment through green architecture. This includes not only the green roofs and photovoltaic panels we see fitted as standard on the luxury residential developments springing up across London, but also the retrofitting to council estates of insulation and cladding systems that improve the thermal performance of the buildings, reducing loss of energy and with it residents' energy bills. Both practices has been the direct result of government lobbying by green industries, which have made huge profits out of the installation of cladding systems to hundreds of residential blocks, both private and state owned, across the UK — the most famous of which is, of course, Grenfell Tower.

The retrofitting of Celotex thermal insulation and Reynobond aluminium composite material (ACM) rainscreen cassette panels to the reinforced concrete walls of Grenfell Tower (*below*) was part of a refurbishment scheme designed by Studio E Architects and installed by Rydon, the primary contractor, under the project management of Artelia UK. Completed in July 2016, this cladding system created the 'chimney effect' that a year later swept the small fire that began on the fourth floor up and across the new facade of the building (*below*), circumventing and rendering useless the compartmentalisation on which Grenfell Tower, like hundreds of other tower blocks across the UK, relied for its fire safety system. In the context of *The Architects Code*, the 'wider impact' of the architects' work was the fire that killed 72 people and made hundreds of others homeless and thousands traumatised.
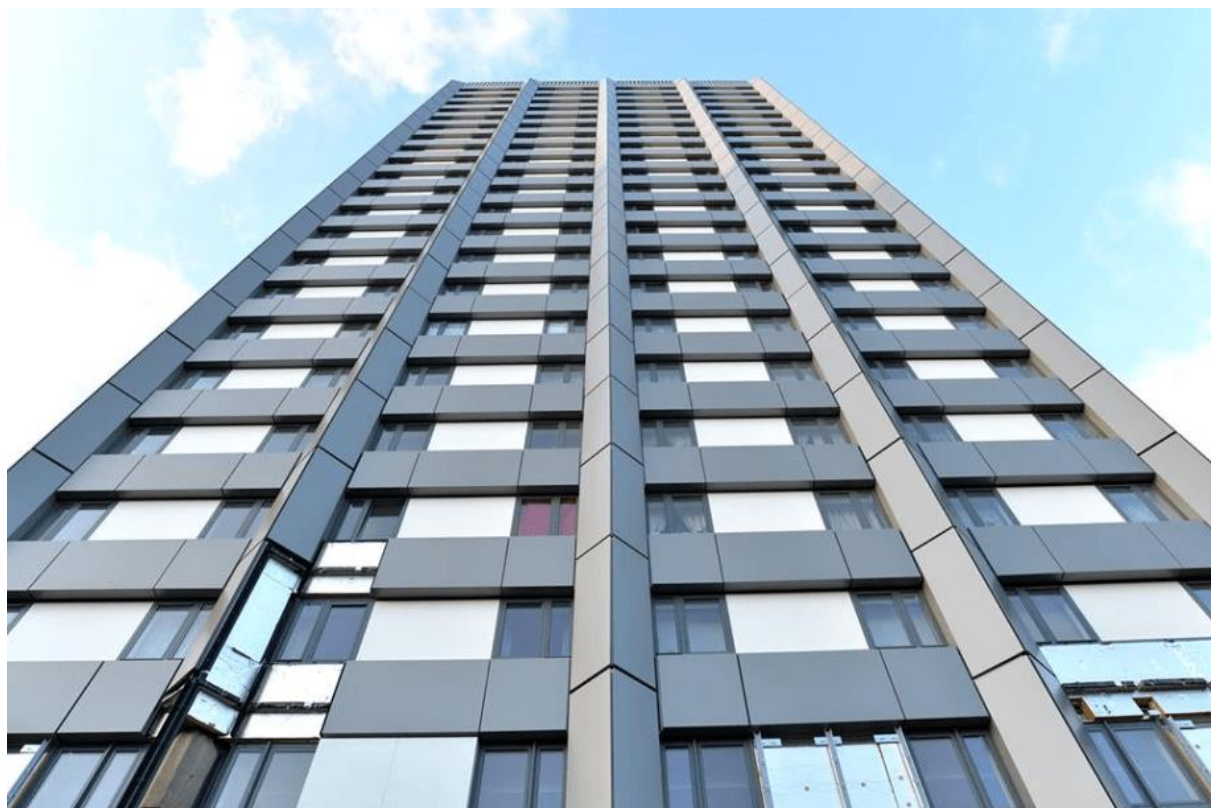
One of the lessons that emerged from the Grenfell Tower fire is that, following the Climate Change Act 2008, the retrofitting of social housing tower blocks with highly flammable, aluminium composite material (ACM) cladding systems like the one that caused the deaths was widespread, and included at least 430 public-sector, high-rise residential buildings. Not only that, but over 320 private-sector, high-rise housing blocks had also been retrofitted with cladding. And that's just the tower blocks, and the ones with ACM cladding systems similar to that on the Grenfell Tower. The total number of buildings in England and Wales that have been retrofitted with some form of cladding system is unknown, or at least not made public, but could run into the thousands, with one estimate

that nearly 1,700 high-rise or high-risk buildings have been clad with combustible non-ACM materials.

Why? Why was this vast programme of retrofitting carried out? The justification was that it would improve the thermal performance of these buildings, reduce the energy use of their occupants and residents, and therefore lower the carbon emissions from the functioning of these buildings, bringing them closer to the thermal performance of new buildings. In fact, from reading the planning application and other documents relating to the cladding of Grenfell Tower, the cladding was primarily cosmetic, on a tower that the council had originally decided to demolish and redevelop back in 2009. However, after Kensington and Chelsea failed to find a private development partner following the financial crisis, it instead voted to cover Grenfell Tower explicitly in order to ameliorate the negative effect that post-war reinforced concrete council housing has on the latent value uplift in the land, and therefore on the property values of the high-cost market-sale houses the council planned to build in the surrounding area.

It would be precipitous to generalise from this individual example of the Grenfell Tower refurbishment to every other cladding retrofit in England and Wales, even on the numerous council housing point blocks; but to accept the official reason for this programme at face value would be extraordinarily naive. More than that, it would be to close our eyes to the political dimension of housing in this country, the ongoing process of its demolition and privatisation, and the role of global investment in financing this process.

But the other answer to this question of why so many buildings were retrofitted with cladding is: because of extensive and ongoing lobbying of government departments and ministers by the peddlers of so-called 'green' architecture, 'green' finance, 'green' industry and 'green' technology by multinational corporations, non-governmental organisations, think-tanks, developers, builders, estate agents, sub-contractors and manufacturers — by, in other words, the entire building industry and its associated hangers-on of financiers, investors and profiteers looking to capitalise on the climate crisis.

The immediate result of this is that we now have around 24,800 homes in high-rise blocks that we know of, and probably far more, that are covered in ACM flammable cladding systems that circumvents the fire-safety of these buildings, that the owners of the buildings are refusing to pick up the bill for removing and replacing, that are putting the lives of over 60,000 residents at risk, that the government that privatised housing provision and deregulated building control, and that the councils that handed out the development contracts to the private development and management companies and stock-transferred the estates to housing associations, has turned its back on.

This is all a matter of fact, established by the benefit of hindsight following the public attention on the disaster of the Grenfell Tower fire. Without that attention, few of us would be aware of this programme, or of the threat it presents to the safety of the thousands of residents living in buildings clad in flammable materials ostensibly applied to improve their thermal performance.

In contrast to this absence of consideration, the architect's 'regard' — which was in the original standard 5.1 of the code — for 'anyone who may reasonably be expected to use the products of their work' was expressed very clearly by the Grenfell Action Group. This was set up in 2010 to oppose new development on the estate's green land that residents felt not only deprived them of community amenities but endangered the fire safety of their homes. In November 2016, after 6 years of having their increasing concerns ignored by their landlord, the Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation, members of the Grenfell Action Group wrote their now famous blog post:

> *'It is a truly terrifying thought, but the Grenfell Action Group firmly believe that only a catastrophic event will expose the ineptitude and incompetence of our landlord, the Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation, and bring an end to the dangerous living conditions and neglect of health and safety legislation that they inflict upon their tenants and leaseholders.'*

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Seven months later their terrifying thought came true. What is the role of the architect when given a brief such as this? Is it enough for an architectural practice to simple 'advise' the client, as the latest version of Standard 5.1 has it, on how to 'conserve and enhance the quality of the environment and its resources'? Does collaborating on a potentially fatal cladding of a residential block in order to conserve those resources without regard for the voiced concerns of the residents constitute sufficient discharge of the architect's duty to 'consider the wider impact of their work'?

5. Carbon Cost of Demolishing the Aylesbury Estate

Let's move on to a less immediately but, in a different way, just as violent example. Resisting and proposing design alternatives to the demolition and redevelopment of council and social housing estates in London is ASH's primary work. We've identified around 250 of these in London alone, where the exaggerated value of the land on which these estates are built means their redevelopment, in order to realise the land's potential value uplift, are at least 50 per cent for market sale and more often than not up to 65 per cent, with the remainder being some form of so-called 'affordable housing' increasingly composed of shared ownership and shared equity schemes, rent-to-buy products, and rents up to 80 per cent of market rate. In every estate redevelopment we know of there is a loss, and usually a mass loss, of homes for social rent, which in 2017-2018 made up only 5 per cent of completed new-build dwellings.

An example of such a scheme is the Aylesbury estate in Camberwell, whose 'regeneration' was initiated in 1997. This is, or was, a large council estate of 2,758 homes for around 7,500 residents. Completed between 1963 and 1977, since 2004 it has gradually been decanted of residents and their homes demolished by Southwark council (*previous page*). It is currently awaiting redevelopment by the newly merged Notting Hill Genesis Housing Association, whose proposals will result in the loss of 778 homes for social rent in an Inner London borough with 11,000 households on the housing waiting list. The Aylesbury estate is located immediately adjacent to Brockwell Park, as was common in the 1960s and 70s when such amenities were considered a boon for everyone, including the working class, rather than the exclusive preserve of the rich. Nowadays, any housing estate beside a park or canal or river, with desirable views, close to current or soon-to-be-built transport links, or simply in a neighbourhood undergoing enforced gentrification, is under threat of demolition and redevelopment as high-value properties designed to realise latent land values.

Although sometimes it can seem like it in the face of the mass collusion of the profession in the social cleansing of Inner London, ASH isn't the only architectural practice resisting the estate demolition programme. In 2017 two architects, Mike Kane and Ron Yee, published an article in the *Journal of Green Building* in which they estimated the carbon cost of demolishing and removing one of the Aylesbury estate's slab blocks. Chiltern House — which is the large block overlooking the demolition site in the Googlemap 3D image above — at fourteen storeys high and over 200m long, is 1 of 7 super-scale slab blocks that are evenly distributed across the estate. With 172 flats, it contains 6 per cent of the Aylesbury estate's residential units, but less than that of its entire structure, with communal facilities, housing offices, schools, playgrounds, sports facilities, car parks, garages and other amenities contributing to the total built environment. In January 2016, Chiltern House was occupied by political squatters protesting against the demolition of the estate. In this report, Kane and Yee reach the following conclusions about the carbon cost of demolishing this building. This includes not only the carbon emissions from its demolition and disposal, but the carbon already embodied in the building that will be lost upon demolition, as well as the carbon cost of replacing the demolished building with a new structure:

> 'The carbon cost of constructing this building was extremely high. The reinforced concrete structural frame (excluding partition walls and internal elements) is estimated to weigh in excess of 20,000 tonnes, which equates to approximately 1,800 tonnes of emitted CO2 for the concrete alone. This figure is significantly increased with the remainder of the construction process and transport emissions. Demolition of Chiltern House requires in the region of 800-plus HGV truck journeys through London's congested streets, and the use of heavy demolition machinery will greatly add to the figure again. Clearly, the CO2 emission cost of reaching just the cleared site (after only 40 years of housing use) is very high, moreover, if the replacement

building is of conventional construction (with only 30-year warranty), then the overall environmental cost of providing additional homes is enormous.'

What they don't say, and which neither Southwark council nor Notting Hill Genesis housing association have produced an impact demonstrating, is how these environmental costs — let alone the social and financial costs to existing residents — will be offset by green roofs, photovoltaic panels, improved thermal insulation and all the other tokenistic gestures of 'green architecture' we might expect to see on the roughly 3,500 new properties being designed by a dereliction of architectural practices led by HTA Design and followed by Duggan Morris, Hawkins\Brown and Mae.

6. Environmental Costs of Demolishing the Central Hill Estate

Built between 1966 and 1974, the Central Hill estate in Crystal Palace (*above*) contains 476 dwellings that are home to around 1,200 residents. In 2016, against the wishes of 77 per cent of residents, the estate was condemned to demolition by Lambeth council, and is awaiting redevelopment by Homes for Lambeth, a council-owned commercial venture financed by private investment partners. The redevelopment scheme will result in the permanent loss of 340 secure council tenancy homes for social rent in a borough with 28,000 people on the housing waiting list. And while no fixed plan for their replacement has as yet been published, in order to recoup the costs of demolition, compensation for leaseholders and the replacement of the demolished homes, at least 50 per cent of the new-build properties will have to be for market sale, with the remainder a mix of

affordable housing. As usual, the majority of these will be shared ownership properties, with the rest a mix of rent-to-buy products and so-called affordable rent. Based on one proposal by PRP Architects, which increased the housing capacity to 1,530 properties, over a thousand of which would be for market sale and rent, this is a project costing in excess of £572 million, payable back over 60 years.

But it's the environmental costs of Lambeth council's proposals I want to focus on here. In 2016 ASH commissioned a report of what some of these would be from the green engineers, Model Environments, and in December they published their report, *Embodied Carbon Estimation for Central Hill Estate*, and I want to quote at length some of their findings. These estimations fall into three categories:

A. Embodied carbon

- *'The office of the London Mayor has set a target to reduce London's carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions by 60% based on 1990 levels by 2025. Homes are responsible for 36% of London's CO2*
- *'The concrete industry is one of the world's two largest producers of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide. About half of the emissions come directly from the heating of limestone in its manufacture, and around 40% are emissions associated with burning fuel.*
- *'A significant fraction of the carbon emissions a building will make over its lifetime is locked into the fabric by the time the building is constructed. As improvements in efficiency reduce carbon emissions from energy in the operational phase, increasing attention is being given to the issue of embodied carbon, examination of which can provide cost-effective carbon savings.*

B. Environmental costs of demolition

- *'When a building is demolished, there are carbon emissions from the energy used in the deconstruction, removal and disposal of the waste. There may also be CO2emissions released by chemical processes as the building fabric is broken up.'*
- *'The vast majority of the embodied carbon is sequestered within the building fabric itself. The carbon emissions released by any deconstruction of the buildings is 40 times greater than the emissions from the energy needed to carry out the demolition.*
- *'Demolishing a housing estate of some 450 homes will exact a high carbon price on the environment and detracts greatly from the London Borough of Lambeth's contribution to tackling climate change.'*

C. Embodied carbon and demolition estimation of Central Hill estate

- *'A conservative estimate for the embodied carbon of Central Hill estate would be around 7000 tonnes of CO2. Those are similar emissions to those from heating 600*

detached homes for a year using electric heating, or the emissions savings made by the London Mayor's retrofitting scheme in a year and a quarter.

- *'For the demolition phase a conservative estimate of 3 months (480 hours) with 4 excavators using 30 litres of diesel per hour equals 57,600 litres. A conversion factor of 2.68kg of CO2e per litre of diesel suggests a figure of approximately 154 tonnes of CO2.*
- *'Annual domestic emissions per capita in Lambeth were 1.8 tonnes in 2012. Therefore, the emissions associated with the demolition of Central Hill estate equate to the annual emissions of over 4,000 Lambeth residents.*
- *'Other environmental impacts from the demolition such as air pollution and water pollution should also be considered in further studies.'*

7. Refurbishment versus Redevelopment

What does this mean? It means that green roofs and walls, photovoltaic panels, external insulation, improved thermal performance and the reduced energy consumption of modern buildings are not enough to offset the environmental impact of demolition and redevelopment. It means that the environmental sustainability of housing needs to be taken as a totality. It means that it takes decades for the more environmentally efficient buildings one might expect to be built on new developments to recoup the environmental costs of demolition and redevelopment. In 2015, at a Housing Committee meeting convened by the London Assembly into the relevant merits of refurbishment versus demolition, Chris Jofeh, the Building Retrofit Leader at Arups, the engineering company that designed the structure of Central Hill estate, testified that:

> *'Even if you build a super-efficient home, it could take 30 years before you redress the balance.'*

Unfortunately, neither the former nor current Mayor, nor any of the local authorities in London or elsewhere, has listened to him or the numerous other expert testimonies to the social, economic and environmental benefits of refurbishment over demolition and redevelopment. Professor Anne Power, Head of London School of Economics Housing and Communities, who gave her endorsement to our 2018 report on Central Hill estate, in an 2008 article titled 'Does demolition or refurbishment of old and inefficient homes help to increase our environmental, social and economic viability?', argued for the preference of the former over the latter when situated within the context of the totality of concrete relations that compose this abstraction we call 'the environment':

- *'The evidence we have uncovered counters the suggestion that large-scale and accelerated demolition would either help us meet our energy and climate change targets or respond to our social needs.*
- *'The overall balance of evidence suggests that refurbishment most often makes sense on the basis of time, cost, community impact, prevention of sprawl, reuse of existing*

infrastructure and protection of existing communities. It can also lead to reduced energy use in buildings in both the short and long term.

- *'Upgrading the existing stock is likely to gain in significance for environmental, social and economic reasons.'*

8. Environmental Principles for a Socialist Architecture

How do we learn from this expert testimony, to which the UK Government, the Greater London Authority and every council in London has turned a deaf ear? To situate the environmental dimension of architecture within the totality it composes, rather than reducing it to the window-dressing of 'green architecture', we have to address the relationship between the principles we want to see guiding this social, economic, environmental and political totality and how we put these principles into practice as agents for a socialist architecture. So, let's begin by formulating this ignored expert testimony into some of the environmental principles for a socialist architecture.

- A socialist architecture must be environmentally, socially and economically sustainable.
- The built environment cannot be separated from the people who produce and inhabit it.
- The environmental context of a socialist architecture means understanding and reducing the totality of consumption within the finitude of global resources.
- A commitment to reducing carbon emissions and to policies of economic de-growth is inevitably a socialist concern, not least because damage to the environment has enormous collective social and economic consequences, which are disproportionately born by the poorest members of our societies, and of which the fiscal policies of austerity are the most recent example.
- Under capitalism, the global consequences of expansion are not estimated in individual project costs but deferred, manifesting themselves in the health and social well-being of future generations, and in contributions to the long-term degradation of the global environment.
- While maintaining that only a socialist economy can hope to re-order the relations of production to environmentally and socially sustainable levels of consumption, a socialist architecture must seek to offset, resist and challenge the unsustainable growth on which capitalism depends for its profits, and which is the economic cause of the global crisis of housing affordability.

The first, typical and almost universal response to any mention of socialism in this country is that it 'goes against human nature' — or some equivalent truism, as if the few hundred years in which capitalism has emerged to become the dominant economic model of our world represented the thousands of years in which humans have lived in something larger than hunter-gatherer bands. 'Nature' has always been the last refuge of

the politician, the priest and the judge; but it turns out that nature is very far from being capitalist.

While in Vancouver I started reading Robert Macfarlane's new book, *Underland*, and I came across a passage in which he describes the symbiotic relationship between Douglas firs and paper birches in the forest of British Columbia. Loggers, eager to maximise their profits from the fir 'products', 'weeded' out the birch saplings, thinking that, as we are constantly told, they would be competing for nutrients from the soil. Once removed, however, the firs weakened and soon began to die.
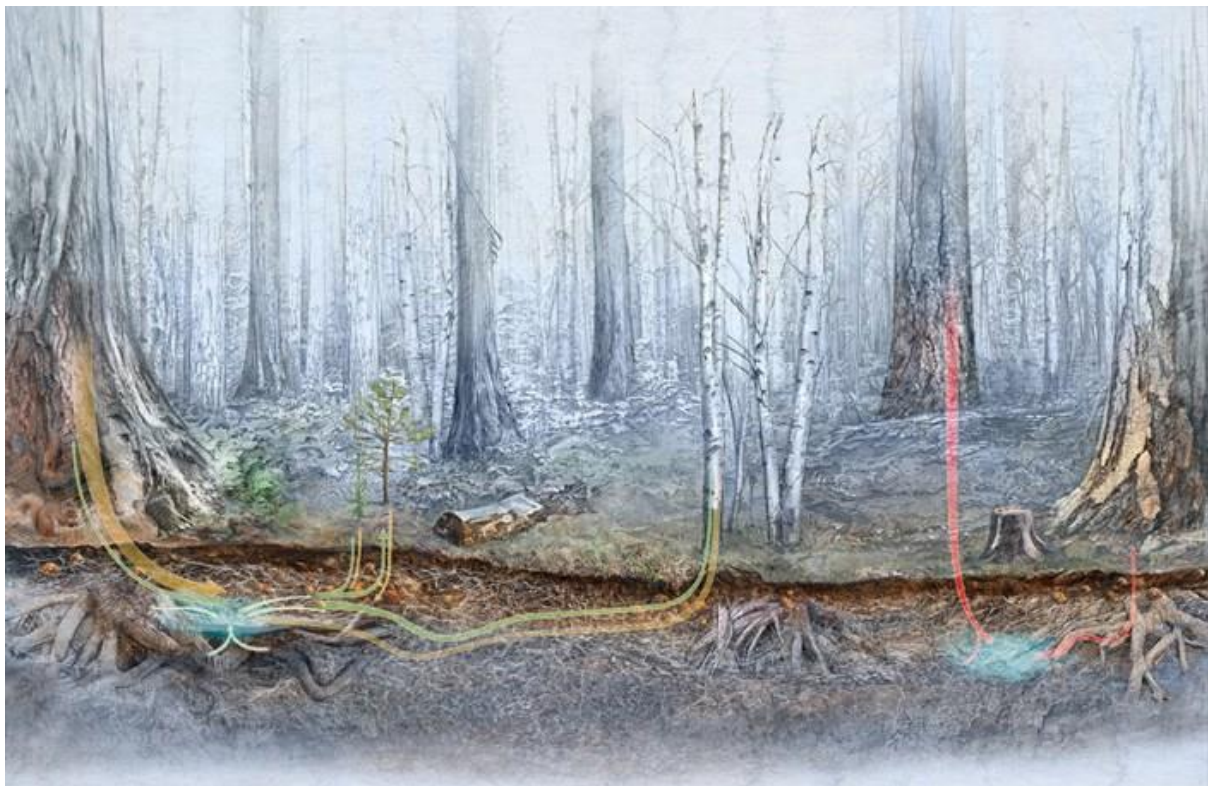
The subsequent ground-breaking research by the Canadian forest ecologist, Suzanne Simard, established that the Douglas firs were receiving photosynthetic carbon from the birches, and the means of its transmission was the extraordinarily complex network of fungi (dozens of miles of hyphae per cubic meter of soil) that linked the roots of tree to tree at the cellular level, both among and between species (*above*). Far from competing for resources according to capitalism's ideological depiction of nature in its own image, the trees were in fact sustaining each other. Not only that, but the fungi were themselves siphoning off carbon produced by the trees in the form of glucose during photosynthesis, by means of chlorophyll that the fungi do not possess. And in turn, the trees obtained nutrients such as phosphorous and nitrogen the fungi had acquired from the soil through which they grow, by means of enzymes the trees lack. In describing this mutually sustaining relationship, Macfarlane, to my surprise, slipped into a language a long way

from his usual, rigorously depoliticised, tales of a Cambridge University professor on holiday:

> *'Instead of seeing trees as individual agents competing for resources, Simard proposed the forest as a "co-operative system", in which trees "talk" to one another, producing a collaborative intelligence she described as "forest wisdom". Seen in the light of Simard's research, the whole vision of a forest ecology shimmered and shifted – from a fierce free market to something more like a community with a socialist system of resource redistribution.'*

For some time now we've been harvested for the wood-chip mill of capitalism, and it's not surprising that, although still growing, we're as lifeless and utilitarian as a forest plantation. The question facing us is: how do we convince a UK population every bit as indoctrinated to Neo-liberalism as the Hitler Youth were to Nazism — only over a far longer period of time — that there is nothing 'natural' about capitalism; that there are other motivations to human evolution than money and power; and that, if we don't openly identify, denounce and overthrow capitalism as the parasitical destroyer of our environment, we'll all end up as dead as those Douglas firs? In the Part 2 of this lecture we'll try to answer these questions through proposing some of the environmental practices of a socialist architecture.

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Lecture 2. Part 2. Environmental Practices

In our first lecture in this series we talked about the agents for a socialist architecture: those who pay for it, those who inhabit it, those who use it, those who design it, those who build it, those who argue, lobby and legislate for it, those who manage and maintain it, those who refurbish it, those who dismantle it, those who reconfigure it; these are all agents for a socialist architecture. Architecture is not produced by architects alone. This is important in order to understand architecture in the expanded field in which we're trying to situate it.

1. Alternative cycles of production, consumption and waste
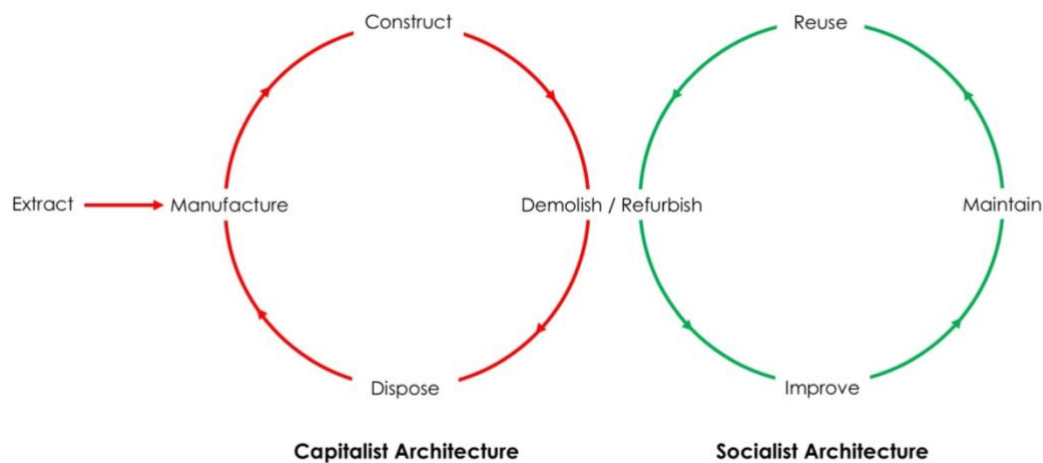
We then went on to discuss the urban development cycle and how the various agents for a socialist architecture can engage with that process. This diagram (*above*) shows the development cycle from an environmental perspective. A socialist architecture practicing principles of de-growth needs to be one that reduces production and minimises waste. We can't talk of a 'sustainable' architecture without addressing the environmental and social costs of its materials, their extraction, transportation, manufacture, construction, maintenance, demolition, disposal or recycling. What we're showing here are two alternative but overlapping cycles of production, consumption and waste. On the left is the capitalist cycle of extraction, manufacture, construction, demolition and disposal, with the red representing the extent of the energy used and the waste produced in order to produce architecture within this cycle.

However, there are moments in every building's life where a decision has to be made whether to demolish it, and begin the cycle of production again, or whether to refurbish. More often than not, in a capitalist economy, which relies on the production of the always new commodity, the decision is to demolish. Financially, for both the developer and the architect, there is far more incentive to demolish and redevelop. Since an architect's fees

are arrived at as a percentage of the overall cost of the project, redevelopment is far more profitable for redevelopment than for refurbishment. The capitalist cycle of production is predicated on an endless growth that only the rapidly arriving finiteness of the world's resources has brought into question.

In contrast to which, a socialist architecture follows an alternative cycle of production. Rather than demolish a building, we can refurbish, improve, maintain and re-use it. Rather than repeating the cycle of extraction, manufacture, construction, demolition and disposal, the repeatable moments in a socialist architecture have significantly less impact on the environment than the cycle of capitalist architecture, and are therefore represented in this diagram in green.

2. Environmental Practices for a Socialist Architecture

From these basic principles we can begin to formulate some of the environmental practices for a socialist architecture:

- A socialist architecture must ensure minimal environmental impact and carbon cost across the whole life-cycle: its use and maintenance as well as its construction and reuse.
- A socialist architecture must never displace existing communities, residential or others.
- A socialist architecture must enact and promote the principles and practices of economic de-growth.
- A socialist architecture must encourage low-impact and healthy living, and increase environmental, social and political engagement and awareness.
- A socialist architecture must take refurbishment of the existing built environment as its default option.

All development must:

- Have neighbourhood and/or existing resident consent, leadership or participation in the entire development process (procurement, design, construction and management);
- Employ maximum passive ventilation and renewable energy strategies (orientation, material, construction);
- Use low environmental impact materials (recycled and locally sourced, with low embodied carbon);
- Use sustainable drainage, infrastructure and waste recycling, resulting in less production, consumption and waste.
- Create minimal disruption to local communities and eco-systems, and increase bio-diversity;

- Anticipate and mitigate the potential effects of future climate change on the proposed development and its environment;
- Encourage low impact living (sharing amenities, walking, cycling and use of public transport rather than driving) and use of local employment and production.

All of these practices can be implemented within the limitations of an architect's brief; and both councillors and community members can lobby and agitate for these to be adopted as a condition of a development being given planning permission by the local authority. The most important, however, and one of the key principles of a socialist architecture, socially, environmentally and — as we will look at in our next lecture — economically, is refurbishment. In practice, as we have said above, refurbishment *must* be taken as the default option in any development project, and above all in estate regeneration schemes. From an environmental perspective, refurbishment has the following benefits over the current orthodoxy under capitalism of demolition and redevelopment:

- Refurbishment has the minimum impact environmentally, as well as financially and socially, on existing residents and local communities.
- Refurbishment enables the continuation of existing communities structurally displaced by demolition, as well as the maintenance of existing eco-systems otherwise destroyed by redevelopment.
- Refurbishment improves the internal environment and residents' living conditions, health and well-being.
- Refurbishment reduces energy use, therefore financial costs and fuel poverty, as well as the environmental costs of production.
- Refurbishment retains embodied carbon in existing buildings.
- Refurbishment minimises dust particles and other demolition-related air, water and noise pollutants.
- Refurbishment minimises waste production, removal and containment.
- Refurbishment is cheaper than demolition and rebuilding, so allows for funds to be reallocated according to the principles of a socialist architecture.

3. Regeneration of the Grand Parc Bordeaux

Let's look at some examples of these practices, beginning with one not taken from the work of ASH. This is the Grand Parc in Bordeaux. Built in the early 1960s, the three social housing blocks, now owned by a private company, contain 530 dwellings. Between 2014 and 2017 they underwent a renovation and refurbishment scheme (*below*) designed by Frédéric Druot Architecture, Lacaton & Vassal Architectes and Christophe Hutin Architecture. This included the addition of 3.8 metre-deep winter gardens and open-air balconies to each apartment. These were built from pre-cast slabs and columns were hoisted into place by cranes to form a freestanding structure. In addition, new lifts were

installed, access halls and bathrooms were refurbished, and thermal curtains were added to the windows.

Crucially, since the *Agence nationale pour la renovation urbaine* programme is targeted at displacing the *banlieusards* through demolition and so-called 'social mixing', residents of the Grand Parc remained in their homes during the work, which took a mere 12-16 days per apartment. The renovation of the 530 units cost 27.2 million euros, which comes to less than 52,000 per apartment; but rents, which are indexed to income, have remained the same as before the refurbishment, with the apartments only available to workers earning the minimum income or lower. As a practice of refurbishment, this accords with the primary principle of Lacaton, Vassal, Druot, which they expressed in their manifesto *Plus*:

'Never demolish, never remove or replace, always add, transform, re-use!'

Extraordinarily — for us — this refurbishment scheme won the 2019 Mies van der Rohe Award, which recognises the best European buildings completed in the past two years. And interestingly, this was the successive time that a housing regeneration scheme had won the biennial award. In 2017 the award went to NL Architects for its renovation of the 1960s DeFlat Kleiburg housing complex on the outskirts of Amsterdam, which it completed in association with XVW Architectuur. However, a member of ASH who grew up on the estate told us that the tenants of the social housing block had been evicted from

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their homes long before the regeneration scheme was implemented, which was for the benefit of the new home-owing residents. Once again, this demonstrates the importance of not separating the environmental dimension of architecture from its social and economic context. In contrast to the European Union Award, in the UK this year the 2019 Stirling Prize is an object lesson in championing the thermal performance of estate regeneration redevelopments that have evicted former council tenants from their demolished homes, privatised the new housing stock through commercial vehicles, and cross-subsidised the reduced social-rent housing it has re-provided with a massive increase of high-cost market-sale properties on the same or other developments sites.

4. Regeneration of the Central Hill Estate

My next example is drawn from our own work on the Central Hill estate (*above*), which we looked at in Part 1 in relation to the environmental costs of demolition measured by both embodied carbon and carbon emissions. An estate of 476 homes condemned to demolition and redevelopment by Lambeth council, between 2015 and 2017 ASH produced design alternatives up to feasibility study stage, as well as having our proposals costed by Robert Martell and Partners, a quantity surveyor who offers their services to us at a reduced rate. This was to retain and refurbish all the existing homes up to the Decent Homes Standard, includes external insulation, green roofs, overhaul of ventilation and services, new doors and windows to address to address incidences of mould and cold bridging. We also proposed the improvement of communal facilities, the re-use and re-purpose of existing unused buildings on the estate; to reinstate 'green fingered' walkways

pulled down by the council as part of the managed decline of the estate, retain all existing trees, and retain and increase the biodiversity of the estate as a 'green corridor' for wildlife between local parks.

Proposed
floor plan

In addition, we proposed designs for the extension of the stepped maisonettes onto existing under-used terraces. This would increase the size of the existing bedrooms on the upper floor (*indicated in blue in the diagram above*), and add one additional bedroom to existing lower floor (*indicated in yellow*). This demonstrated that these homes had not come to the end of their life, but could be renovated, extended and improved. As part of our strategy for increasing the housing capacity on the estate without demolition we also proposed new homes (*indicated in pink*) and gardens to be installed on the roofs of the low-rise maisonettes. These would be lightweight, pre-fabricated timber constructions craned onto site, thereby minimising noise, dust, construction time and disruption to residents.

In total, and with the agreement of the residents of central Hill estate, we were able to potentially increase the housing capacity on the estate not only through roof extensions but also by infill housing up to 52 per cent. Crucially, without the huge financial costs of demolition, compensation for leaseholders and replacement of the existing homes, we were financially able to make at least half the 242 new homes for social rent.

Obviously, since none of this fitted their plans to maximise the value of the land on which Central Hill estate is built, Lambeth council rejected our proposals outright, claiming without proof that they were financially unviable. But with the help of Robert Martell, we've estimated our proposals would cost in the region of £97 million. That's around a

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sixth of the cost of the council's demolition and redevelopment scheme, and payable back over only 25 years rather than 60. And from the environmental perspective, the environmental costs of refurbishment, infill development and light-weight timber roof extensions are a fraction that of demolition and redevelopment at the vastly increased densities required to fund such a project.

5. Regeneration of the West Kensington and Gibbs Green Estates

As another example, between 2015 and 2016 ASH developed design proposals for new homes and improvement of existing homes and amenities on the West Kensington and Gibbs Green estates in West Kensington. This included the refurbishment of all 760 existing dwellings with external insulation, green roofs, overhaul of ventilation and services, new doors and windows. In addition, we proposed a new community hall and children's play spaces, community allotments, tree-planting initiatives, sustainable urban drainage, and the conversion of unused garages into workshops for the local community.

To address housing need in the borough, we proposed the addition of roof extensions, new lifts, balconies and — inspired by Druot, Lacaton and Vassal — winter gardens to existing housing blocks (*above*). This would increase the size of the 1-bedroom flats significantly, adding an extra 10-12 square metres to each home, as well as improving the thermal performance of the flats. Together with infill housing on land to which the residents had given their consent for new development, residents agreed to an additional 360 new dwellings on the estate, a 47 per cent increase without a single home having been demolished.

Finally, we proposed new single-storey supported housing to free up the many under-occupied homes on the estate, often lived in by grandparents whose children had moved out, and whose energy bills, as a consequence, were unnecessarily large. This would in turn house larger families on the estate living in over-crowded homes. As always, the

redistribution of resources provided the very simple solution to what councils had depicted to residents as an intractable problem justifying the demolition of their homes.

6. Regeneration of the Patmore Co-operative Housing Estate

My final example is the Patmore Co-operative housing estate in Wandsworth, which lies to the immediate south of the Battersea Power Station redevelopment that we looked at in Part 1 of this lecture. As we said, this is under threat of demolition by the council precisely because the surrounding development of extremely high-cost residential property has driven up the land values in the neighbourhood, precisely as it was meant to do. At the request of the co-operative, ASH has developed a different vision of the estate's future than demolition and redevelopment as investment opportunities for offshore companies (*below*).

This vision begins with the refurbishment of all 860 dwellings, which have so far been excluded from the funding to do so by Wandsworth council. But our proposals also include the re-use of disused laundry rooms as community facilities or 'DIY stores' at not-for-profit rates for residents. At the suggestion of residents, these include recycling spaces, a workshop library, an after-school club or a social club. As part of this re-use we encouraged the development of partnerships between local food banks, the adjacent Covent Garden Market and food-growing initiatives on the estate.

We have also proposed a new pedestrian and cycle-friendly public realm, new low-energy lighting throughout the estate, and low-maintenance, porous, flood-resilient landscapes to increase bio-diversity and wildlife. The Patmore estate, like the Battersea Power Station development, is built on a flood-plain that was formerly marsh land. As a consequence, under the guidelines for the Opportunity Area all new developments must have green roofs to offset the effects of floodwater. However, the environment is a radical leveller in who and what it affects, and rainwater doesn't stop falling at the edge of gated communities. ASH is therefore arguing that for the green architecture on the new developments to function as designed the Patmore estate should also be retrofitted with green roofs on the housing blocks. Again, rather than reducing the environmental dimension of architecture to a slice of the capitalist financial pie, it must be situated within the totality of the relations that compose the whole of the built environment.

With regard to this last practice, I'd like to add these two further principles of a socialist architecture, which were suggested to us by the landscape architect, Daniel Roehr, who co-presented with us on our workshop on the environmental dimension of a socialist architecture. These were further articulated by Daniel in his subsequent article on 'Vancouver's Housing Crisis: A Collaborative Opportunity for Planners and Architects':

- Given the increase in the incidents of flash-flooding consequent upon global climate change, storm-water management of future sites must be addressed by planners and designers at the beginning of developing a site, not as an afterthought once the housing design has been approved.
- To this end, the master-planning of housing developments should be designed by architects and landscape architects in collaboration with planners at the beginning of a project. Designers should not be reduced to consultants who are only brought into the development process after developers and planners have decided the use of a piece of land.

In conclusion, all these case studies are specific and unique to each place and legislative and policy context. The practices we have derived from them are intended to explore and suggest how a socialist architecture might find common principles in order to address global problems that have a common cause but which must be solved with a diverse range of local solutions.

7. Solutions to the Climate Emergency

One of ASH's working principles is that the wrong solution to a problem is not 'better than nothing', as we are inevitably told by those proposing it; it is, in practice, worse than nothing. Not only does it consume funding, energy, time, political will and other resources that could and should be put towards the right solution, but the wrong solution deceives the public into believing that the correct solution has been found. How long did it take the public — and not just housing campaigners — to learn that 'affordable housing' was a euphemism for demolishing social housing and replacing it with a hodge-podge of shared ownership scams, rent-to-buy products and higher rents with reduced rights? And even after 20 years of demolition, social cleansing and privatisation, politicians from all political parties are still able to argue that estate 'regeneration' is the answer to our crisis of housing affordability. Imagine what could have been achieved with the vast sums of public money thrown at subsidising affordable housing and market-sale properties at the point of both production and consumption. Enough, surely, to have refurbished every estate in England and Wales up to the Decent Homes Standard. Enough, perhaps, to have built however many new homes for social rent for which there is such overwhelming housing need. Instead, the enormous profits made by developers, builders and housing associations have been publicly funded with Help to Buy, Right to Buy, Buy to Let, Affordable Housing subsidies and the privatisation of swathes of council-owned land in the UK. So how do they get away with it?

The answer to that question is: the same way the propagandists of Neo-liberalism have got away with ten years of fiscal austerity that has cut public spending and workers' wages while overseeing the exponential rise in the wealth of the richest. Or the same way

we have committed to a never-ending War on Terror that has made the British people the legitimate target of terrorists for generations to come. They did it by declaring a 'crisis'. Whether it's the security crisis kicked off by the attack on the World Trade Centre in 2001; or the sub-prime mortgage crisis in which 6 million people lost their houses in the USA alone; or the subsequent financial crisis in which UK banks were bailed out by the British taxpayer to the sum of £850 billion; or the housing crisis that ensued as global capital looked for a secure commodity in which to invest its profits: the discourse of crisis, of declarations of emergency, are always employed to push through increasingly repressive measures against the very people it is claiming to save while increasing the power and profits of the institutions and corporations nominated to impose them. We're seeing the same thing happening right now with the increased surveillance, stop-and-search powers and punitive measures granted to the police and law courts in response to the 'crisis' of knife crime in the capital, while leaving the economic and social causes of that crime untouched.

So why should we expect anything different from the environmental crisis? Over the past year we've seen the rise of Extinction Rebellion, whose calls to declare a 'Climate Emergency' have been adopted by Parliament if not yet by Government, by the Greater London Authority, by councils across London, and by architects across the UK. Of the more than 600 architectural practices that have signed up to the recent manifesto, *UK Architects Declare Climate and Biodiversity Emergency*, many of the largest and most influential companies continue to promote, implement and financially profit from the estate demolition programme, including many of the founding signatories:

- **Adam Khan** (Tower Court and Marian Court)
- **Alison Brooks** (South Kilburn and South Acton estates)
- **Allies and Morrison** (Heygate, Gascoigne, Acton Gardens and West Hendon estates)
- **David Chipperfield** (Colville estate)
- **dRMM** (Heygate estate)
- **Hawkins\Brown** (Agar Grove, Bridge House, Aylesbury and Alton estates)
- **Haworth Tompkins** (Robin Hood Gardens estate)
- **HTA Design** (Ferrier, South Acton, Waltham Forest, Kender, Aylesbury, Ebury Bridge, Ravensbury, New Avenue and Clapham Park estates)
- **Levitt Bernstein** (Aylesbury, Eastfields, Winstanley, York Road and Rayners Lane estates)
- **Maccreanor Lavington** (Heygate and Alma estates)
- **Mae** (Knight's Walk, Agar Grove and Aylesbury estates)
- **Metropolitan Workshop** (Leopold and Robin Hood Gardens estates)
- **Mikhail Riches** (Goldsmith Street)
- **Pollard Thomas Edwards** (Lefevre Walk, Packington, Alma, Thames View East and South Lambeth estates)

- **PRP** (Crossways, Myatts Field North, Mardyke, Haggerston, Kingsland, Portobello Square and Central Hill estates)
- **Studio Egret West** (Ferrier and Love Lane estates)

That's just on the estate redevelopment schemes we're aware of, and doesn't include the deposit boxes for money laundering being designed along the Thames by such corporate architects as Foster + Partners, Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners and Zaha Hadid Architects. The only major estate-demolishing architectural practice notable by its absence from this list is Karakusevic Carson (*Claredale, King's Crescent, Bacton, Colville, Alma, Nightingale, Fenwick, St. Raphael, Joyce Avenue and Snell's Park estates*). Quite apart from the tens of thousands of residents socially cleansed from their homes by these and other schemes, it beggars belief that this catalogue of architectural practices colluding in the estate demolition programme are now trying to pass themselves off as defenders of our environment. Or rather, it would be if it wasn't so glaringly apparent that this collective call for a 'paradigm shift' in the 'behaviour' of UK architects is a cynical example of 'green-washing'.

It's no surprise, therefore, that the only mention in this manifesto about the environmental cost of demolition is watered down with the same get-out clause used on the 2017 *Architects Code* to 'advise your client how best to conserve and enhance the quality of the environment and its natural resources . . . where appropriate.' Although now declaring their intent to 'upgrade existing buildings for extended use as a more carbon efficient alternative to demolition and new build', this is immediately qualified by the tacked-on caveat: 'whenever there is a viable choice'. In this context, 'viable' means 'financially viable', which means after the developer has taken their 20-25 per cent profit according to a viability assessment produced by them that is not available for public scrutiny under the get-out clause of 'commercial confidentiality'. Once again, therefore, the environment is being subordinated to the profit margins of developers and investors, in which it represents a slice of expenditure in capitalism's pie.

All this accords with Extinction Rebellion's trenchant refusal to identify capitalism as the primary cause of our environmental situation. In the more than 5,000 words its website devotes to explaining 'The Truth' about climate change, not a single one of those words, incredibly, is 'capitalism'. Despite the fact that, by its own admission, half of carbon dioxide emissions since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution around 270 years ago have been released since 1988, a mere 30 years ago, Extinction Rebellion has instead found a new culprit in the fashionable term 'anthropocene', which attributes the globe's recent and rapidly increasing species extinction and climate change to the humanist, anthropological and a-historical abstraction called 'man'. But then, the leadership of Extinction Rebellion is composed of directors of non-governmental organisations and lobbyists for multinational energy companies, whose promotion of a 'Green New Deal' for capitalism — carefully erased of any reference to socialism — has been readily adopted by the Labour Party. Indeed, the Green New Deal's 20,000-word report, published this

October, on their proposed Decarbonisation and Economic Strategy Bill mentions 'capitalism' only once, and even then qualifies it with the word 'financialised', as if the two can be separated. It's not surprising, therefore, that the architects of 'green architecture', employed by the same political party to demolish around 190 council estates in London alone and replace them with supposedly 'carbon-neutral' properties for investment by global capital, find common ground with this recourse to that old chimera of liberals that many point to but few have seen: *capitalism with a human face.*

One of the more cynical examples of the building industry capitalising on the 'climate emergency' is councils and other registered providers of social housing quoting the lower thermal performance of post-war estates when compared to new-build housing in order to justify demolishing the former, while ignoring the carbon cost of demolition. This is exactly what Leeds City council tried to do with the council homes on Wordsworth Drive and Sugar Hill Close, and the Cambridge Housing Society is doing to push through its plans to redevelop the Montreal Square estate; and yet neither local authority nor housing association has produced an impact assessment of the huge environmental costs of demolishing, removing, disposing of and replacing these perfectly serviceable homes.

In contrast to this manipulative discourse of 'crisis' that seeks to retain and strengthen capitalism's iron grip on the world, ASH proposes principles and practices of a socialist architecture that intervene in, oppose and propose alternatives to the capitalist cycle of production, distribution, exchange and consumption. It is within this economic cycle — which from an environmental perspective is the unsustainable cycle of extraction, construction, demolition and disposal — that the development process is entrenched by current housing legislation, policy and funding. Confronted with the ruinous and catastrophic consequences of this cycle — which began with the industrial revolution but continues to increase exponentially with the hegemony of global capitalism — promotions of a 'green industrial revolution' and the implementation of 'green architecture' are little more than window dressing to more false solutions in the service of expanded markets, corporate competition and the increasingly militarised struggle for dwindling natural resources.

Rather than declarations of 'climate emergency' that serve to push through new capitalisations on the environmental crisis on a wave of orchestrated public feeling that silences public scrutiny under the newly imposed orthodoxies of climate activism, what we need is to remove all housing provision from the capitalist cycle of production. Within this cycle, the environment is accorded no more than a slice of the financial pie that is spent on the false solutions of so-called 'green architecture', in the same way that the social dimension of architecture is discharged by a portion of funding spent on the equally false solution of so-called 'affordable housing'. But the environmental dimension of architecture, like its social, economic and political dimension, is not a component of a whole that is always, in current practice, subordinated to the profit margins of landlords, developers and investors. Rather, each dimension constitutes that whole — which today

is that of an inhabitable planet. However much capitalism tries to separate them into portions of a financial viability assessment, in our social practice, in our economic growth, in our political policies, and in the environmental consequences these will have for us, they are indivisible. The answers to the planet's climate change and species extinction cannot be separated from the social, economic and political system that is causing them. Any proposed solution that does not clearly identify global capitalism as their cause is the wrong solution.

Lecture 3. Part 1. Economic Principles

'Where did this entire financial phantasmagoria come from? Quite simply, from the way people who could just not afford them were forced into buying nice new houses because they were seduced into taking out miraculous loans. Their promises to repay the loans were then sold on, after having been mixed up with securitisations whose composition had been made as clever as it was opaque thanks to the work of battalions of mathematicians. But then the property market collapsed, and that was all it took to ensure the buyers were less and less able to pay their debts, because their houses were worth less while their creditors were demanding more. It looked like a draw: the speculators lost their stake money and the buyers lost their homes when they were gently evicted. But, as always, it was the collective dimension and ordinary life that lost out. Ultimately, all this came about because tens of millions of people are on such low incomes — or non-incomes — that they cannot afford anywhere to live. The real essence of the financial crisis is a housing crisis.'

— Alain Badiou, *This Crisis is the Spectacle: Where is the Real?* (2008)

This is the third lecture of four ASH is delivering on the principles and practices for a socialist architecture. In the first lecture we looked at the social dimension of a socialist architecture, the context for which is:

1. *The Social.* To situate architecture within the totality of relations of its production, distribution, exchange and consumption, and propose new practices for a socialist architecture under capitalism.

In the second lecture we looked at the environmental dimension, one of the contexts for which — or perhaps better challenges — is:

2. *The Environmental.* To understand and reduce the totality of consumption within the finitude of global resources.

And today we're going to be looking at the economic dimension of a socialist architecture, perhaps the overwhelming challenge of which is:

3. *The Economic.* To design for and implement economic de-growth within the context of global housing demand.

The current estimate is that we need to build around 2 billion homes globally in which people can afford to live by the end of the century, most of them in the southern hemisphere. This seems to me to be the key challenge facing architecture, housing policy and a lot of other things, including our economy.

1. Opposed Economies of Architecture

We showed this diagram (*overleaf*) for the first time last week, and I want to return to it today, as we will in our final lecture on the political dimension of architecture. On the left is a familiar diagram within our capitalist economy: it's a pie chart in which one would, for instance, break down how funds are allocated to an individual project or large scheme. And within that breakdown, a certain amount of funds would be allocated to ameliorating, for example, the environmental costs of building a particular structure or scheme, for instance with the kind of 'green architecture' whose failings we looked at in our previous lecture; and the social costs, equally, would be understood as a certain amount of funding for homes for the equally inadequate provision of so-called 'affordable housing' that very few people can actually afford. Within this financial pie chart, both these dimensions of architecture are understood as a financial loss conceded to the total profit that could otherwise have been extracted from the project. And as I said last week, within a capitalist economy the political sphere is seen as extrinsic to these financial considerations, because under capitalism the capitalist model of the economy is taken as given.

Opposed Economies of Architecture
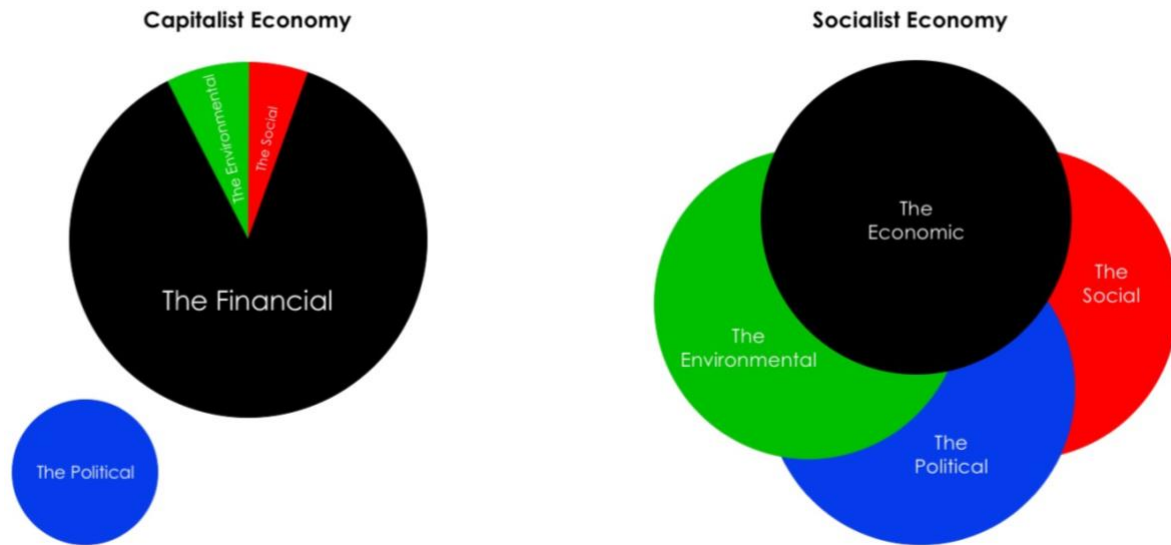
In contrast, under what we understand to be a socialist economy of architecture, these four spheres of practice are one and the same. We can separate one discursively to talk about its specificity, but what we do in one sphere, whether the economic, the social, the environmental or the political, influences all the others. And, crucially — which is what we're going to discuss next week in our concluding lecture — the political sphere is very much a part of this totality.

The other thing to emphasise in the differences between these two opposed economies of architecture is that, under a socialist economy, the economic is not the same as the financial. Under capitalism, the financial is about how you fund a project, the return you make on it, the profit you extract from it. In contrast, within a socialist economy of architecture the economic sphere describes the totality of exchange — and not just the financial costs — consequent upon a scheme.

Environmentalists have a tendency to talk about the environment as if it were outside the relations of production, and to argue that what we need to do is change what is characterised within Western liberalism as 'man's' exploitative relationship to the environment; but I don't think that is the case. We're not, as a species, trying to save the planet for the planet — which will get along just fine without us once we're gone. We're trying to save the planet so that we can continue to live on it — for our survival, which means the sustaining of its eco-system sufficient to sustain us. Saving 'the environment' means engaging with the total economy of exchanges, which includes, as I have said, housing another 3 billion people by the end of the century should we reach it. An environmental model of change, therefore, must at the same time be a model of economic change, therefore also a change of our social and political models — of which gestures towards funding 'green architecture' fall desperately short in both vision and effectivity.

The last thing to emphasis about this diagram here is that, no matter how much we try to separate these spheres — to argue, as our politicians and economists do, that the political sphere is outside of our economy and 'there is no alternative' to capitalism; or, as our developers and architects do, that the social and environmental requirements of a housing development are discharged with a portion of its funding — our political policies, our economic models, our architectural practices and their environmental consequences, are all inseparable. One of the key ideas we want to convey in this lecture is that the economic dimension of architecture — as it is of housing provision — is not reducible to its financing, but cuts across the total costs of a given scheme.

2. The Neo-liberalisation of Housing

So let's start with what we are doing now and have been doing for a long time: Neo-liberal housing policy. I imagine there are more than these, but in my understanding of it — gained from working over the past four years as a member of Architects for Social Housing, in which my role involves reading a lot of UK housing policy — Neo-liberal housing policy is based on the following three basic principles:

1. That attracting investment in UK residential property from the private sector, including foreign investors, overseas buyers and offshore financial jurisdictions, should be the primary source of revenue for house building, rather than state investment.
2. That according to the law of supply and demand, massively increasing the number of residential properties for market sale will reduce house prices in general;
3. That the sale of prime and super-prime residential properties for the highest possible market price will cross-subsidise the provision of so-called 'affordable housing' the rest of the population can afford to rent or buy.

So, private investment, increased supply, and cross subsidisation: these are the three primary principles of Neo-liberal housing policy, and they are all three fallacies. This is why:

1. Because private investment in the property market has qualitatively transformed housing into a global commodity to which traditional notions of property ownership no longer apply. As an example of which, anonymous investors represented by companies registered in offshore financial jurisdictions are now speculating on shares — not on material properties — in the value uplift consequent upon planning permission for housing being granted on a piece of land they will never see and which may never even be developed. Property — residential or otherwise — has always been a product in which the buyer invests; but it is now a commodity. This means it's no longer simply being exchanged on the property market. Property has always been bought and sold, and in London today most high-cost residential properties are purchased off-plan years before

they are built, with a deregulated banking system offering loans far in excess of incomes. But for some time now UK housing has been additionally subject to speculation by global financiers, who use mortgages on property to leverage additional finance, which is what led to the sub-prime mortgage crisis that cost 6 million Americans their homes. This marks a qualitative change in the housing market to which not only our policies but also our economy must respond;

2. Because the law of supply and demand doesn't describe this property market, whose financialisation by global capital has driven prices up — at it is intended to — not down. It shouldn't be necessary to point out the obvious: that investors don't invest in a commodity in the expectation that its price will fall; they do so because they think it will rise — which is exactly what has happened to UK residential property, and in particular since the financial crisis;

3. Because far from cross-subsidising affordable housing, let alone homes for social rent, private investment is instead funding the demolition of public housing and the sale of public land for the development of primarily market-sale properties. This is particularly the case in London where land values are so high, and so much of the inner-city is built on by council housing.

So what are the costs of this? I said before that social, environmental and economic costs are indivisible. As evidence of what these are I'm going to give here just a few statistics, to try to convey some of the costs of the Neo-liberalisation of housing.

- Between 2006 and 2014, at least £170 billion worth of UK property was acquired by companies registered to offshore financial jurisdictions protected by secrecy laws and with extremely low tax regimes.
- The real owners of more than half of the 44,000 UK land titles registered to oversees companies are unidentified, but 9 out of 10 of the properties were purchased through tax havens.
- In the second half of 2018, overseas investors purchased 57 per cent of all homes in Central London.
- As of October 2019, £10.7 billion-worth of residential property in London is sitting empty.
- Only a quarter of the residential properties with planning permission in London between 2017 and 2021 will meet current housing tenure and price demand, which is for homes for social rent and lower mainstream housing at lower prices than almost anything currently on the market in London.
- Of the 169,770 residential properties completed in England between April 2018 and March 2019, only 6,287 homes, or 3.7 per cent, were for social rent.
- Between 2011 and 2018, only 6 per cent of residential dwellings built on government land sold to developers for housing were for social rent; and only 23 per cent will be even 'affordable housing'; while 56 per cent of all developments on sold sites have no social-rented housing at all.

- The total number of unsold new-build properties in London on sale for more than £1 million has hit a record high of 3,000 units, with half of all new-build residential properties in Central London currently standing empty.

There are many more such statistics where these came from. So, despite the justifications of politicians, lobbyists for the building industry and ideologues of the free market, Neo-liberal housing policy is quite clearly not working. Or rather, while it is certainly working to the benefit of some people, it's not doing what it is claiming to do.

3. The UK Property and Homelessness Market

Unsurprisingly, the imposition of these policies has had considerable effects on the accumulation of capital in the UK property market, some of which I've collected here:

- The total value of the UK housing stock in 2018 was £7.29 trillion, having risen by a third over the last decade alone. This is equivalent to 3.45 times the gross domestic product of the UK, and more than 62 per cent of the UK's entire net wealth of £11.63 trillion.
- 72 per cent of the increase in the value of UK housing stock in 2018, some £137.7 billion, was due to house prices going up, with only 28 per cent of that increase coming from new properties being built. Property wealth, in other words, is not coming from an increase in housing production but from an inflation in house prices caused by market speculation and government subsidies such as Help to Buy equity loans.
- In 2016 the 10 largest house builders in the UK were sitting on land with planning permission sufficient to build 404,000 new residential properties, as well as holding option agreements with landowners on enough land to build another 480,000. Yet between them they built less than 30,000 new dwellings that year.
- Despite this — or rather because of it — the pre-tax profits of the four largest UK builders rose from just under £419 million in 2011 to over £2.6 billion in 2016. That's a more than six-fold increase in just five years. The largest builder, Persimmon, cleared £1 billion profit in 2018. There is a direct correlation, therefore, between housing supply and the profits being made from it, but it is not based on flooding the market with low-cost housing.

Again, what are the costs of this, and the social costs in particular? Here are some statistics from the UK market in homelessness — and we should never be mistaken that homelessness is not big business:

- London house prices have risen from an average of £245,000 in April 2009 to £618,432 this month. That's nearly eighteen times the average London salary of £35,000, and many times more than the roughly £20,000 the vast majority of Londoners earn.

- Rents on London's private market, in which 30 per cent of London households now have to find a home, have risen to an average of £1,694 per month, compared to the UK average of £967.
- The total rent paid by UK tenants in 2018 was £51.6 billion, more than double the £22.6 billion paid in 2007. Though we're constantly told by UK housing policy that we should aspire to live in a home-owning democracy, fewer and fewer owners actually live in the properties that are being built. Instead, we're moving toward a rentier society of buy-to-let landlords.
- One of the consequences of this is that the UK Housing Benefit bill for 2018-19 is expected to be £23.4 billion, almost all of which is going straight into the pockets of private landlords. This represents 2.9 per cent of total public expenditure and 1.1 per cent of national income that could otherwise be spent on building homes for social rent that meet the housing needs of the UK population.
- Since 1980, nearly 2 million council homes have been sold to tenants at a state-funded discount, a quarter of which are now owned by private landlords who more or less promptly bought them off the leaseholders and now rent them out — often back to the councils that sold them — at private rent levels. Further capitalising on this scheme, investors represented by estate agents are now fronting the money for tenants to enact the Right to Buy their council home, then sell the reduced-price property to the investor in return for a cut of the profits. Meanwhile, 1.6 million households in England alone are waiting for a council home.
- Of the 31,851 residential units completed in London in 2017-18, 27,148 were for market sale or rent; 2,839 were intermediate, meaning shared ownership or equity; 1,431 were for affordable rent, meaning up to 80 per cent of market rate; and a mere 433, 1.36 per cent of the total, were for social rent.
- As of March 2019, 84,740 households in England, including 126,020 children, were living in temporary accommodation, a 77 per cent increase since December 2010. Of these, 56,280 (66 per cent of the total) were placed in temporary accommodation by London local authorities.
- The number of long-term vacant properties in London increased from 20,237 in October 2017 to 22,481 in October 2018.
- At the end of 2018, there were an estimated 170,000 people homeless in London, or 1 in 52 of the capital's population, and roughly double that in Inner London, with over 320,000 homeless across the UK.
- 8,855 people slept on the streets of London last year, with 12,300 sleeping rough across the UK, and a further 12,000 sleeping in tents, cars, sheds, bins or night buses.

4. The Capitalist Housing Crisis

So, what can and must we learn from all this? After our previous lecture someone asked us an interesting question about our use of the word 'socialism', and whether we were

worried about putting people off. We had several answers. First, that for the first time in decades it's possible to use the word socialism without being dismissed as a dreamer or arrested as a criminal, and it's incumbent upon us not to fear using the word 'socialism' to describe our social, environmental, economic and political principles, rather than fall back on euphemisms. Second, at the same time — and as capitalism has shown itself throughout history to be so successful at doing — the term 'socialism' is being appropriated to a liberal programme of identity politics and minor adjustments to capitalism, neither of which have anything to do with socialism; and after forty years of Neo-liberal ideology it's important that we clarify what socialism means in practice. And third, it's about time we came up with an alternative to capitalism, because everything tells us that it isn't working, and that socialism is, quite literally, the unsurpassable horizon of our time. So let's start with a few home truths about capitalism:

- Capitalism doesn't create competition, but the monopoly in housing provision we currently have. The so-called 'free market' has never existed in anything more than the imagination of Adam Smith and his followers, who in the face of the monopoly exerted over the world's economy by multinational corporations continue to babble on about competitive markets and the democracy of the customer.
- Capitalism is not restricted by government regulation, as the ideologues of a deregulated free market argue; but is the author of the legislation that is accommodating and promoting its financial interests, with UK housing policy written by professionals who work for the developers, housing associations and estate agents.
- Capitalism is not restrained by the state but in collaboration with its legal and municipal authorities to implement the social cleansing of working-class communities from the inner cities of global finance. This is happening across the world, from Melbourne to Berlin, from Barcelona to Sao Paulo, from Vancouver to London.
- Capitalism has no interest, financial or otherwise, in meeting the housing needs of its customers. Its exclusive interest is in increasing the profits of its shareholders. We may deplore this as immoral, but handing over a basic social need such as housing to the indifference of the market is fundamentally flawed. The building industry, accordingly, has no financial motivation to flood the property market with low-cost housing that would lower house prices and with it the vast profits it is making from that market. This is not speculation but an irrefutable truth, whose proofs have been there to see all around us for some time now.
- The housing crisis – which is the lack of affordable housing provision, the escalation in housing costs, the diminution of space standards, the reduction in build quality from what we built in the past, the worsening of housing conditions with more people living in slums, and the increase in housing poverty and homelessness – is not a residue of the failure of capitalism but a product of the

successful functioning of its markets. If the 21st Century should have taught us anything by now, it is that capitalism creates crises, and then it capitalises on them.

5. Economic Principles for a Socialist Architecture

What, then, are the economic principles of a socialist architecture we oppose to capitalism? As we said in our first lecture, by a socialist architecture we don't mean the architecture of the Soviet Union, or of the German Democratic Republic, or of the Republic of Yugoslavia. We're not talking about the past. We're talking about the socialist architecture we need for the future, whose principles and practices begin in the present. To describe what a socialist architecture is, therefore, we must articulate and engage the relationship between principles and practices. Having proposed the principles of a socialist architecture is not enough. That's what declarations of human rights stop at, and why they consistently fail to impose their principles in defence of those who have redress to them. We need to address how to put the principles of a socialist architecture into practice under existing economic, political and social conditions. But let's start with what the economic principles of a socialist architecture might be. Let's speculate a bit on our future:

- *All new housing should be social housing*. Every time a new development goes up in London there's an earnest debate about whether 15 per cent, or 30 per cent, or 45 per cent is an acceptable or sufficient share of affordable housing — without asking what exactly composes that share. And the debate always falls back on the claim that, as a city, a state, a nation, we can't afford to build homes for social rent. Economically, this is rubbish. In the UK after the Second World War, when our national debt was 245 per cent of GDP, we initiated a programme of council housing that built 4.355 million council homes in England and Wales between 1945 and 1980. That's an average of 121,000 new homes per year, all of them for council rent. These homes weren't 'subsidised' by the state, as we are told nowadays: the state invested in them. So how did the UK of 1945-79 afford to do what we supposedly can't afford today, when our GDP, adjusted for inflation, is more than 4.6 times what it was in 1955 when records began? First, local authorities with in-house architectural departments directly employed building contractors, and in doing so cut out the hugely exaggerated profits developers take from housing today. Second, the return the state received on its investment was not a quick profit shared with private companies but long-term, with the revenue from what's left of our council housing continuing to make a profit for local authorities today. Third, and most importantly, the calculation of that return was not purely financial but economic, in the proper sense of the term: meaning it included the social return that took millions of UK citizens out of housing poverty, unsanitary living conditions and exploitation by slum landlords.
- *All land should be socialised*. By socialised we don't mean just nationalised, which means owned and run by the state — as the Labour Party is promising to do when

and if it forms a UK government — but run for the benefit and needs of society. There are plenty of examples across the world of state ownership of land and infrastructure that are anything but run for the benefit of its citizens — China's state capitalism being the prime example today. Ownership by the nation is not enough. Socialisation prescribes how the land is used — beginning, in the UK, where two-thirds of the land is owned by just 0.36 per cent of the population, with its radical redistribution.

- *The state should invest sufficiently in housing as it should in all essential infrastructure* — such as public transport, water and energy supply, waste disposal, health, education and emergency services — thereby removing new housing provision from the market altogether. This is the basis to the claim — which the UK has yet to include in its legislation — that housing is a human right.

- *A socialist architecture must never be for profit*, which must be subordinated to the total social, environmental and economic costs of a scheme, rather than the opposite — as is standard practice under capitalism — in which the social, environmental and economic costs of the scheme are subordinated to the profit margins of developer and investors.

- *A socialist architecture must prioritise the use-value of its products as homes* over their exchange-value as commodities on the property market. We can't afford, economically, socially or environmentally, to continue to build residential properties that stand empty, in which we cannot afford to live, or which living in forces us into housing poverty and precarity.

- *Maintenance, refurbishment, re-use, improvement of and addition to existing housing and amenities* — the costs of which are far lower socially, environmentally and economically than demolition, disposal and redevelopment — must be the default option for a socialist architecture.

- *A socialist architecture must demonstrate a socialist economic model* that disrupts the hegemony of capitalism as our economic, political and social orthodoxy — encapsulated in the truism coined by Margaret Thatcher that 'There Is No Alternative'. The political sphere, and not just of architecture, is part of the totality it composes; and to change our economy we have to change our politics from this orthodoxy. From the perspective of architectural practice, it is not enough to come up with a model that benefits a particular community, whether that's a housing co-operative, a community land trust or a squat. A socialist architecture must be based on a generalised economic model that is available and applicable to all.

- *A socialist architecture must include a degree of excess*, whether in its design, construction, materials, amenities or space. In the same way that we have come to recognise that the austerity measures imposed on the poorest members of society are a political choice and not an economic necessity, so too we must reject the ingrained idea that public housing, whether council or social, must always be built to the minimum standards and for the lowest possible cost. As a comrade of ours always reminds us: There's nothing too good for the working class!

6. . . . Under Capitalism

How do we do this? In the absence of a socialist revolution — or anything like it — on the horizon of UK politics, how do we turn these economic principles into architectural practice under the following conditions:

- When housing provision under capitalism is primarily for market-sale properties, with a diminishing percentage of affordable housing and social housing becoming a thing of the past?
- When the Neo-liberal state is disinvesting in housing, as it is in all essential infrastructure — all of which are being privatised by Neo-liberal capitalism — thereby submitting new housing provision to market forces?
- When architecture in a capitalist economy is primarily built for profit, which takes precedence over the total social, environmental and economic costs of a scheme?
- When Neo-liberal architecture prioritises the exchange-value of its commodities over their use-value as products? As an example of which, the projects nominated for the 2019 Stirling Prize, awarded to the 'most important contribution to UK architecture', include a private house, a train station, a distillery, an opera house and a sculpture park; and the winners over the past three years have been the headquarters of a US financial media company; a pleasure pier built with £8.75 million of lottery money that the following year was sold to a private company; and an art gallery for the private collection of the UK's wealthiest artist.
- When the current orthodoxy in Neo-liberal housing policy is for demolition and redevelopment, with no funding currently available for refurbishment, and the added disincentive of VAT on refurbishment schemes set at 20 per cent compared to between 0 and 5 per cent on new-build?
- When the Neo-liberalisation of housing provision is embedding the hegemony of capitalism within our economic, political and social systems? The financialisation of housing across the globe is embedding Neo-liberalism into the economies of countries, and in particular rapidly developing economies producing the greatest inequality, such as India, Brazil and Indonesia.

As we said in our first lecture, it is far too late to sit around waiting for the promises of political parties calling themselves social democratic to introduce socialist policies that are impossible under the capitalism to which they are committed in political philosophy. While proposing socialist principles, a socialist architecture must be rigorously honest about how these can be put into practice under the current economic circumstances, which are as bad in the UK as they have been in three-quarters of a century, and politically far worse. Against the protestations of a profession that mistakes its collusion with the implementation of capitalist housing provision for an apolitical attitude, there is far more space for agency than we are led to believe by apologists for Neo-liberal orthodoxy.
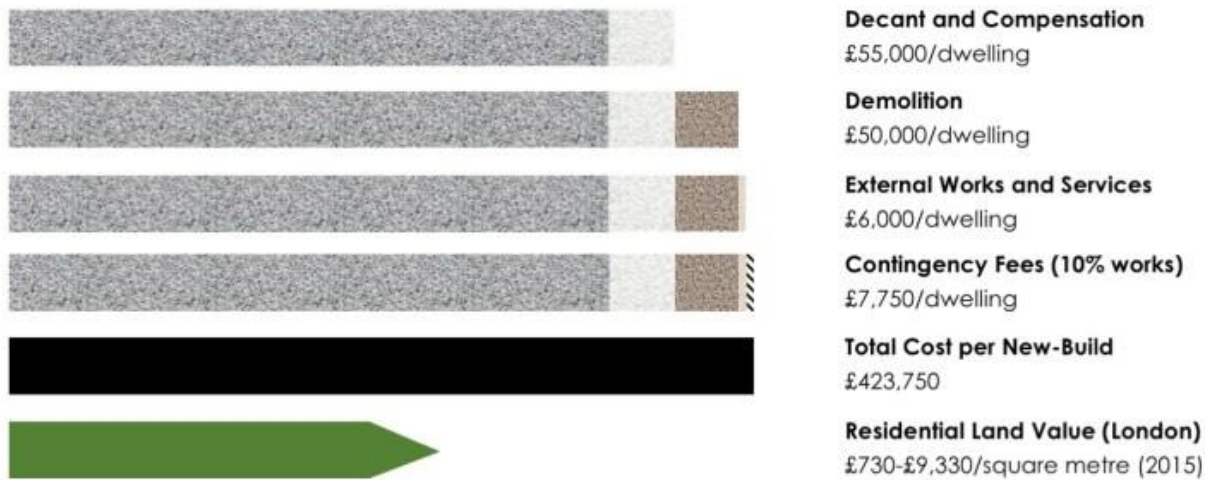
7. Financial Costs of Housing Development

To demonstrate this, let's look at the relative costs of demolition and redevelopment versus refurbishment. These are figures from a report ASH published last year titled *The Costs of Estate Regeneration*, whose findings I want to summarise here as briefly as possible. This diagram (*below*) breaks down the costs of new-build dwellings, which with materials and production, professional fees and community levy, marketing and letting fees, finance (here based on a viability report for the redevelopment of the Aylesbury estate, but which can and most likely will be far higher), and developer profit (here based on Notting Hill Genesis housing association demanding 21 per cent, but which can go up to 25 per cent), come to around £305,000 per unit.

Estimated costs per new-build dwelling (Aylesbury estate)

Materials & Construction
£212,000

Professional Fees & Community Levy
£38,500

Marketing & Letting Fees
£7,500

Finance
£8,000

Developer Profit (21%)
£39,000

Cost per New-Build
£305,000

However, when a housing development is built — as so many of them are in London — on land cleared of an existing council estate, there are additional costs (*overleaf*). These include the cost of decanting and compensating existing residents, both tenants and leaseholders; the cost of demolishing not only the existing homes but the accompanying infrastructure, and transporting and disposing of the waste; the cost of external works and services to the new development; as well as the contingency fees, typically set at around 10 per cent of works. All of which drives the total cost of new build dwellings up to something closer to £425,000 per unit. And, finally, to this enormous figure must be added the cost of residential land, which in London in 2015 varied between £730 and £9,330 per square metre. This makes it impossible to arrive at an estimated financial cost per unit of redevelopment, but it does allow us to say without fear of contradiction that it is enormously expensive. In short, we're looking at huge financial costs for any new residential development. There is no way we can circumvent these figures, which are the financial givens of the UK property market.

Additional costs of demolition and redevelopment per new-build dwelling (Central Hill estate)

Decant and Compensation
£55,000/dwelling

Demolition
£50,000/dwelling

External Works and Services
£6,000/dwelling

Contingency Fees (10% works)
£7,750/dwelling

Total Cost per New-Build
£423,750

Residential Land Value (London)
£730-£9,330/square metre (2015)

8. Refurbishment versus Redevelopment

Unless, instead of demolishing and redeveloping, we refurbish and extend. This next diagram (*below*) shows the relative costs of refurbishment and infill development versus demolition and rebuild on the Central Hill estate. From the existing housing provision of 340 homes for social rent and 136 leasehold properties purchased under the Right to Buy, ASH was able to extend the housing capacity on the estate by an additional 242 dwellings. This mixture of infill housing and roof extensions brought the housing capacity of the estate up to 718 dwellings, an increase of 64 per cent without demolishing a single home. Not only that, but in the absence of the enormous costs of compensation, demolition and replacing the existing homes, we were able not only to refurbish all those homes up to the Decent Homes Standard, but also to make around half the new dwellings for social rent, thereby meeting the housing needs of the borough.

Alternative proposals for the regeneration of the Central Hill estate

Existing Estate (476 homes)
340 Social Rent
136 Leasehold

ASH Proposal (718 dwellings)
460 Social Rent (120 new build) (64%)
136 Leasehold,
60 Market Rent, 62 Market Sale

Council Proposal (1,530 dwellings)
320 London Affordable Rent, 100 Tenancy Strategy Rent,
109 Shared Ownership (27% 'Affordable Housing')
246 Market Rent, 765 Market Sale (50%)

In contrast, in order to cover the costs I've just quoted of compensation, demolition, replacement and redevelopment, Lambeth council were proposing to increase the housing capacity on the estate to — in one scenario — 1,530 dwellings. However, this required replacing the 340 homes for social rent with 320 for the increased London Affordable Rent, and making nearly three-quarters of the new properties for market rent and sale, with the latter making up 50 per cent of the total new builds. Not only would this not meet anything like housing need in the borough, but the increase rental levels and housing costs would preclude many of the tenants and most likely all the leaseholders from returning to the new development.

Not only that, but to fund this project, the council are proposing to privatise the entire scheme through a commercial housing development, management and letting company. Again, let's break down the costs of ASH's proposal compared to that of Lambeth council. Last week we looked at the huge environmental benefits of refurbishment compared to demolition and redevelopment; but the financial costs of the latter relative to the former are even more extraordinary.

We asked a quantity surveyor, Robert Martell and Partners, to estimate the cost of ASH's proposal to refurbish all 476 homes on the Central Hill estate up to the Decent Homes Standard and build 242 new dwellings, and adding up the costs of refurbishment, of construction, of external works and services, of professional fees and with a 10 per cent contingency sum, they came up with an estimate of £84 million. On top of that — even though half the new builds are for social rent and would therefore be allocated by the council, and being built by the council would remove developer profit — we've added marketing and letting fees, finance and developer profit to arrive at a total of around £97 million. Why have we been so generous with our estimates, rather than trying to reduce them as much as possible to support our argument for the financial benefits of refurbishment and infill? Quite simply, because we don't have to, since the costs of demolition and redevelopment are so enormously higher. Let's break these down.

Just to decant and compensate the existing residents costs £25.65 million. To demolish the estate costs £22.8 million. Just to replace the 456 homes the council plans to demolish will cost £156 million. This means that simply to redevelop the estate to its current housing capacity will cost a total of £204.5 million, more than double the cost of the ASH proposal. To build 718 dwellings provided by the ASH proposal will cost £245.5 million, which with decant and demolition costs comes to £294 million, more than three times the cost of the ASH proposal for the same number of dwellings. However, to cover the cost of this scheme over a repayment period of 60 years, it will be necessary to increase the housing capacity of the estate to something like 1,530 dwellings. Not only, as we have seen, will half of these have to be for market sale and a sixth for market rent, with the remainder a mix of shared ownership and affordable rents, but the total cost of this scheme is in excess of an astronomical £570 million, nearly 6 times as much as the ASH proposal.

Relative costs of refurbishment and infill versus demolition and redevelopment of the Central Hill estate

Refurbish and Infill (718 dwellings)
£97 million

Decant (456 households)
£25.65 million

Demolition (456 homes)
£22.8 million (£48.45 million)

Construction (456 dwellings)
£156 million (£204.5 million)

Construction (718 dwellings)
£245.5 million (£294 million)

Construction (1,530 dwellings*)
£523.25 million (£571.7 million)

Not only that, but even with the lack of state funding for, and increased VAT on, refurbishment schemes, under the current funding guidelines and UK house prices and rental market, a financial viability assessment of our proposal (*below*) shows that it would be possible to repay the costs of the ASH proposal over 25 years, rather than the 60 the council is proposing. That's on a scheme that increases the housing capacity of the estate by 62 per cent and the proportion of homes for social rent by over a third, with none of the environmental costs of its demolition, or the social costs consequent upon its redevelopment.

Financial viability assessment of refurbishment and infill of the Central Hill estate over 25 years

Social Rent Subsidies (120 new)
£12 million

Net Social Rent (460 rentals)
£39.350 million (25 years)

Net Market Rent (60 rentals)
£18.75 million (25 years)

Market Sale (62 properties)
£28.737 million

Total return
£98.837 million

**Construction (242 dwellings)
Refurbishment (476 homes)**
£97 million
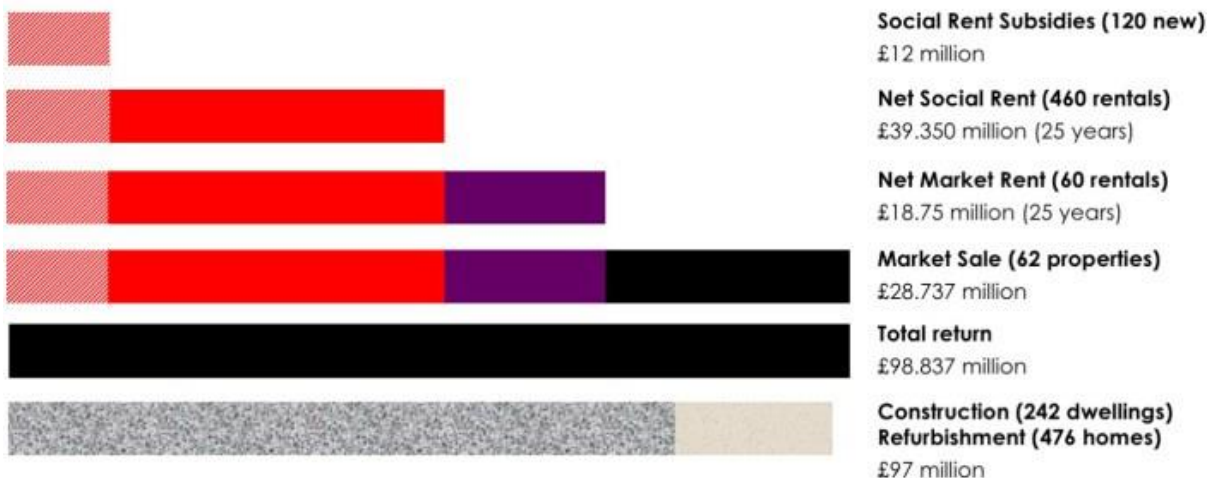
What this demonstrates, and which can be verified by this and other ASH reports, is that refurbishment and infill is by far the most socially beneficial, environmentally sustainable, and economically viable option for estate regeneration. But what it also

demonstrates is that, even under the current conditions of Neo-liberal capitalism, it is still possible to put into practice the economic principles of a socialist architecture.

9. Alternative Economies of Housing Provision

I want to end with this final diagram (*below*), which we showed last week to compare cycles of production, consumption and waste within capitalist and socialist architecture. Today we've altered its terms to show alternative economies of housing provision. From capitalism's environmentally unsustainable cycle of extraction, manufacture, construction, demolition and disposal, we now have its equally economically unsustainable cycle of production, distribution, exchange and consumption, with the cycle beginning all over again only with a diminished source of natural resources. Equally damaging to the sustainability of this cycle, at the point of exchange public funding is extracted from the economy as private profit, not re-invested in housing and other infrastructure.

Capitalist Architecture   **Socialist Architecture**
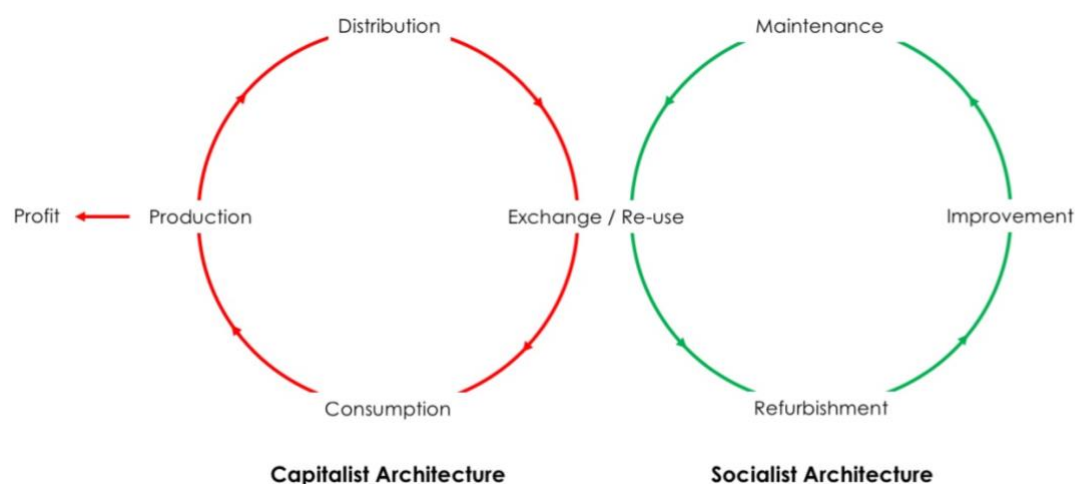
What a socialist architecture must do is interrupt this cycle. Where socialist architecture, from an environmental perspective, begins with the same cycle of extraction, manufacture and construction, instead of demolishing and disposing it refurbishes, improves, maintains and re-uses. In the same way, at the point of exchange in the economic cycle of capitalist architecture, a socialist architecture re-uses, refurbishes, improves and maintains. Refurbishment, as a principle, is not only a method for extending the life of a building, or just a new cycle of production; it is also a different economic model that disrupts, challenges and proposes an alternative to capitalist accumulation. As we have shown, the cycle initiated by refurbishment is far more sustainable environmentally, and it's infinitely more beneficial socially; but it is also many times more economically viable.

Lecture 3. Part 2. Economic Practices

Alternative economies of housing provision
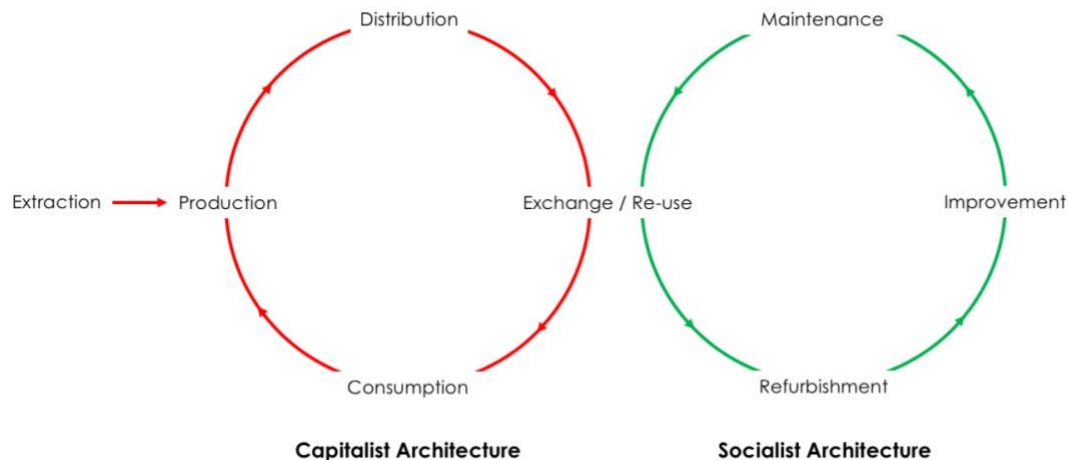
I want to begin with the diagram with which we ended Part 1 of this lecture, which illustrates the connections between the social, the environmental and the economic dimensions of architecture. The terms 'ecology', meaning the study of the relationship between organisms and the environment, and 'economy', meaning household management, both derive from the same root, 'eco'. This comes from the Greek *oikos*, which means 'household', so both terms are linked to the concept of the home. But the home is more than simply a financial investment. Home is a place where we engage with the world socially, and where existences other than humans live. The economy, therefore, means something far bigger than just financial costs, as it does in capitalist architecture. For a socialist architecture, the economy is where all elements relate and co-exist in a sustainable whole.

Having said that, it's important to understand that the simplistic and reductive ways in which global systems are discussed in terms of small-scale household management is not an accurate description of our housing economy. This has been the basis to the imposition on capitalist economies over the past decade of the fiscal policies of austerity, which have justified drastic cuts to state spending by arguing that the UK household has to balance its payments against the profligacy of the pre-financial crisis. But the global economy of the financialised property market and its effect on UK housing cannot be reduced to paying household rent and bills. In order to find ways to engage with and disrupt the existing system and its systemic failure to meet housing need we have to understand how that system operates.

The economy of a development extends from the macro context to the micro scale of a particular project and community. The direct costs of a scheme are those expended directly by the developer, contractor or client on a project, and these are the only ones typically considered as part of a project budget. The capitalist system is interested in

minimising immediate financial costs in order to generate the greatest possible profit for investors in the present. Indirect costs, in contrast, are those that are one step removed from the present and, as a result, are not accounted for by a capitalist architecture. Under capitalism, an individual project is not responsible for costs incurred to anyone other than the client, such as the health, social and financial costs to the existing residents or environment. These indirect costs will instead eventually be shouldered by the state and future generations. This is a hidden debt, a deep debt. And as we have experienced in the UK through this past decade of living under austerity, this debt is born by those who can least afford to pay for it. In contrast to this deferral, a socialist architecture must anticipate, expose, account for and mitigate these debts.

Interestingly in this respect, in 2015 the Welsh National Assembly passed the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales). This 'requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change'. Unfortunately, this Act is unique to Wales, and it's hard to imagine the UK Parliament passing similarly progressive legislation, or of turning this requirement to 'think about' the negative impact of their decisions into an obligation to do something about it; but it shows that there is some recognition of the gap between what our capitalist system is able to produce and what is needed. This is legislation that is demanding local authorities to think beyond the financial gains from a project to its social, environmental and economic impact.

1. West Kensington and Gibbs Green Estates

I'm now going to introduce some of the projects ASH has worked on, and extract some of the economic practices of a socialist architecture we have learned from this work.

The West Kensington and Gibbs Green estates in West London, which contain 760 existing homes on council-owned land, is currently threatened with demolition and redevelopment primarily as market-sale homes by a developer called Capco. ASH identified the possibility for 327 new homes on the estate without demolition, making a 45 per cent increase in housing capacity. Our proposals (*overleaf*) include roof extensions (*indicated in pink in the drawing*) and infill housing (*indicated in yellow*); the refurbishment of all the existing homes; as well as improvements to the landscape and communal facilities on both estates.

In our previous lectures we looked at the social and environmental costs of these demolition and redevelopment schemes; but now I want to focus on the cost benefits from refurbishing these estates. Through external insulation and winter gardens we can reduce energy costs and reduce fuel poverty, which is an increasing problem in the UK.

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The People's Plan
West Kensington and Gibbs Green Estates

Overview from the South West
Alternative to Demolition ASH

In addition, we looked at the distribution of residents across the homes, which since the estates were completed 50-odd years ago has left some under-occupied and others over-occupied. Under current council policy, there is no mechanism for addressing this issue, which has been quoted by Hammersmith and Fulham council as a justification for demolishing the estates. By building new housing, we enable elderly residents currently paying to heat rooms they don't use to move to a new, single-storey, 1-bedroom dwelling on the estate, rather than being forced away from their support networks. This would in turn free up these larger homes for currently overcrowded families. This method of housing redistribution and provision of 1-bedroom residencies would also address the bedroom tax, according to which, under the Welfare Reform Act 2012, a parent claiming housing benefit on a multi-bedroom flat whose child leaves home has their benefit payments reduced, placing a greater burden on their finances. Finally, our proposals looked at re-purposing existing unused garages (*overleaf*), many of which are too small for current-sized cars. We proposed turning these into low-cost workshops or not-for-profit workspaces to support small resident-run businesses.

So how would we finance this? At present, residents on the West Kensington and Gibbs Green estates are applying to the Secretary of State for the Right to Transfer both the land and homes into their own ownership as a Community Land Trust. ASH's design proposals were part of the residents' business plan, demonstrating that the refurbishment and development of the estates is financially viable and has their support. At present, however, there is no government funding for refurbishment, and Value Added Tax (VAT) on refurbishment has been set by the government at 20 per cent, compared with 0 per

cent on new-build development, further disincentivising refurbishment. So although cross-subsidisation is not an ideal solution, the market sale or rent of around half the new dwellings would pay for the construction of all new dwellings, the other of which would be for social rent, as well as for the cost of refurbishment and improvements to the rest of the estates.
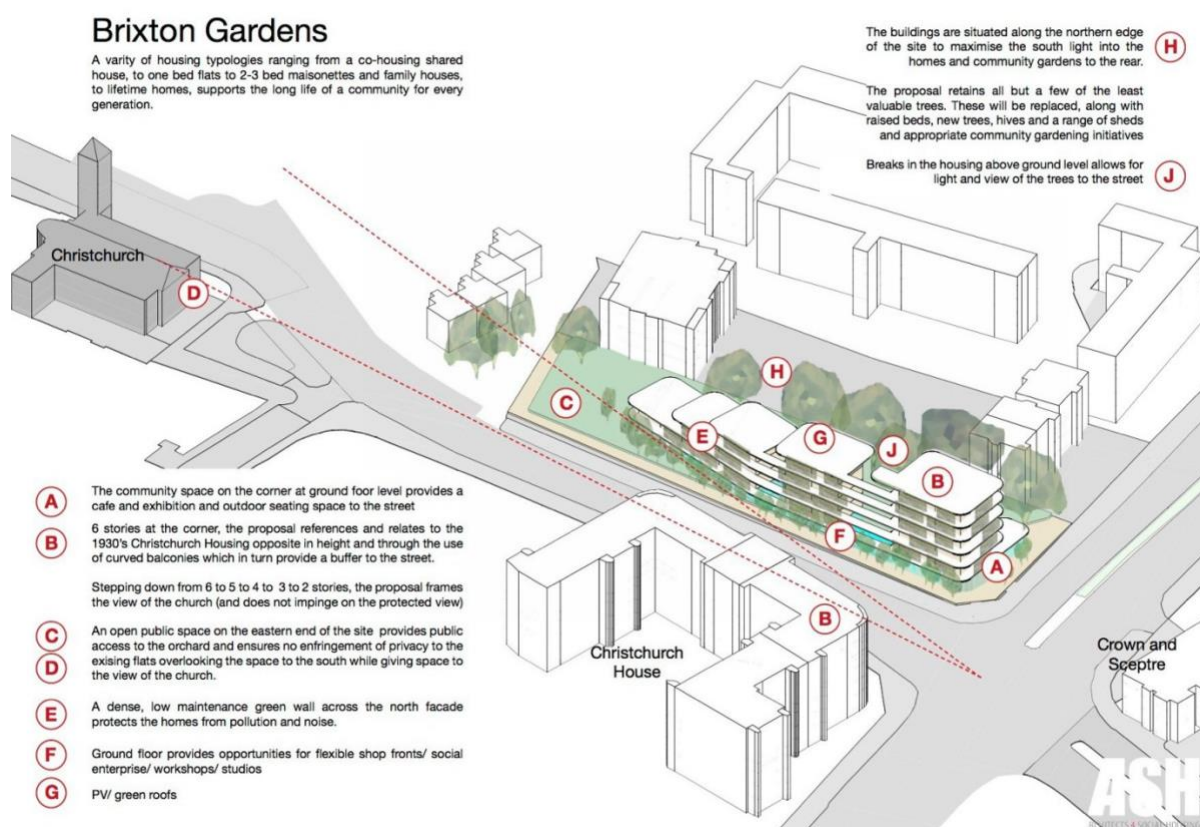

Following the Right to Buy council homes at a state subsidised discount — a scheme that was introduced in 1980 — around a third of homes on estates in Inner London are now owned by leaseholders. At around £50,000 per home to bring the estate up to the Decent Homes Standard plus, the funding of refurbishment on leaseholder homes presents a problem. Our solution is that their share of the refurbishment costs would be funded by the CLT as equity, and be repayable by the leaseholder only at the time of sale. Funding would be raised from long-term, ethical investor partners, as well as from existing government subsidies for new-build affordable housing. It's difficult, but it's not impossible, and the results are infinitely preferable to the economic costs of demolition and redevelopment to councils, leaseholders and tenants.

2. Brixton Gardens Community Land Trust

This next project, Brixton Gardens, which is on a smaller scale, was a collaboration between Architects for Social Housing and the Brixton Housing Co-operative. This was to establish a Community Land Trust that was founded by housing co-operatives, including Co-ops for London. Interestingly, while in Vancouver we met with the Co-operative Housing Federation of British Columbia, which has already put into practice what we were trying to do in the UK. In response to a small site in Streatham, South London being made available by Transport for London for a community-led, affordable housing development, our proposal was to take the land off the market and placing into a

Community Land Trust called Brixton gardens. In the UK, however, housing built on a CLT is traditionally for shared ownership, with the homeowner having to raise a mortgage. It therefore doesn't address the real housing need in the UK, which is for homes for social rent. In contrast to which, the co-operative model has traditionally been for low-cost renting. The co-operative model also offers a management model that is more socialist, rather than the current failed models of either council managed housing or outsourced private management companies. This, to us, seemed a way to take the positive aspects of co-operative management and apply them to a Community Land Trust model of ownership.

Brixton Gardens

A varity of housing typologies ranging from a co-housing shared house, to one bed flats to 2-3 bed maisonettes and family houses, to lifetime homes, supports the long life of a community for every generation.

The buildings are situated along the northern edge of the site to maximise the south light into the homes and community gardens to the rear. (H)

The proposal retains all but a few of the least valuable trees. These will be replaced, along with raised beds, new trees, hives and a range of sheds and appropriate community gardening initiatives

Breaks in the housing above ground level allows for light and view of the trees to the street (J)

(A) The community space on the corner at ground foor level provides a cafe and exhibition and outdoor seating space to the street

(B) 6 stories at the corner, the proposal references and relates to the 1930's Christchurch Housing opposite in height and through the use of curved balconies which in turn provide a buffer to the street.

Stepping down from 6 to 5 to 4 to 3 to 2 stories, the proposal frames the view of the church (and does not impinge on the protected view)

(C) (D) An open public space on the eastern end of the site provides public access to the orchard and ensures no enfringement of privacy to the exising flats overlooking the space to the south while giving space to the view of the church.

(E) A dense, low maintenance green wall across the north facade protects the homes from pollution and noise.

(F) Ground floor provides opportunities for flexible shop fronts/ social enterprise/ workshops/ studios

(G) PV/ green roofs

Using this model, we proposed to build 22 new homes at social-rent levels to be co-operatively managed (*above*). Dwellings of varied sizes to support inter-generational and diverse communities, plus communal facilities and workshops. We explored two options for construction, traditional and modular, self-build techniques. The latter not only saved £2 million on construction costs, bringing them down from £5.8 million to £3.8 million, but would also provide skills and training to local communities.

The Greater London Authority had secured over £1 million of funding towards the project, with an additional £50,000 for every affordable home provided. In addition, the Brixton Housing Co-operative, which has considerable equity locked into its existing housing stock, proposed to borrow against its assets to buy the land and develop it as a Community Land Trust. Brixton Gardens CLT would then lease the properties to other

housing co-operatives who were members of the CLT, including the Sanford and Westminster housing co-operatives.
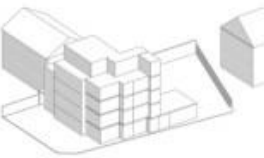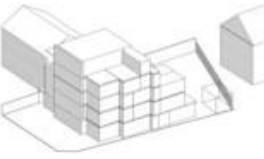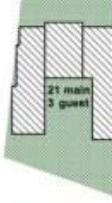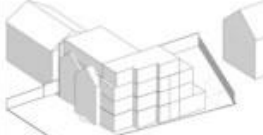

Unfortunately, despite being both financially viable and socially beneficial, our bid was rejected in favour of an alternative bid that proposed building 100 per cent properties for shared ownership. The price of these properties will be set according to average incomes rather than market rate, and the individual owner must sell according to the same principle. But this came nowhere near to meeting either the local council's target of building 70 per cent homes for social rent on all new developments, or the financial means and housing needs of the more than 27,000 people on Lambeth council's housing waiting list. However, by proposing residential properties our competitors were able to offer more for the land; and, as it turned out, this was the deciding factor in awarding the lease.

Under European Union competition law banning what it calls 'State Aid', which is the Neo-liberal term for 'investment', Transport for London, as a public body, is compelled to sell its land at the market price, which is established by the highest bidder. The social value of what the land will be used for — which in our case was to meet local housing need — is deemed irrelevant. This raises the question of how, under capitalism, a socialist architecture can quantify other values than the financial profit of the landowner and developer, and instead arrive at an assessment of the total economic cost and value of a housing proposal.

3. The Drive Housing Co-operative

And finally, my last example is The Drive housing co-operative in Walthamstow, North-east London. This is a private co-op of 10 houses that owns its own land and wants to double the housing capacity. At present the rents the residents have to pay in order to

pay back their mortgage are too high. By increasing the co-ops' housing capacity they want to reduce housing costs to social-rent levels, while also providing housing for residents on disability allowances who can't meet the current rental rates. The co-op also wants to reduce energy and running costs by improving insulation and thermal performance of the homes. They also want to reduce the increasing maintenance costs to the existing property, which is around 150 years old, and to extend and expand the lifespan of the co-operative.
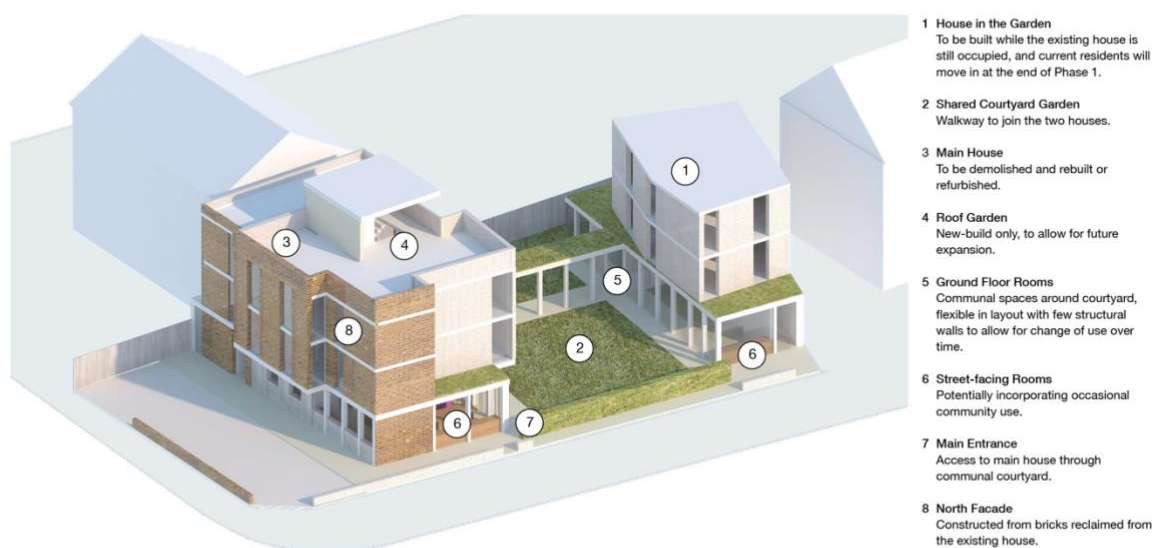
1 Refurbishment of Main House

1.1	Simple Refurbishment of existing house	Discounted (does not achieve brief requirements of any additional rooms)
1.2	Intense Refurbishment of existing house (with optional roof extension)	Discounted as an option on its own. Exploration continued in conjunction with New build house in the garden under option 1.5
1.3	Intense Refurbishment with new West wing and roof extension	Discounted (complexity of construction, overshadowing of existing house, problematic in delivery)
1.5	Refurbishment of existing house + New build house in the garden	Under consideration (with optional roof extensions, depending on intensity of refurbishment and planning)

2 New Build Main House

2.1	Two houses	Discounted (complexity of construction, overshadowing of existing house, problematic in delivery)
2.2	Three town houses	Discounted (overprovision of shared and communal facilities and subsequent cost implications, complexity of construction, overshadowing of existing house, problematic in delivery)
2.3	Two houses + New build house in the garden	Discounted (overprovision of shared and communal facilities and subsequent cost implications)
2.5	New build main house + New build house in the garden	Potentially under consideration dependent on revised cost

As we said in Part 1 of this lecture, refurbishment, as a principle, must be the default option of a socialist architecture. But that doesn't mean it is the only option. In this case, we produced several options (*previous page*) that the residents narrowed down to two. The first option is for the refurbishment of the existing building and the development of additional new-build housing in the garden, which could accommodate around 8-10 new residents. The second option is for the full demolition of the existing building, with current residents moving into the new garden development, and the existing building being redeveloped. For a house of this age requiring a high level of refurbishment, it may be more financially viable and socially beneficial to demolish and redevelop it. At present

we're looking into the relative costs of the two options. But, importantly, this decision will be made by the existing residents once they have all the information about the options, and not, as is the case with estate demolition schemes, made either unilaterally by the council or by residents without such information, which is withheld by councils either on the grounds that it is 'commercially sensitive' or because the ballot is taken before that information can be produced with any accuracy.

The Drive Housing Co-operative
Designs for Co-housing Development

1 **House in the Garden**
To be built while the existing house is still occupied, and current residents will move in at the end of Phase 1.

2 **Shared Courtyard Garden**
Walkway to join the two houses.

3 **Main House**
To be demolished and rebuilt or refurbished.

4 **Roof Garden**
New-build only, to allow for future expansion.

5 **Ground Floor Rooms**
Communal spaces around courtyard, flexible in layout with few structural walls to allow for change of use over time.

6 **Street-facing Rooms**
Potentially incorporating occasional community use.

7 **Main Entrance**
Access to main house through communal courtyard.

8 **North Facade**
Constructed from bricks reclaimed from the existing house.

So, how does this work in terms of design (*above*)? Through co-housing, two groups of 10 people in each building means fewer bathrooms and shared kitchens and other facilities. This equates to the more efficient use of resources and the reduction of energy costs. It also has huge benefits in terms of the sharing of space, with opportunities for multi-purpose and mixed-use rooms dedicated to a wide range of activities. The other consideration when thinking about economy in design is long-term thinking. By designing flexible spaces and structures we can accommodate changes in their use over a period of time. To this end, we haven't proposed load-bearing internal walls that would restrict change in the layout in the future. At the same time, solid foundations on the new development would accommodate future increase of housing capacity on the roof by an additional two floors. We've also proposed re-cycling materials from the existing building, using locally-sourced materials, and applying passive-design strategies that maximise solar gain and reduce energy use (*overleaf*).

In terms of funding options, residents have approached the Ecology Building Society, an ethical funder, for a loan at lower interest rates. We've also looked at co-operative loan stock, which is co-operative organisations lending money to each other. In Germany the Mietshäuser Syndikat shares co-operative loan stock, and this is a model that could be imported into the UK. We've also looked at community shares. In South London there is an organisation called the Rural Urban Synthesis Society (RUSS), a Community Land Trust that provides loans and grants to members. We've also looked at long-term, low-risk investors such as pension funds. As we said in Part 1 of this lecture, social housing is a secure and profitable investment over the long term. And finally, there are still some government grants for affordable housing and community-led projects.

Finally, we've looked at how to bring the cost of construction down. In Part 1 we looked at the enormous costs of construction in the UK being a barrier to the provision of social housing. What's the incentive for the landlord, developer and architect to undertake a refurbishment and infill scheme that retains and increases the stock of social housing over a demolition and redevelopment scheme that realises greater profit for the investors and contractors? Negotiated tender, which is a collaborative rather than competitive process, and profit share, which redistributes profit at the end of the project, are two ways to motivate lower construction costs from contractors and consultants. Phased construction, which allows residents to remain on site throughout construction, removes the costs of decanting and rehousing them during refurbishment or redevelopment. And self-build could save 20-30 per cent on construction costs in so-called 'sweat equity'. This adds time and complexity to the project, and is not suitable for every scheme; but in the case of The Drive could act as a means of involving new residents in the co-operative and making them feel properly included in its future. These are incremental cost savings, but on a small project like The Drive they can make or break its financial viability.

4. Economic Practices for a Socialist Architecture

So, how do we extract from ASH's work on these and other projects the practices that will guide and implement the economic principles for a socialist architecture? This is what we've come up with.

- A socialist architecture must be not-for-profit.
- A socialist architecture must make the most economical use of the existing land, materials and resources, through re-using, refurbishing, improving, recycling and extending what is already there.
- A socialist architecture must utilise and support local community funding networks, and be funded by low-interest, ethical investment partners.
- A socialist architecture must adopt a transparent financial viability, procurement and management process that is overseen by the community.
- A socialist architecture must maximise the number of homes for 'social rent' to meet existing housing need.
- A socialist architecture must explore low-cost construction methods and practices, but not at the expense of long-term economic, environmental or social costs.
- A socialist architecture must be low-cost to maintain and low-cost to run, and minimise the project's whole-life costs, including the cycle of maintenance, dismantling and re-use.
- A socialist architecture must design for the long term, be resilient and flexible, and accommodate change in its use over time.

5. Questions in Need of Answers

To address the housing crisis with any chance of success we need to understand what's happening in the UK property market. It's important that we begin by countering the myths that surround the economics of housing provision under capitalism, some of which we exposed in Part 1 of this lecture. For example, we need to challenge the so-called law of supply and demand that has no descriptive purchase on the global property market, yet is the basis to housing policy not only in the UK but across the capitalist world. We also need to break the capitalist cycle of extraction, consumption and waste and replace it with a socialist cycle of state investment and de-growth. We can start this process by asking some questions about the policies of Neo-liberal economics.

- Why do our house prices keep going up when workers' wages are falling?
- Why is the UK government bent on subsidising our mortgages when we can't afford to pay rents?
- Why are interest rates so low and yet land so expensive?
- Why will banks lend money to offshore investors but the government won't tax them?

- Why are developers that have increased their profits eight-fold in six years being subsidised with public money, yet there's no government funding for refurbishment or investment in social housing?
- Why is the UK economy founded on owning property and selling debt?
- Why are our councils intent on demolishing every housing estate in London and handing the land over to the hedge-fund managers of global capital?

And then ask how we can go about changing the effects of these policies in both perception and practice.

- What are the specific economic conditions pertaining to the housing crisis in a given city, region or country?
- To what extent are these conditions the manifestation of the global crisis of capitalism, and to what extent are they particular to the legislation and policies of the government, municipal and local authorities?
- How can we bring about a more equitable distribution of land and access to housing?
- How can we implement solutions to the housing crisis that disrupt its economic causes in speculation and investment in the property market?
- How do we change legislation and policy that allows, encourages and funds that disruption?

As Alain Badiou wrote in our epigraph to this lecture, the financial crisis of 2007 was essentially the housing crisis with which we continue to live, and both originated in our global banking system. As a result of the collapse of the sub-prime mortgage bubble in 2007, $5 trillion in pension funds and property value vanished overnight in the USA, 8 million people lost their jobs and 6 million people lost their houses; yet not a single banker went to jail. In the UK, banks that had spent the last forty years arguing for the removal of all state intervention in the economy were bailed out by the British taxpayer to the tune of £850 billion courtesy of the UK government; yet 10 years after the financial crisis, £10 billion out of the £19 billion in bonuses handed out across the country in 2017 went to those working in financial services. Meanwhile, the rest of us are still living under austerity cuts. The UK has the lowest share of public sector spending of any major capitalist nation except the USA; the impact of changes to taxation and benefits has hit, and will continue to hit, the poorest harder, with 14.2 million people, over a fifth of the UK population, currently living in poverty; and 80 per cent of the gains from cuts to income tax go to the wealthiest half of households, while the poorest third will shoulder two-thirds of the government's cuts to benefits.

We might be forgiven for expressing confusion at such obvious economic injustice — if that's the phrase we should be using to describe the systemic exploitation and expanding inequality produced and reproduced by capitalism. But, in reality, it's simple. The current stage in the historical development of capitalism is designated by the term 'monopoly

capitalism' not because it creates the greatest wealth for the largest number of people — as capitalists keep repeating against all the evidence to the contrary — but because it accumulates an exponentially greater portion of that wealth in a decreasing number of hands. And as the aftermath of the greatest threat to capitalism since the stock-market crash of 1929 has demonstrated to those burdened with the historical task of paying for it, nothing in our existing structures of political government and civil society can do anything to stop it.

In our next and final lecture, on the political dimension of a socialist architecture, we'll be looking at how its agents can act to overcome this impasse.

Lecture 4. Part 1. Political Principles

1. The Realism of the Impossible

Over the past couple of months I've been reading the poetry of Bertolt Brecht, and I'd like to start by quoting one of his poems. He wrote this poem in 1933, the year that Adolf Hitler became German Chancellor with 44 per cent of the vote — which with the support of the Conservatives gave the Nazi Party the working majority it needed. Soon afterwards Brecht — who had been unrelentingly mocking of the 'dauber', as he called the former amateur painter — had to flee the country as a political exile. The poem is titled *On Wavering*, and given the state of the world at present there are parallels between these two historical moments. It's a poem, I think, about political commitment.

> *You say:*
> *It looks bad for our cause.*
> *The darkness grows deeper.*
> *Our powers grow weaker.*
> *And now, after so many years*
> *of work, we are in*
> *a worse position than when we started.*

Yet the enemy is stronger than ever.
His powers seem to have grown.
He has assumed the appearance
of imperial invincibility.

We, on the other hand, have made mistakes,
there's no point in denying it.
Our numbers are dwindling.
Our slogans are in disarray.
The enemy has twisted
the meaning of our words
beyond recognition.

What now is false
of what we once said?
Some of it or everything?
On whom can we still rely?
Are we just left over,
discarded from the living stream?
Shall we remain behind,
no longer understanding anything
and by no-one understood?
Must we be lucky to succeed? This you ask.

Expect no other answer than your own.

The political dimension of architecture is, without a shadow of a doubt, the most unpleasant aspect of it. The seemingly unachievable aims of socialising housing, of creating an alternative economic system to capitalism, or of saving the planet from environmental disaster, look relatively easy compared to changing our political system. Having to engage with UK politics is something we dislike intensely. Political debate in the UK is a sandpit of social media squabbling; and the resulting politicisation of housing provision by all our parliamentary parties, who use it as a bargaining chip to advance their own aspirations to council, municipal, parliamentary and ultimately government power, is the single largest barrier to finding solutions to our housing needs.

To accompany this poem I want to show this photograph (*previous page*) of graffiti on one of the bridges over the River Seine in Paris. If you don't read French, it says: *'Be realists: demand the impossible.'* This photograph was taken in May 1968 during the uprising in Paris, which saw a new collaboration between striking workers and radicalised — if not quite revolutionary — students. The story goes that at a meeting at the Renault-Billancourt car factory, whose workers went on strike for 33 days, a union boss said to the committee: 'We must be realists: don't demand the impossible.' The next

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day someone who presumably was at that meeting wrote on the walls of the factory the slogan: *'Be realists: demand the impossible.'*

What subsequently became one of the slogans of the '68 uprising is seen as the idealist character of the events, which saw students occupy the Sorbonne to discuss overthrowing the capitalist system of education but neglecting to occupy, for example, the radio or television broadcasting stations or the offices of the municipal authorities. But I don't think it is. The proposed solutions to our current political moment — which extends far beyond the field of architecture, but in which architecture is a moment — are, I think, deeply unrealistic. They are, in fact, idealistic. These include propositions that, for example, so-called 'affordable' housing will address our housing needs; that minor revisions to capitalism under, say, a social democratic government will somehow meet the demands of feeding the population of the world, bringing about greater social equality, averting a third world war, or stopping the planet from turning into an uninhabitable globe. To be realist, in contrast, we have to demand what is seen at present to be impossible. We have to cross that line, which is drawn by the state, between what is deemed to be possible and what is perceived to be impossible. So, let's be realists, and let's look at the impossible.

2. Opposed Economies of Architecture

This workshop is the fourth in this series of lectures for a socialist architecture. The context for this lecture is the challenge of reclaiming the political dimension of architecture and bringing about progressive change within the totality of social, economic and environmental relations. The previous workshops set about situating architecture within the dimensions of the environmental, the economic and the social, all of which, as I have said, are metonyms for the totality in which architectural practice exists. I want to emphasise the word 'reclaim' within this context, since the political dimension of architecture is something that has been lost — or rather conceded — by contemporary architects, who have turned their back on this dimension of their professional practice, and in doing so handed it over to the clients who pay them, the developers who employ them, and the politicians who write the legislation within which they practice.

We have been showing this diagram (*overleaf*) on opposed economies of architecture throughout the four workshops, with each version illustrating the particularity of the dimension of architecture under discussion. In the first workshop on the social dimension of architecture, I drew a contrast between the tiny portion of finance accorded in any capitalist architectural project to social or affordable housing — which is regarded as a loss subtracted from the total profits extracted from that scheme — and the total social dimension of architecture within a socialist economy. The same thing obtains with the environmental dimension of architecture, which under capitalism is discharged as a portion of funding given to ameliorating the negative effects of a given scheme on the

environment. I also drew a distinction between the economical dimension of architecture — which is to say, the totality of exchanges — compared with the purely financial dimension of architecture within a capitalist economy.

Opposed Economies of Architecture

Capitalist Economy
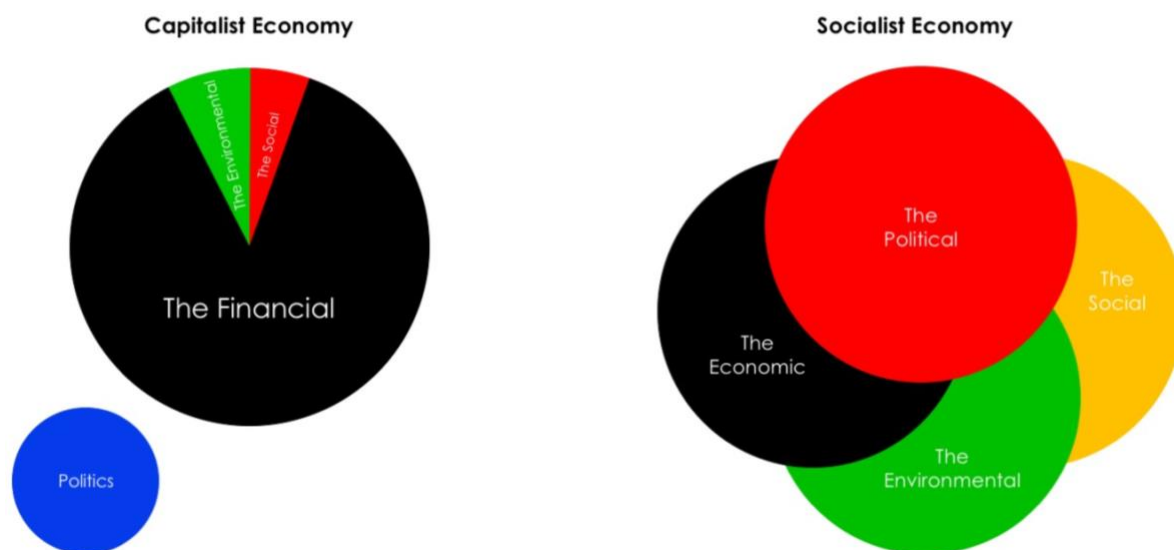
Socialist Economy

This particular diagram represents the difference between the political spheres within a capitalist economy and a socialist economy. Within a capitalist economy, the political dimension is something that is seen as outside of the financial sphere. It is given. It is unchangeable. There is no alternative up for consideration. Politics decides which political party governs the capitalist system, but that system is not available for challenge within its political system. This line, which is drawn by the state, is the line between the possible (different political leadership of the capitalist system) and the impossible (a different economic system).

One of the things I've changed on this diagram from its use in our workshops on the social, environmental and economic dimensions of architecture is that the political sphere within a socialist economy is no longer blue — which is a conservative colour: it is, of course, red. But I've also changed the words. In a socialist economy, the political is distinct from politics, which is what this sphere is called, and how it functions, within a capitalist economy. There is a difference between politics, which is the grasp for executive power over the capitalist state, and political practice, which for a socialist who doesn't believe in that old chimera of the parliamentary road to socialism (which is to say, a communist) is the attempt to overthrow the capitalist state and oversee a socialist economy.

3. The Politics of Architecture

An example of this difference is ASH's book-length report, *Central Hill: A Case Study in Estate Regeneration*. This is about the work we did on the Central Hill estate in Crystal Palace, South London. The bulk of this study is made up of the necessity of retaining and refurbishing our council housing estates, particularly during a crisis of housing affordability that in London has reached epidemic levels; but a lot of it is about how the local authority, Lambeth council, opposed our proposals. If you look at the beginning of the report, it opens with about two-dozen endorsements of its proposals by some of the most senior academics whose research speciality is housing, by politicians and councillors resisting the estate demolition programme, and by architects and campaigners who support the work of ASH. And the universal consensus among these housing professionals is that this report is really important, that its proposals are clearly the best solution not only for Central Hill estate but for all estate regeneration schemes, and that they should be adopted and exported as the best way to retain what's left of our social housing, to generate the funds to refurbish it, and to build the homes for social rent we so desperately need and which are not being built under the current programme of estate demolition, redevelopment and privatisation.

So, why did the council refuse ASH's proposal? Why did they vote to demolish the estate, even though doing so would cost them many times the costs of redeveloping it, and doing so would lead to the mass loss of homes for social rent, the privatisation of the new development, and at least 50 per cent of the new properties being for market sale, with the remainder a mix of unaffordable housing tenures, the bulk of which would be for shared ownership? And why have councils done so not only on this estate, but on the 250-odd council estates across London that have undergone, are currently undergoing, or are threatened with demolition, social cleansing or privatisation, with the enormous negative impacts this will have, socially, financially and environmentally?

The answer, of course, is because architecture is always political. There is this strange perception in the architectural profession today — and certainly in the UK, which is probably the most depoliticised state in Europe — that architecture is somehow outside of politics, in the same way that, in the diagram above, politics under capitalism is accorded a separate sphere of practice. But that isn't the case, because at the moment architecture is very clearly capitalist. So what does capitalist architecture do?

- *Capitalist architecture* is not just an expression — whether regrettable or cynical — of the capitalist system. The argument that: 'I am an architect, I work within the capitalist system, therefore my architecture is capitalist by default' — is an inadequate description of the close relationship between architecture and capitalism from which the current global housing crisis is inseparable. Capitalist architecture is a tool and implementation of that system, entrenching, expanding

and exporting its social and economic inequalities globally, and the political hegemony that guarantees them.

- *Capitalist architecture* accumulates capital in residential property. Global capital is being invested in property where the housing markets offer the greatest returns on that investment, and the capitalist state guarantees the security of those markets. It is not being invested where housing need is greatest, for instance in the global south, or in the housing that meets that need, even in the wealthiest cities in the world. Capitalist architecture, therefore, has become divorced from its primary and defining task: housing the populations of our cities, our states, our world. Compounding this abrogation of professional responsibility, the value of the residential property capitalist architecture is producing is being extracted from the economy as investor profit, which is invested in further property speculation rather than housing provision.

- *Capitalist architecture* designs social segregation into the built environment, through segregated affordable housing blocks, through segregated entrances (so-called 'poor doors'), segregated amenities ('rich gardens' inaccessible to residents of the affordable housing component of a development), anti-homeless architecture (such as sleepless benches and doorway spikes), and segregated and gated ghettos of wealth patrolled by private security firms. The justification for poor doors, which I recently heard repeated by an architect at a panel of experts on housing I was attending, is that shared entrances would incur increased service charges on affordable housing tenants. On such contemptuous excuses is social segregation being built into our cities. The only city I know of that has rejected poor-doors is New York, because if its history of racial segregation. So while it's impossible to introduce poor doors into New York City, in London, apparently, it's okay. It's also okay to have segregated gardens, as witnessed by the recent scandal of a privatised and gated housing development, also in Lambeth, built on council land sold to a private developer, prohibiting children from the affordable housing block run by a housing association, from playing on an area for residents of the market-sale and shared ownership properties.

- *Capitalist architecture* contributes to the degradation of the environment through expanding the production of its commodity, the consumption of resources, and the production of waste, all of which are increased many times over by the current architectural orthodoxy of demolition and redevelopment, which flies in the face of recent token declarations to reducing carbon emissions through such false solutions as green walls, green roofs and photovoltaic panels being added to luxury apartments built for global capital investment.

- *Capitalist architecture* actively produces homelessness — the increase of which is not a symptom of the failure of capitalism but the product of its more and more successful functioning. It produces housing poverty and housing precarity — which is becoming an experience common to all but the very wealthiest members of a society. And it demolishes existing social housing in order to eradicate the competition it represents to the market, while at the same time consuming those

state subsidies that the so-called 'free' market can supposedly do without. Indeed, I know of no new housing development which is not based on the massive transferral of public funds into private hands. All market-sale housing is currently being subsidised with huge funds, at the point of production and sale, by the state, while social housing has had progressively more and more funding withdrawn from it. Capitalist architecture is complicit in all this.

- *Capitalist architecture*, finally — and this relates to motivations — generates profit for its agents, including landlords, local and municipal authorities, property developers, investors, architects, property managers, estate agents and buyers. At a basic level, the more expensive the scheme, the greater the profit, with the fees of architects and other contactors fixed to the total value of the development. Given which, is it any wonder that architectural practices have all but universally supported demolition and redevelopment schemes, when far less expensive refurbishment options equate to a far smaller fee? This is further encouraged by government legislation, with Value Added Tax on refurbishment projects being set at a full 20 per cent, while new-build development has zero. And, of course, while there is considerable if inadequate funding for various forms of affordable housing provision at both ends of the production process, for developers as well as for consumers, there is none for refurbishment. Everything, under a capitalism economy, is designed to extract private profit, even at the cost of the public purse.

4. Party Politics

So how — in the absence of a socialist revolution or anything like it on the horizon — does a socialist architecture begin to address the complicity of the profession in the systemic violence of the state against its own citizens and those of other states? Let's start with the attempted solutions of party politics — precisely that realm of practice from which architecture is separated under capitalism, and to which the political agency of architecture has been outsourced by the head-in-the-sand ideologues of Neo-liberal architecture.

To summarise what we've learned from four years of trying to work with or against various political parties I came up with a political syllogism. It's not an exact syllogism, but it'll do for our purposes. It's my attempt to answer the question of why — given that every housing professional not benefiting financially from the estate demolition programme supports our proposals — those proposals have been unanimously rejected across the political spectrum by every council in office, whether that local or municipal authority is Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat or even Green.

- *1st Premise.* When in opposition, a political party is opposed to, for example, the demolition of social housing, the privatisation of public land, the eviction of tenants and local businesses, the closing down of libraries and social services, and the social cleansing of their constituents.

- *2nd Premise.* However, the same parties, when in power, are in favour of all the above, which they carry out ruthlessly and with complete disregard for either the constituents who voted them into office or the other political parties.
- *Conclusion.* The reason for this is that party politics, which we are told guarantees our democracy, is in practice the very successful strategy for negating any accountability an elected representative might have to their constituents. Party politics is in practice the structural antithesis of democracy.
- *Proposition.* Therefore, the only way to hold local authorities accountable to the constituents who voted them into executive power is to ensure that no party is in overall majority control. Certainly, in the UK our politics has been completely dominated for over a century by the Conservative-Labour monopoly, both of which are right-wing parties committed to the economic policies of Neo-liberalism in both philosophy and practice.

Only by breaking this monopoly and the majority control a single party exerts over a council can we stop that party ordering a member to vote for something they don't support on the pain of being expelled. Only by being directly accountable to their constituents, rather than their political party, will our political representatives be compelled to represent the interests of their constituents.

These are propositions designed to re-introduce democratic accountability into our politics, which under our current party-political system is structurally impossible. Let's have a look at an example of how this works in practice. This is an example of party politicking that occurred in July 2019. At the last local elections in London held in May 2018 the Green Party, with whom ASH has worked in the past, managed to get 5 councillors elected into Lambeth council. Several members of the Green Party wrote endorsements of our proposals for Central Hill estate — although the party has subsequently refused to align itself with ASH's proposed changes to policy on estate regeneration and has even come to endorse demolition. But recently the Lambeth Green councillors introduced a <u>motion</u> to Lambeth council that drew on an impact study ASH had commissioned from <u>Model Environments</u> into the embodied carbon emissions consequent upon the demolition of the Central Hill estate:

> Council further notes:
>
> - Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) are used to predict environmental impact at early stage in project planning and design, to find ways and means to reduce adverse impacts and to shape projects, providing options to a decision maker.
> - EIAs must take into account inter-related socio-economic, cultural and human health impacts, both beneficial and adverse.
> - A 2016 study commissioned by Architects for Social Housing found that demolishing Lambeth's housing estates would exact a high carbon price on the

environment and a conservative estimate for the embodied carbon released on demolition of Central Hill alone are around 7000 tonnes of CO2e.

Now, under the influence of Extinction Rebellion, the Labour-run council had recently declared a 'climate emergency', much like every other council in London. So, one might think it would have no hesitation in adopting the propositions in this motion to reduce carbon emission in the borough, starting with looking at alternatives to the council's estate demolition programme, and to make impact assessments of the social, economic and mental health effects of demolishing an estate a prior condition to a regeneration scheme. But no. Party politics always comes before political action, and Lambeth council, under its Labour Party administration, redacted the entire motion relating to estate demolition (*above*). This is only one example of many in which opposition parties will oppose, in principle, whatever is proposed by the party in power, regardless of whether or not it meets with, or is in contravention of, its own policies. In our experience, no political party has any principles, any policies, any ethical commitments that will get in the way of its goal of political power at any cost.

5. Independent Politics

So, what of independent politics? At the last local elections a former Labour councillor in Lambeth, Rachel Heywood, stood as an independent candidate. She had previously been suspended from the Labour Party for publishing an open letter to the council voicing the mildest criticisms of their plans to convert 10 libraries in the borough into fee-paying gyms, demolish the venues of around 30 traders to make way for redevelopment by Network Rail, and demolish and redevelop 6 council estates, including Central Hill. The fact she had been a Labour councillor for 12 years, several of them as leader of the council, made no difference to the Labour Party, which accused her of apostasy and withdrew the party whip; and when, at the local elections in May 2018, she stood on a platform to oppose the plans of the Labour-run council, she was ejected from the party altogether.
In response, ASH sent Ms. Heywood, who had declared her intent to stand as an independent councillor, a copy of our report on Central Hill, asking her to support our proposals as a member of Lambeth council should she be re-elected. This is the endorsement she wrote:

> *'This piece of work could not be more timely: I am convinced there is no bigger issue for this election and, crucially, over the four years until the following one. Much of the ward I represent — Coldharbour in Central Brixton — is comprised of social housing, and it is this — not the fashionable watering holes of the town centre or the architecturally anomalous and substandard blocks of private and un-affordable housing — that makes it such a joyous and extraordinary place to represent with its wonderful communities, and a fitting locus for the battles for social justice it has witnessed.*

'These estates, which include Loughborough, Southwyck House and Angel Town, along with democratically significant buildings including Brixton Recreation Centre and the real markets, are undoubtedly at huge risk in the immediate future under this administration's policies and priorities. Having fallen out with said administration over this, over the plan to put fee-paying gyms in libraries, over the ruination of so many small businesses in the town centre, and much else besides, I am standing as an Independent after 12 years as a Labour councillor.

'I'll see Brixton brought to the ground over my dead body, but I'd rather try more conventional means of protest first. A piece of work like this must be essential reading for everyone who values strong and sustainable communities, and real places and societies in which to live. Thank you.'

It's interesting that a former councillor felt it necessary to express this lack of faith in the democratic process to which she had adhered for the past 12 years. And unfortunately she was right to do so. The electorate of Brixton is overwhelmingly Labour-voting, and constituents have as little knowledge of the policies of individual candidates standing in the elections as they do, apparently, of the Labour Party they repeatedly vote into office in the borough. Heywood was voted out by Brixton's 'wonderful communities', and a new, more obedient Labour candidate, Scarlett O'Hara, who had previously won the bi-election following Heywood's suspension, was voted back in. Ms. O'Hara promptly announced that, as she had grown up on a council estate, she had learned, she said, 'how valuable it is to really listen to residents and hear their views.' Unfortunately, this doesn't extend to listening to the 77 per cent of residents on the Central Hill estate who voted against the demolition of their homes by Lambeth Labour council and for their refurbishment along the lines suggested by ASH. Despite Ms. O'Hara's declarations of allegiance to the benefits of the council housing in which she herself has enjoyed growing up, allegiance to her political party, as always, trumped allegiance to the candidates who elected her into office.

6. Political Practice

As a result of this structural flaw at the heart of our democracy, party politics is confined, at best, to changing government policy within a parliamentary or presidential system, while leaving the economic relations those policies administer unchanged. Party politics, therefore, is implicitly resigned to the belief that the economics and politics of capitalism cannot be changed — or as Margaret Thatcher repeatedly said when justifying the Neo-liberal revolution she oversaw in the UK: *'There Is No Alternative'*. This is the line the state draws between the possible and the impossible, and whose current axis has been drawn by the Neo-liberal consensus that no UK government of the past forty years has dared to challenge. And in that resignation, our political parties jockey only to purchase the best seat they can afford at the unfolding spectacle of our current decline into increasingly authoritarian and right-wing governments.

Lenin famously described fascism as *'capitalism in decay'*, and today that term has become applicable to describe not only the rise of far-right movements and political parties across Europe and the world, but with increasingly applicability to the most powerful capitalist states, beginning with the United States of America. Historically, fascism has been the political system to which capitalism turns when the state struggles unsuccessfully to contain its economic contradictions. This is exactly what the Western democracies are struggling to overcome right now: through state subsidies for corporate monopolies; through ideological hegemony between political parties; through violent and legislative suppression of workers' organisations (as currently being demonstrated by the French state's extraordinary level of violence against the *Gilets jaunes*); and through trade and military wars of imperialist aggression, which is what's going on right now, most dangerously between the USA and China. Lenin's description of the characteristics of fascism in the 1920s uncannily describes the world right now.

However, where there was a Neo-liberal Revolution within Western democracies whose consequences have defined most of our lives, there can — and must be — a Socialist revolution if our children are not to inhabit a world that will make the dystopias of the Twentieth Century look like crude prototypes. So what's the alternative? In contrast to the increasingly dictatorial administration of capitalism by party politics, or the civil-rights campaigns of identity politics with which so much of the liberal Left is comfortably distracted, political practice — which is what we so desperately need a revival of today in the West — attempts to change the political, economic and social totality that produces and reproduces the economic relations of capitalism.

7. Political Principles for a Socialist Architecture

How do we locate architectural practice, which as we have seen has become a willing tool of Neo-liberal social, economic and environmental violence, within this political landscape? To answer this, let's look at some of the political principles for a socialist architecture.

- *A socialist architecture* must not only provide an alternative model to the capitalist system, it must also disrupt and challenge the hegemony of that system: developing, expanding and exporting its social, economic and environmental principles through political practice. It is not enough to be content with an individual solution meeting the housing needs of a particular community — whether that be a squat, a housing co-operative or a community land trust. Co-existence with capitalism, either happily or on its margins, is not the goal of a socialist architecture.
- *A socialist architecture* must produce publicly-owned housing in which public funds are invested, not market-sale housing through which those funds are extracted; thereby becoming a means for the redistribution of wealth, rather than

its accumulation in fewer and fewer hands. Just as capitalist architecture is not merely an expression of the capitalist system but re-entrenches it, so a socialist architecture must become a means to redistribute wealth. At present, so much of our personal wealth is spent on paying our housing costs, every penny of which is making the rich richer, and the rest of us poorer.

- *A socialist architecture* must design social equality into the built environment — the very opposite of what capitalist architecture is currently doing; through equality of social housing tenure; through equal access to communal amenities; through retention and reclamation of public space; through equal access to communal spaces, light and views; and through socially integrated neighbourhoods, not neighbourhoods segregated by wealth, which is what's happening more and more to our cities under capitalism. The favelas that surround the financial, commercial and residential centres of the cities in the global south is only the most extreme manifestation of this phenomenon, but its causes are everywhere re-designing our urban conurbations.

- *A socialist architecture* must reclaim the political dimension of architecture that has been ceded to developers, planners, real-estate firms, think-tanks and politicians. These are the people writing housing policy and in doing so determining architectural form and practice. The so-called New London Vernacular that UK architects have universally embraced is not an architectural style but a means to increase the residual value uplift in the land on which it is built. In reclaiming its political dimension, a socialist architecture must restore the object of architectural practice to its place within the totality of social, economic and environmental relations. Architecture is important because it's a field of practice through which innumerable strands of the social fabric pass. Today it has been reduced to a servile tool of the building industry.

- *A socialist architecture*, finally, must apply political pressure for the legislative, policy and cultural changes that will make it possible to further socialist practices within our current capitalist system. By this, we don't mean to suggest that a socialist architect can have a happy co-existence with capitalism. As we've said, the socialist architecture whose principles and practices we're describing is not the architecture of the past. The socialist architecture we're interested in is that of the present and the future.

8. Towards a Socialist Revolution

That doesn't mean, however, that models from the socialist past aren't useful for imagining a socialist architecture of the future. In 1930 the Russian architect Moisei Ginzburg completed the Narkomfin building in Moscow (*below*). This had a huge influence on Le Corbussier's far more famous *Unité d'habitation,* which was completed in Marseilles in 1952, two decades later. There was a real dialogue between the two architects, with Ginzburg being influenced by Le Corbussier's architectural thesis *Towards an Architecture*, which was published in 1923 and which has provided

something of a model for our own book, *For a Socialist Architecture*. We considered calling our book *Towards a Socialist Architecture*, but we wanted to distinguish between the socialist architecture of the future we hope to bring about, and the principles and practices *for* a socialist architecture of the present — which is to say, under capitalism. But let's talk, for a moment, about how we move *towards* a socialist revolution, and what part architecture can play in that movement.

Ginzburg called the Narkomfin building 'transitional type housing'. What did he mean by this? Well, the 2-bedroom maisonettes for families on the first and second floors were self-contained, with their own kitchens and bathrooms, much like the standard contemporary home within capitalist economies. However, the 1-bedroom apartments over the third, fourth and fifth floors that make up the bulk of the building, and which were made for single residents and young couples, had their own toilet and shower cubicle; but residents had to use the communal kitchen and dining room in the adjoining annexe. The building was revolutionary, therefore, in the proper sense of the term — of bringing about change — not only in its architectural form and engineering structure, but in its social function. It affected the transition of its residents from a domestic life based around the social unit of the bourgeois family to a collective mode of living.

Ginzburg's building drew on Trotksy's idea of the 'transitional period', the period after the Russian Revolution when the Bolsheviks were confronted with how to affect the movement from a semi-feudal and only partially industrialised Russian Empire to a Union

of Soviet Socialist Republics. This is what Trotsky wrote in 1923 in *Problems of Everyday Life: Creating the Foundations for a New Society in Revolutionary Russia*:

> *'People cannot be made to move into new habits of life — they must grow into them gradually, as they grew into their old ways of living.'*

I think it's important to reflect on these words when thinking about the role of a socialist architecture. As the failures of the Twentieth century demonstrated, there is no blueprint for a socialist society; but the transition to socialism must be undertaken not only by policies handed down by central government. We can't afford to wait around for this always-future government to pass down socialist policies that will save us all from capitalism. It's not going to happen. Party politics, such as it functions under capitalism, is never going to produce that change. But what we can try to do is change the everyday habits of citizens, including the spaces in which we live with each other. Clearly, it will take far more than that to affect the movement toward socialism we so desperately need, beginning with fundamental change in the relations of production; but just as capitalist architecture is a tool of the capitalist system of privatisation, social cleansing, wealth accumulation, inequality and social segregation, so a socialist architecture can be a tool for bringing about change towards a socialist system.

9. Policies on Housing Development

To this end, we've come up with some policies on housing development, in conformity with the final principle I mentioned, that 'a socialist architecture must apply political pressure for the legislative, policy and cultural changes that will make it possible to further socialist practices within our current capitalist system.' These are our policy proposals:

- *Maintenance, refurbishment, re-use, improvement of and addition to existing housing and communal amenities must be the default option for all estate regeneration and new housing schemes.* The socially destructive, environmentally unsustainable and economically privatising orthodoxy of demolition and redevelopment must become a thing of the past.
- *When proposing a housing development scheme that requires the demolition of existing housing, the planning authority or landlord and their private investment partners must set aside sufficient funds for a refurbishment and infill option to be developed up to feasibility-study stage.* This option must be designed, assessed and costed by a team of architects, engineers and quantity surveyors independent from the team given the project brief for the demolition and redevelopment option.

- *This independent team must be given funds, from the planning authority, landlord and investment partners implementing the scheme and/or the municipal or district*

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authorities, to produce an impact assessment of the social, financial and environmental costs of demolition and redevelopment for existing residents, the local community and the planning authority. The findings of this assessment must be overseen and verified by an independent supervisor, and made available to the public before any ballot is held on regeneration.

- *Enforceable target requirements must be set in local, municipal and regional policy defining what a housing regeneration scheme is required to meet before receiving either public funding or local authority planning permission.* These targets must not be described with vague phrases about 'like-for-like' replacement of demolished homes, residents' financially contingent 'right to return' to them, or undefined proportions of promised 'affordable housing', but written in non-negotiable, clearly defined numbers, proportions, tenure types and rent levels that are not subject to revision.

- *If a community votes against a proposed demolition and redevelopment scheme, the planning authority or landlord must carry out the refurbishment and continue (or, where it has been neglected, restart) the maintenance of the existing homes at the very least.* Where it is necessary to the funding for this refurbishment, and with the agreement of residents, the landlord should implement the infill housing produced by the independent team employed to develop this option. In this way, residents cannot be presented with a choice between the demolition of their estate and its managed decline.

- *The municipal authority must allocate sufficient funds for housing refurbishment and infill.* If residents vote for this option these funds must be made available to them, either working in tandem with the planning authority or through the various forms of resident or co-operatively managed and collectively-owned models currently being explored by resident groups.

- *If a housing development is deemed financially unviable because of insufficient profit margins for the developer and private investment partners, the scheme must be rejected by the planning authority as unviable.* Whether this is due to insufficient public funding, an increase in development costs or a downturn in the property market, these reduced profits must not be recovered at the social, financial and environmental cost to the existing community, future residents or the general public.

- *All existing housing, as well as communal and public amenities, must be re-provided on site at the same rental levels, service charges, house prices, security of tenure and ownership status.* Any move costs and increase in housing costs incurred during a 'decant' process must be borne by the developer. All redevelopment projects must be phased to ensure residents must only move once. Interim housing, when all other alternatives have been exhausted, must keep the existing community together.

- *New housing provision must meet local housing need, with the maximum amount, and at least the majority of new-build dwellings, for social rent levels and secure tenancies.* New housing must not have a negative social, financial or environmental

impact on existing residents or the local community. Any uplift in land value consequent upon the granting of planning permission or new development must be reinvested in the local community and its infrastructure, not extracted as profit for the landlord, property developer or their private investment partners.

We've already had some success with these proposals. Last year we gave our report on _The Costs of Estate Regeneration_ to Len Duvall — at the time the Leader of the Labour Party in the London Assembly, but whose opposition to Lewisham Labour council's planned demolition of Reginald House and the Old Tidemill Wildlife Garden in New Cross meant he was banned from meetings of the Lewisham branch of the Labour Party — and at the subsequent meeting we presented him with our proposed changes to policy on estate regeneration. This March we received an e-mail from Debbie Smith, the Research and Support Officer to Len Duvall:

> _'Len Duvall has asked me to let you know the following about the London Mayor's budget for 2019/20. Following lobbying from Len, funding is to be made available to residents voting on the regeneration of their council estate to commission expert guidance on the proposals. This guidance would ensure that residents can talk directly to developers and councils on an even playing field, and that they are fully informed of options around the design, size, quality, cost and tenure of the development. The Mayor agreed to take the ask of the request forward in other parts of his housing strategy, and he will be pursuing this request throughout the year. He will let you know when we have further details.'_

We'll wait and see whether London's notoriously slippery Mayor will honour this agreement, and exactly who these experts are that will give guidance to residents when the current membership of the Mayor's Regeneration Team is made up of architects, housing professionals and politicians that are supporters, implementors and financial beneficiaries of the estate demolition programme in its current form. But despite this cronyism — which is rife in UK politics at every level and in every party — we are making some progress with these proposals, and we will continue to lobby for their adoption into legislation, Greater London Authority policy and council policy. However, in Part 2 of this lecture we'll look at how the principles behind these policies can be put into practice without waiting for the latter's adoption by our political parties and institutions.

10. Opposed Political Economies of Housing Provision

Finally, in this last diagram (_overleaf_) we are showing opposed political economies of housing provision under capitalist and socialist economies. The both begin with production, where the two circles join, but from there they follow opposed paths. Capitalist architecture distributes the commodity; a socialist architecture redistributes wealth. Capitalist architecture is made for the moment of exchange, and its value is its exchange value; a socialist architecture is made for its use, and it is judged by its use value.

Capitalist architecture is consumed, so that the cycle can begin again and profit can be extracted from that cycle; a socialist architecture is maintained, refurbished and re-used.

Opposed political economies of housing provision

Capitalist Architecture   **Socialist Architecture**
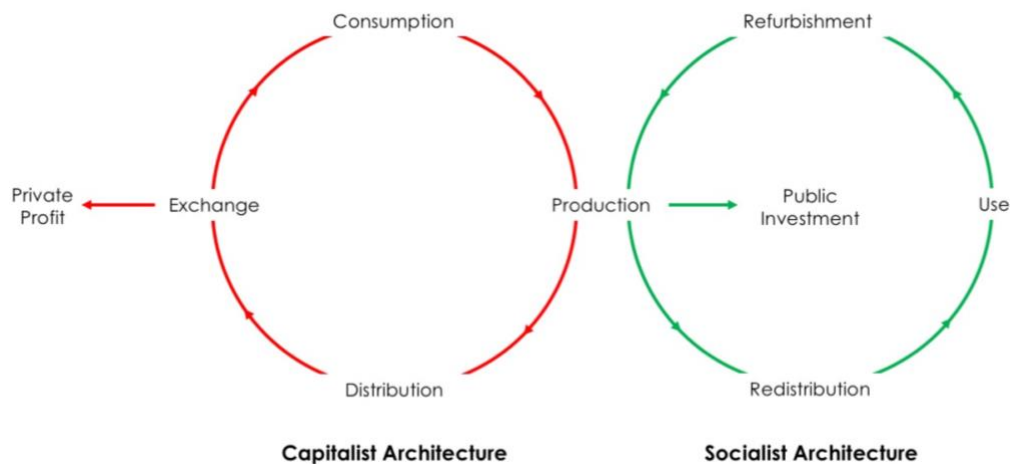
The key point I want to end on is that, at the moment of exchange, that money is taken out of the economy. What is happening at present is that more and more money is being taken out of the economy and hidden in offshore financial jurisdictions where it pays no tax. Living standards are dropping. More and more wealth is being accumulated in fewer and fewer hands, but it is not being invested in anything productive. Instead, it is being invested in the global housing market, with 72 per cent of the increase in the value of the UK housing stock last year coming from an increase in house prices, and only 28 per cent from the production of more dwellings. High-value residential property in economies whose political system will subsidise and when necessary bail out the property market has become one of the primary deposits of global capital. 10 per cent of global wealth, some US$7 trillion of private wealth, is now held in offshore financial jurisdictions, and at least £170 billion of that wealth — and most likely far more — was invested in UK property in the 8 years between 2006 and 2014. In contrast to this, a socialist architecture invests that wealth back into the economy, into social services and into infrastructure, including housing that meets the needs of the population.

Lecture 4. Part 2. Political Practices
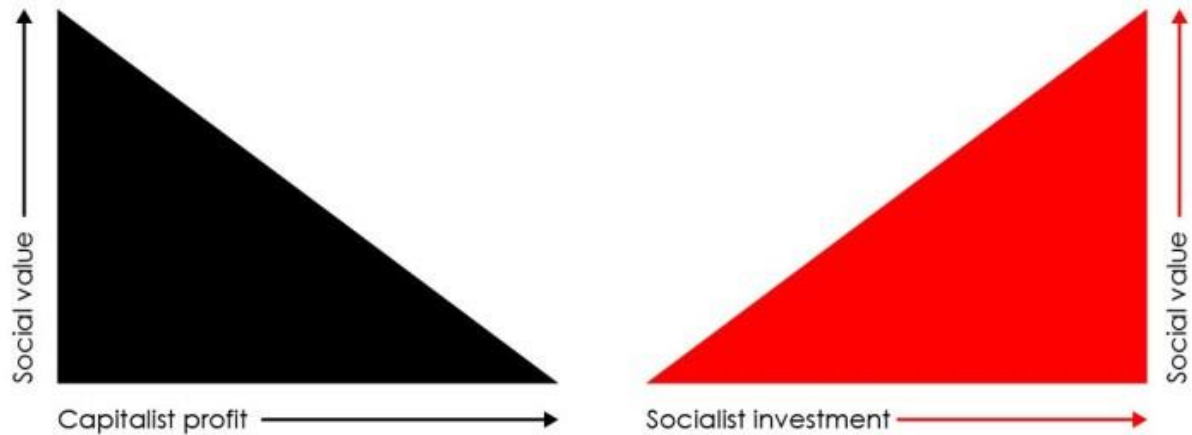
1. The Political Economy of Housing Provision

In this first diagram we have two opposing political economies, the capitalist and the socialist. Within a capitalist economy, the greater the social value of an architectural project — that is, the social housing and communal amenities — the lower the profit extracted from it; just as the greater the profit extracted from the budget, the lower the funds remaining for amenities of social value. While within a socialist economy, by contrast, the greater the financial investment in the project the greater its social value. It's a simple diagram, but one that shows the contradictory mechanisms of these opposed economies. At present architects are working within a capitalist economy in which the more the state invests in a project through public subsidies at the point of both production and consumption, the higher the profits of the developer and investors. Help to Buy, to take just one example, has helped drive the huge increases in housing costs and the vast profits being made by developers; while state subsidies for so-called affordable housing has resulted in public funding being used to build properties for private ownership rather than housing need. The more public funding that is thrown at developers and buyers, the higher the cost of the housing they build and purchase, the greater the profits of the building industry and the larger the share of UK wealth that is locked into the housing market. Only a socialist economy can escape this cycle, by investing public funding where it should go, in social value. In housing terms that means the homes in which UK citizens can afford to live, not the properties in which investors wish to invest their capital.

I want to start, therefore, by asking what we mean when we say — as ASH repeatedly has — that architecture is always political? And how can we engage with the politics of architecture in our practice? All architecture creates, reproduces or reinforces particular social, economic and environmental relationships. Every design decision has consequences for existing relationships and creates new ones, and therefore is political.

Architects who claim otherwise either don't understand the meaning of 'political', are fooling themselves, or are lying.

Capitalist architecture, as we looked at in Part 1 of this lecture, reinforces existing relations of inequality: through designs that segregate access and use; through designs that prioritise the exchange-value of a property over its use-value; and through designs that produce and reinforce inequality rather than mitigating or eliminating it. As an example of this that is so ubiquitous these days that it isn't even questioned, just about every new development in London, whether residential, office or mixed-use, turns the top floor of the building into a place of privilege. Whether that's a multi-million pound residential penthouse (*below*), a boardroom, a members bar, an upmarket restaurant or a viewing platform, this designs economic inequality into the architecture, mapping social difference onto spatial distance, and provoking feelings of aspiration, perhaps (the desire for career promotion, social mobility or to climb the property ladder), certainly of resentment.

This is architecture in an expanded sense, which embraces capitalist practices and methods of accumulation, and makes full use of advertising, marketing and other cultural forms that reinforce contemporary social and economic segregation. The ubiquitous stereotypes that politicians, think tanks, councils, housing associations, developers, estate agents, consultants and architects use to denigrate and stigmatise the communities and homes of the estates they want to demolish and redevelop is typical of this practice. This is architecture as status symbol, as the manufacturing of desire through restricting access and limiting availability or opportunity through the estate agents' patter of 'exclusivity'.

In opposition to this practice, a socialist architecture does not mean eradicating difference or variety. Equality of amenity does not mean homogeneity of design — another trope of capitalist propaganda. On the contrary, a socialist architecture means ensuring that every user of the architectural product has equal access to enjoy its housing, amenities, environment, landscape and facilities irrespective of their economic status. The environment, in this respect, is absolutely political, in that the access — or lack of it — to clean air, clean water, sanitation, ventilation, heating, daylight, sunlight, shade and security is profoundly unequal under capitalism, available according to the measure of the price someone pays for it. In contrast, the design of Central Hill estate (*below*), which we looked at in Part 1, assigned the number of bedrooms in the individual homes according to the size of the household; made the size of living rooms, kitchens and bathrooms according to the needs of the household not the financial purchasing power of the occupants; granted equal access to all communal amenities, as well as individual balconies, shared views over London to the north and sunlight from the south — all of which will be lost in the new proposals for the redevelopment by Lambeth council.

Housing, or the lack of it, is not the cause of the crisis in housing affordability. Poverty and increasing economic inequality are the problem. Housing, therefore, cannot 'solve' the problem of inequality; but it can improve an individual's level of poverty. One step towards eliminating poverty would be to eliminate housing poverty, as under Neo-liberalism this has become the largest single financial obligation for most people in the UK. However, as demonstrated by the Neo-liberal privatisation of our other basic needs — including water, sanitation, health, energy and transport — if we eliminated housing poverty but didn't address the bigger problem of capitalism, poverty and inequality would simply resurface elsewhere. Ultimately, we need to overthrow and dismantle the current Neo-liberal system producing ever greater inequality, and which more and more

people are beginning to realise is destroying the environment. But in order to do that we need collectively to change the ways in which we act and the ways in which we live. The practice of a socialist architecture is one way to do that.

2. The Moments of Political Agency

What I've done here is to go back to the development process I mapped out in the first of these lectures on the social dimension of architecture, and match its various phases to possible moments of political agency. In doing so, I want to lay out the moments in which the different agents for a socialist architecture can intervene in and engage with the development process, and put pressure on its current unfolding according to the demands of a capitalist economy. These headings are broad, but I've broken down political agency in the development process into four moments, as follows:

A. *Legislation, policy and strategic development*
B. *Urban design, master-planning and brief development*
C. *Project design and the planning process*
D. *Education, dissemination and agitation for change*

As can be seen, these moments are not only accessible to architects. We are all, collectively and potentially, political agents for a socialist architecture. Political agency, which includes the creation of political opinion and will, takes place in the street, at a protest, on the internet, in a newspaper, on television, on the radio, in a book, at the cinema, in a gallery, at a performance, in the classroom. It is essential that the agents for a socialist architecture that are in a position to create political narratives — which includes activists, writers, artists, musicians and teachers as well as architects, councillors, planners and politicians — do so to challenge the currently dominant, overwhelmingly negative and wildly inaccurate stereotypes by which we are confronted in every aspect of our media and communications every day.

There are a number of mechanisms through which the agents for a socialist architecture can engage within the current capitalist system. First, we must intervene in the existing processes and demand better and more socially, environmentally economically sustainable practices and designs. And second, we must ourselves help propose alternatives. These two methods have more agency when combined, and generally one cannot propose an alternative without providing a critique of the existing proposal and demonstrating why an alternative is necessary.

In order to be able to produce a critique of existing policies and proposals, it is essential we have the correct information available to make reasoned arguments; so a large part of the following advice is devised to help identify or locate this information, as this is typically not easily or readily available. In many cases, we must demand that the information be made public, disseminate that information to the wider public, demand

that particular assessments are made by independent bodies, or are at the very least are made available for scrutiny by the public. None of this activity is limited to an architect.

The development of the urban landscape and built environment is continuous and happening all the time and all around us. However, the development process can be broken down into a series of stages, and it is within the phases of development that the agent of a socialist architecture is able to engage with the existing city. I want to go through these stages, therefore, and explore some of the ways in which our work with ASH has engaged with, interjected in and disrupted their smooth working within the capitalist development process, and then to propose alternative practices in line with the principles of a socialist architecture. This will allow me to formulate some of the political practices of a socialist architecture. Let's begin with the first moment of political agency:

A. Legislation, Policy and Strategic Development

A socialist architecture must:

- *Participate* in all stages and spheres of planning and urban development policy processes, at local, regional and national levels;
- *Lobby* for, propose and produce architectural, planning, housing and urban design policies that support the principles of a socialist architecture;
- *Scrutinise* all 're-zoning' and 'opportunity area' planning designations, and oppose those that will have a negative social, economic or environmental impact on existing and/or future communities;
- *Oppose* the privatisation of any public land and amenities;
- *Propose* securing threatened buildings or land as an asset of community value;
- *Advocate* for removing housing and land from the market;
- *Agitate*, promote and lobby for policies that give more power and rights to residents over landlords.

It's important to say that, while we've been drawing up these principles and practices, we've been thinking about how the larger principles we're advocating — such as the socialisation of land, which is impossible under capitalism — work with the more specific practices of a socialist architecture under capitalism, such as those outlined here. And it's raised questions about whether, in outlining these practices, we're conceding too much to capitalism; whether we should be opposing its structures more absolutely; and how much we should be demanding.

Recently, for example, ASH developed an option for infill development in the gardens of the Montreal Square housing association estate in Cambridge, whose campaign we've been advising over the past year, and this was rejected outright by the residents. Having spent, in many cases, the past quarter of a century lovingly tending their gardens, they saw no reason why they should give them up to new development, even if doing so might

save their homes from demolition, just because their landlord wants to redevelop the estate as market sale and shared ownership properties. Rather than make concessions that would drastically reduce their quality of life, they have decided not to yield an inch to the Cambridge Housing Society and instead challenge their justifications for demolishing their homes for profit. In our view, this is absolutely the right course of action for the Montreal Square community.

In other circumstances, where infill development is less intrusive and would generate the funds to refurbish homes neglected of maintenance, an attempt at compromise would be the best course of action. The principles of a socialist architecture are there to guide our practices, not to constrain or limit them with rigid dogma that doesn't take account of concrete situations. The practices, however, are there to determine what a socialist architecture must do when it is possible to do so — and here we return to the dividing line that we looked at in Part 1 between what is perceived to be possible and impossible — but also what it must not do under any circumstances. A socialist architecture, to take one obvious example, *must not* design poor doors in segregated affordable housing blocks; it must *try* to build as many homes as possible that meet housing need; but it *must* — to take one of the above examples — oppose the privatisation of public land. At present, the architectural profession and other possible agents for a socialist architecture are far too content, far too comfortable, and far too unwilling to challenge the line that has been drawn by the state between what is possible and what is impossible. Drawing up these political principles will hopefully show what is possible even under the impossible circumstances in which Neo-liberal capitalism has placed us.

Moving on, the next phase in the development process and moment of political agency is:

B. Urban Design, Master-planning and Brief Development

A socialist architecture must:

- *Agitate* against and oppose developments that produce social, economic and environmental inequality;
- *Promote* policies and designs that facilitate the equal distribution of housing and access to resources;
- *Support* residents in campaigns to save their communities from eviction and social cleansing;
- *Work* with communities to develop design alternatives to the demolition of their homes;
- *Encourage* and promote housing management structures that facilitate community ownership, stewardship or management, and ensure the end-user, resident and community has a leading role in the procurement, design, construction and management of developments that affect them;
- *Ensure* the diverse needs of existing residents are met by the brief.

The next phase of development is where the architect has most agency; but there are still many roles that the non-architect can play, particularly during the planning process, which still has the potential for a certain amount of democratic engagement.

C. Project Design and the Planning Process

A socialist architecture must:

- *Promote* architectural and urban design practices that enact the principles of a socialist architecture;
- *Produce* architectural designs that enable relationships of social, economic and environmental equality;
- *Produce* alternative development and refurbishment proposals that are socially beneficial, financially viable and environmentally sustainable;
- *Oppose* planning applications for developments that will have a negative impact on the neighbourhood;
- *Accommodate* all agents for a socialist architecture in its production, expanding the concern of architecture beyond the finished 'object' to the producers and transporters of its materials, the manufacturers of its components, the inhabitants and users of its products, and all those who will be affected by its production;
- *Design* for equality of access to all facilities and amenities, promoting the public and communal over the private.

Before moving on to the fourth moment of political agency, I want to clarify that, although these moments follow the development process as laid out in the first of our lectures on the social dimension of architecture, these moments are not sequential but structural. Although they equate to phases in the development process, the intervention in them can be made at any moment in that process; and the final moment is also the first one and can and should be continued throughout its phases:

D. Education, Dissemination and Agitation for Change

A socialist architecture must:

- *Educate* architects, residents, politicians, built-environment professionals and consultants, clients, and all the potential agents for a socialist architecture, in the failures of capitalist architecture and the principles of a socialist architecture;
- *Challenge* the false premises of capitalist architecture — for example, the so-called 'law' of supply and demand — wherever they are encountered;
- *Produce* alternative narratives to the entrenched negative stereotypes about social housing and the communities that live in it;
- *Lobby* institutions — such as the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Architects Registration Board — for changes to the codes of conduct guiding the

architectural profession, something we looked at in our second lecture on the environmental dimension of architecture.

Undoubtedly there are and will be further moments of political agency, and not only in the development process; but these are the ones we have come up with, and I want to end by giving concrete examples of these practices in the work of ASH.

3. Political Practices for a Socialist Architecture

A. Legislation, Policy and Strategic Development

- *Organise* demonstrations against proposed housing legislation.

In January 2016, ASH organised the first of several demonstrations outside the Houses of Parliament (*above*) opposing the Government's *Housing and Planning Act*. We accompanied these protests with articles, some of which were published in the national press, critical of the proposed new legislation, including ASH's submission to the House of Commons Public Bill Committee.
- *Analyse and criticise* proposed housing policy.

In March 2017, in response to the Greater London Authority's draft document, *Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration*, ASH published our critical report, *The Good Practice Guide to Resisting Estate Demolition*. This was not only a paragraph-by-paragraph analysis of the numerous flaws in the guide, but advised residents on how to challenge and oppose its policies when they were used to justify demolishing their homes.

- *Organise* hustings to apply pressure on politicians.

In May 2017, in response to the refusal of officially-organised hustings to take questions about housing, ASH organised our own political husting in which we asked candidates standing in the General Election to be a Member of Parliament for the London Borough of Lambeth about their policies on estate regeneration.

- *Hold* public meetings to propose changes to housing policy.

In April 2018, prior to the London local elections, ASH launched our report on Central Hill: A Case Study in Estate Regeneration at a meeting held on Cotton Gardens estate. The ability of the local authority to ignore overwhelming resident support for these proposals provided a context in which to propose ASH's policy changes to estate regeneration.

- *Contribute* to housing think-tanks, council committees and academic panels.

Since June 2017 ASH has been a regular panel member of the London School of Economics' Housing Plus Academy; in November 2017 we presented to the Haringey Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel about the council's estate regeneration programme; and in 2019 we are on the panel of the Bartlett School of Architecture's CLOUD housing research project.

- *Nominate* threatened buildings or land as an asset of community value.

In 2012 a community benefit society applied to Southwark council to have the Ivy House public house in Nunhead listed as an asset of community value. Following the success of this campaign, the Ivy House Community Pub Ltd purchased the freehold using finance raised by the community shares. This was the first time an asset of community value had been purchased using the right to bid provision contained in the Localism Act 2011.

B. Urban Design, Master-planning and Brief Development

- *Support* residents in campaigns to save their communities from being socially cleansed from their homes.

In 2015 ASH produced an option for the refurbishment and increased housing capacity through roof-extensions and infill development on Knight's Walk (*overleaf*), the low-rise

component of the Cotton Garden estate in Kennington, which was then under threat of full demolition. In tandem with the resident campaign, this compelled Lambeth council to look at other options, which ultimately resulted in half the homes being saved from demolition.

- *Work* with communities to propose design, management, ownership and financing alternatives to the proposed demolition and redevelopment of their homes.

Between 2015 and 2016 ASH developed design alternatives to the proposed demolition of the West Kensington and Gibbs Green estates in West Kensington again. These designs proposed increasing the housing capacity on the estate without demolition, refurbishing the existing homes, and increasing the total number of additional homes for social rent. ASH worked our designs up to feasibility study stage and had them costed by a quantity surveyor, and together these provided the basis to the residents' application to the Secretary of State for the Right to Transfer the estate into their own management as a community-run housing association and ownership as a Community Land Trust. Again, this could be seen as a form of privatisation, which a socialist architecture is opposed to in principle; but in practice residents are facing a choice between the destruction of their community and taking their homes out of public ownership into collective ownership.

- *Challenge* client's briefs and propose frameworks and criteria other than the largest financial return on developer investment.

Between 2016 and 2017 ASH produced design alternatives to the partial demolition of the Northwold estate in Hackney. This showed it was possible to increase the housing capacity on the estate through roof extensions and infill development by the same number of new homes (245) as the landlord proposed building following the demolition and redevelopment of half the estate. In tandem with the resident campaign, this compelled the Guinness Partnership in February 2018 to announce that it had had scrapped its plans to demolish the Northwold estate, and were now looking at building 100 new homes using available land without demolishing the existing buildings.

- *Expose* and oppose developments that formalise social and economic inequality.

In 2018 residents of Treves House and Lister House in Whitechapel contacted ASH for advice. Their local authority, Tower Hamlets council, had informed them they couldn't afford to refurbish their homes, and that demolition and redevelopment was therefore the only option. This would have resulted in the loss of homes for social rent, the eviction of most of the existing community, with the rest rehoused in housing association homes in segregated affordable-housing blocks. We looked at the deliberately over-inflated costs for refurbishment, which the council's quantity surveyor had estimated at £7.4 million, and recommended residents demand the council allow them to nominate an alternative quantity surveyor recommended by ASH to produce a new costing. They were successful, and the new figure for the refurbishment of their homes, which came to only £1.8 million, less than a quarter as much, compelled the council to call off the demolition.

C. Project Design and the Planning Process

- *Propose* design alternatives to demolition that retain existing communities and increase social rental housing provision.

Between 2015 and 2017 ASH developed design alternatives to the demolition of the Central Hill estate in Crystal Palace, again up to feasibility study stage, and again costed by a quantity surveyor. While Lambeth council was proposing a mix of market-sale and so-called affordable housing with a mass loss of homes for social rent, ASH's designs showed that, in the absence of demolition and compensation costs, it was possible to increase the housing capacity of the estate by over 50 per cent without demolishing a single existing home, all of which would be refurbished up to the Decent Homes Standard, with at least half of the new-build dwellings available for social rent. Prioritise communal over private amenities, and retain and reclaim public space.

Since 2017 ASH has been working with the Patmore Co-operative to develop a vision for the future of the Patmore estate in Wandsworth. ASH's proposals bring disused spaces

back into communal use (*below*), reinstates resident access to the estate's privatised community hall, and proposes infill housing options that demonstrate it is possible to increase its housing capacity without having to demolish, redevelop and privatise the estate in line with orthodox practice.

- *Design* for equal access to amenities and allocate space according to housing need.

Since 2017 ASH has been working with the Drive housing co-operative in Walthamstow to double its housing capacity based on communal living available to low-income and benefit dependent residents, with improved access and facilities for the residents living with disabilities.

- *Design* housing for equality of tenure or, where necessary for cross-subsidisation, 'tenure blind' housing in order to produce integrated neighbourhoods.

In 2018, as part of the Greater London Authority's Small Sites x Small Builders programme, ASH proposed designs for Brixton Gardens, a co-operative housing development in which all the homes would be for social rent, allocated according household size rather than income, and collectively owned by a community land trust.

- *Oppose* planning applications that have a negative impact on the existing community and surrounding neighbourhood.

In 2019 members of the Sanford housing co-operative, which includes a member of ASH, successfully opposed a planning application on a neighbouring site by creating an interactive website that identified areas in which the application failed to meet local policy planning requirements, enabling an informed and extensive response from the local community.

D. Education, Dissemination and Agitation for Change

- *Organise* and participate in protests, occupations and demonstrations.

ASH has organised protests against the AJ120 Awards (2015), the RIBA Stirling Prize Awards (2015, 2016 and 2019), the Housing and Planning Bill (2016), Savills real estate firm (2016), the Guinness Partnership housing association(2017); and has spoken at, written about and participated in numerous political, union and housing-related protests and occupations across London.

- *Organise* community events.

Between 2015-17 ASH ran Open Gardens Estates, a London-wide annual event hosted by 17 estates threatened with demolition. This was an opportunity for individual campaigns to make contact with each other, gather support for their campaigns, open their homes up to the general public through organised tours of the estates, and in doing so dispel some of the negative myths about council estates as, for example, 'concrete jungles', and their communities as havens for crime and drug-dealing. On some estates, residents used the day to replant some of plants that had been dug up or torn down by the council as

part of the managed decline of the estate preparatory to its demolition. On those for which ASH had designed alternatives to demolition, residents exhibited boards explaining the social, financial and environmental benefits of refurbishment and infill development (*previous page*).

- *Produce* alternative narratives of social housing through walks, lectures and exhibitions.

ASH exhibited our design work at the Peer Gallery (2015), the Cubitt Gallery (2016), London City Hall (2017), the Institute of Contemporary Arts (2017) and the Serpentine Gallery (2019). In 2016, as part of a weekend of actions against the Housing and Planning Bill, ASH conducted a guided tour, *Modern Times*, of the Southwark and Lambeth streets of Charlie Chaplin's childhood. In 2019, as part of Hito Steyerl's exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery, we conducted a guided tour, *Inequality Capital*, of the UK property investments of the billionaires on Kensington Palace Gardens and their influence on London's housing market.

- *Publish* reports and case studies on the social, financial and environmental costs of capitalist housing development.

Since 2015 ASH has published over 250 articles, reports, lectures and case studies on our website, that have been visited over 230,000 times by 140,000 people from 179 countries. These include reports on *The Ethics of Estate Regeneration* (2016), *The Truth about Grenfell Tower* (2017) and *The Costs of Estate Regeneration* (2018), as well as over a dozen case studies of individual estate regeneration schemes.

- *Inform* resident and neighbouring communities, through community talks and workshops, about the process of capitalist development and the socialist alternative.

Over the past four years, as part of our advocacy and outreach work, ASH has given hundreds of talks and interviews to residents, campaign groups and students about housing policy, resisting estate demolition and ASH's alternative model of estate refurbishment.

- *Hold* community talks, workshops and consultations.

ASH has held public meetings on subjects such as the technical, bureaucratic and political causes of the Grenfell Tower fire (July 2017), and proposed policy changes on estate regeneration (June 2018), as well as numerous workshops with residents on estates threatened with demolition.

- *Give* lectures and panel discussions at national and international academic and cultural institutions.

Since 2015 ASH has delivered more than 50 presentations and lectures to academic, art, design and architectural institutions in the UK, Berlin, New York and Vancouver.

- *Give* television, radio and press interviews, and record and publicise work in documentary films and exhibitions.

ASH's work is the subject of a feature-length film, *Concrete Soldiers* (December 2017), and we appeared in the documentary *Dispossession: The Great Social Housing Swindle* (March 2017). Our work has been referenced in over 60 articles and 7 books, and we have also appeared numerous times as expert commentators on various news outlets, including RT UK News, Channel 4 News, Channel 5, ABC News and LBC Radio.

- *Map and document* the effects of the estate regeneration programme.

In August 2017 ASH produced a map of London's estate regeneration programme that identified 237 estates which, since 1997 when the current programme began, have undergone, are undergoing or are threatened with demolition, regeneration and/or privatisation resulting in the mass loss of homes for social rent. Over the past two years we have repeatedly tried to access the public funding to complete the collection of this data, which is currently not available to the public, but so far without success.

- *Participate* in residencies.

In July and August 2019, as part of a research fellowship, ASH took up a residency at the 221A gallery in Vancouver, where we gave lectures on the social, environmental, economic and political dimensions of architecture that will provide the research basis to our new project, a book to be titled *For a Socialist Architecture*.

4. For a Socialist Architecture

Architecture is always political, including, as we have shown in these lectures, capitalist architecture. Now we need to assert what politics of architecture we need to practice in order to create the socially, environmentally and economically sustainable cities of the future; cities that don't displace our communities, consume our resources, destroy our environment and produce exponentially increasing economic inequality.

By the title of this project, *For a Socialist Architecture*, we are not suggesting that the production of a socialist architecture under capitalism will solve the housing crisis. Rather, we envisage a socialist architecture as a transitional practice, a tool that will help lever us out of the capitalist end-game and towards a socialist future. The promotion by our current housing policy of the nuclear-family model of home ownership — the consequences of which include a lifetime mortgage with a global bank and one of the partners (usually a woman) chained to a life of unpaid labour — is as ideologically determined by our capitalist economy as Ginzburg's Narkomfin building was by a nascent socialist one; but it has far less to offer us as a model of housing provision that meets our housing needs, our social and familial structures or the availability of land and material resources in the present or the future.

Contrary to its easy dismissal by the propagandists of capitalism, a socialist architecture is not utopian: it is rigorously practical. At our present moment in the global crisis of capitalism — and of which the international housing crisis is both contributory cause and resulting product — a socialist architecture is a pressing necessity that must be instigated within the historical trajectory of a 'transitional' period. It is estimated that we need to build 2 billion new homes globally by the end of the century. Only through the production of a socialist architecture and other equivalent and parallel social and political practices can we bring about the change we need and build the cities in which we can afford and want to live. The bigger political changes that need to take place to implement our more ambitious proposals — such as the socialisation of all land and housing provision — will only come about as a result of these activities.

The socialisation of our lived environment will not come about overnight; and it must first be imagined in the minds of residents, of architects and of policy makers inured to decades of Neo-liberal ideology. That said, with the political will to do so, most of the changes in practice we are proposing can be initiated right now. It is through these, and not through the passive dream of a parliamentary road to socialism, that a new society will be both conceived and created. Whether consciously or not — whether we deny it or not — architecture is fundamentally a mechanism for social and political transformation. The question before us is: what kind of world do we want to build?

Simon Elmer and Geraldine Dening
Architects for Social Housing