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Co-producing affordable housing futures: tools for community participation

Archio, interviewed by Dhruv Sookhoo and Ava Lynam

1   Kyle Buchanan and Mellis Haward, 2021.

Kyle Buchanan and Mellis Haward, directors of architectural practice Archio, reflect on their experience of developing a toolkit to facilitate the co-design of community-led housing.

Kyle Buchanan and Mellis Haward reflect on the participatory approaches adopted by their practice Archio negotiate the delivery of better quality community-led housing [1]. Their work aims to build trust by interpreting residents' lived experiences and aspirations, examined through architectural knowledges and practices. The following discussion focuses on the co-production of design artefacts as tools. These enable community stakeholders to negotiate shared ambitions for their neighbourhood within community-based development and regulatory processes, such as development management.

In 2016, Archio was invited by London Community Land Trust and Citizens UK to compete for the opportunity to design and deliver eleven affordable homes on a former garage site at Brasted Close in Lewisham, London [2]. Unusually, the public was asked to evaluate prospective architectural teams through a 'Pick an Architect' workshop held on the development site, where they were asked to evaluate practices' ability to engage with residents and communities. Archio's proposed approach anticipated their development of a toolkit of practices for collaboration during the development of affordable housing. These design tools were refined through use across a series of later commissions, including a co-housing project at Angel Yard, Norwich, and a resident-led estate regeneration scheme at Astley Estate, Southwark.
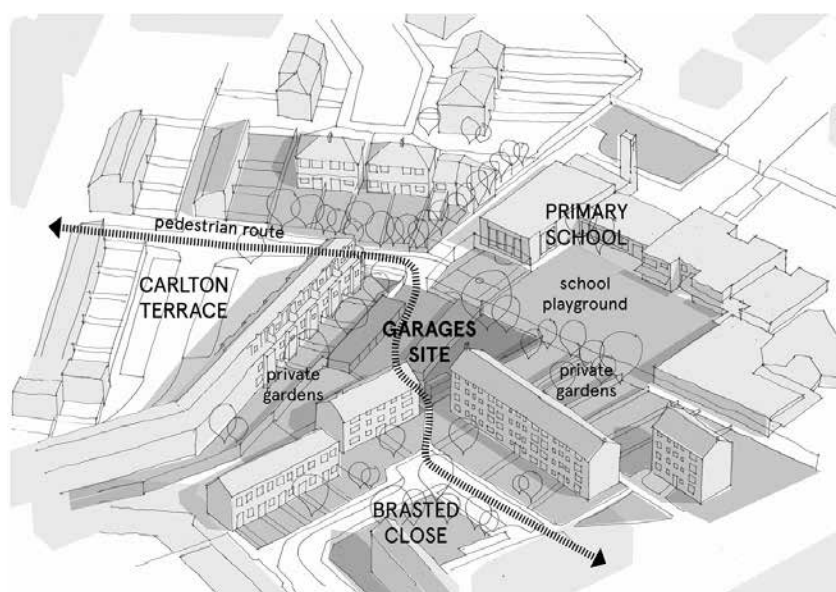

2   Site constraints at Brasted Close, Lewisham.

Ava Lynam (AL): Why did Lewisham Citizens and the London Community Land Trust initiate the project at Brasted Close?

Mellis Haward (MH): Lewisham Citizens' campaign at Brasted Close was motivated by their desire to develop genuinely affordable homes for residents who were otherwise unable to afford housing through private rent or sale, and who were ineligible for state-funded housing.[1] In their view, the most significant issue affecting their community was that housing development often failed to significantly improve housing affordability for a huge bracket of society, and estate regeneration was often responsible for tearing communities apart. Residents described people being forced to leave their neighbourhoods, their boroughs, and London altogether.

Lewisham Citizens joined forces with London Community Land Trust (CLT) who help local people to build homes that are held in a trust by a membership group, ensuring housing affordability in perpetutity.[2] This approach generated a powerful dynamic between a civic group – who were expert at lobbying local politicians – and an experienced, credible alternative housing provider. Together, they persuaded the Mayor of Lewisham to donate a parcel of land from Lewisham's estates that was deemed surplus to requirements. Lewisham Citizens worked to galvanise local people through design workshops, while London CLT led the fundraising campaign to raise public and private finance and devised a competition to find an architect.
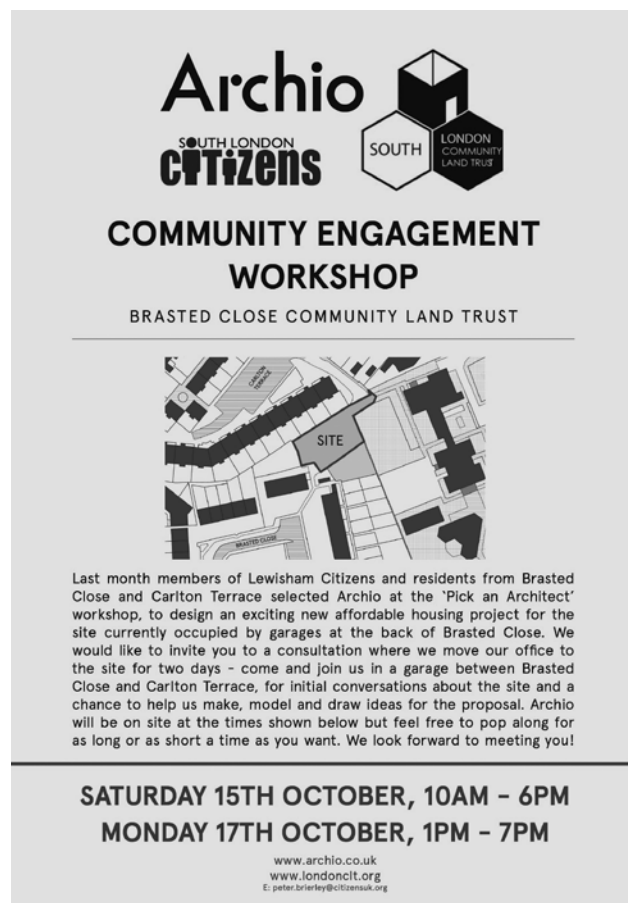
3 Invitation to residents to attend a community workshop between Brasted Close and Carlton Avenue at Archio's temporary architects office, 2016.

Kyle Buchanan (KB): Engagement with the wider community enabled London CLT to develop a piece of land that might have been considered financially unviable for the local authority to develop directly. When local authorities appraise urban infill sites like Brasted Close, they often place them low down the development hierarchy because of cost uncertainty relating to land contamination, access constraints, and overlapping rights of way. But London CLT worked in a really granular way. They connected into local networks to solve problems that a larger and more bureaucratic organisation like a local authority or mainstream housing association might find difficult to address because of the additional, specialist

4, 5 Community engagement workshop, including feedback from children from the local school about their aspirations for site as a communal garden, Brasted Close, 2016.

resources required. Ultimately, the work undertaken by London CLT with the community, even before RIBA Stage 0, contributed to the development of a proposal that ultimately received 107 letters of support, and no objections, when we submitted the project for planning consent.[3]

Dhruv Sookhoo (DS): Your proposal will realise eleven new affordable homes. How did you define the community for the purposes of the co-design process?

KB: A team of around six people from Lewisham Citizens consistently drove community organisation throughout the process. These key actors largely defined the community that participated in the design and development process because they had the skills and local knowledge to mobilise members of the community as volunteers. As the project progressed, participation in the design process expanded from future residents and immediate neighbours to the wider community.

We initially ran two co-design workshops onsite, which engaged thirty-four members of the public *[3]*. This represented a tenfold increase from a previous offsite event conducted before our involvement *[4–5]*. We also engaged with forty-four school children from the neighbouring primary school. As the project progressed, we worked with the community organisers to establish a Steering Group of around ten to twelve people, who we met with on roughly a bi-monthly basis until planning submission, and who continued to shape the design outcomes.

DS: How did you gain overwhelming community support even from those unable to benefit directly from the new affordable housing?

KB: There is an obvious benefit to the residents who will move into new homes, and the wider membership of Lewisham Citizens advocating for the scheme to the local authority at planning.[4] But there is also a positive impact on the wider neighbourhood because residents at Brasted Close are part of an extended and interconnected community network beyond the area being developed. We would like to think that we mobilised this

6   Discussing building configuration and massing with residents on site, Brasted Close, 2016.

network through the participatory approaches we adopted.

DS: How did this community-led approach to developing housing inform your participatory practice as architects? Were any aspects of the procurement process particularly distinct from more mainstream approaches to commissioning affordable housing?

KB: Our selection for the project through a public vote by estate residents and their immediate neighbours – through a 'Pick an Architect' workshop – was highly significant. We were chosen from a shortlist of several prospective architectural practices because the participatory approaches we adopted in developing the brief were valued by the residents. This early, direct engagement with residents onsite made commissioning Brasted Close distinct from standard public procurement methods, where organisational priorities are generally defined at distance from the site using generic information and procedures that often overlook the specific needs of residents. We found the experience of being directly selected by residents exciting, because of the immediacy of the relationship we were able to establish with them even at this early stage.

MH: When you first meet residents to discuss a project, you shouldn't attempt to go in with all the answers. Instead, you should have big, listening ears. That's what we did at the 'Pick an Architect'

workshop. We had realised that arriving with an exciting architectural proposal wasn't the way to win residents' support. Rather, it was much more important in the first instance to work on gaining their trust. We arrived with a lot of people from our team and put a lot of energy into it. We didn't have a design, but rather a map, post-it notes, and felt pens in order to listen to and record how local people felt about development and their specific insights into the local area. At this first workshop, we felt that the most important thing was to show residents that that we would incorporate their views into the design outcomes. Those early conversations gave us an indication of how we might approach the co-design process and the development of the building proposals.

The act of 'stepping back' from presenting an architectural proposal, and instead using tools to prompt good conversations, pushed us forward in residents' minds. Not everyone can start a conversation about housing or engage immediately in the design process. Looking back, I think that residents felt we were open, and didn't have a set idea about how we were going to develop their site. This was important, because for most people the first feeling about a development in their neighbourhood is anxiety, not excitement. By demonstrating that we were able to listen to residents and their concerns, they could see that our design process would try to mitigate potentially negative effects of the development process.

We started the design process only after that trust was built. We relocated to the site for two days to undertake an extensive community engagement workshop. We produced block models using a foam cutter to quickly test massing with residents and enable them to understand the complex issues associated with accommodating housing on a tricky site *[6]*.

AL: How do you understand your role as an architect when engaging in participatory processes with residents?

KB: During participatory processes, Archio adopts the role of facilitator, extending the traditional professional role of the architect. As a practice, we consistently question the wider impact of our projects on residents and the surrounding neighbourhood in an effort to measure success beyond standard architectural KPIs [Key Performance Indicators]. We are still exploring how best to integrate measurements of social value into our participatory approaches, as well as the evaluation of design outcomes.[5] Our commitment to create projects that solve problems not only for immediate residents, but also the wider community, consistently inspires our work. When you start to think about producing architecture in this way, it becomes a much more ambitious proposition.

The practical techniques that we used during the early negotiations at Brasted Close were about generating sufficient understanding to build a robust brief.[6] But ultimately, those techniques also served as icebreakers to start a conversation with the community, and build lasting trust between residents and ourselves as architects. In the past, we have been described by clients as 'reluctant designers'. This doesn't mean that we're reluctant to design buildings, but rather that we think it's critical to understand the local situation first and get under the skin of a place to discover what design principles are likely to make a project valuable and successful for residents. You can competently design a building quite quickly. But it takes longer to design the right building by really understanding the site from the perspectives of residents and other members of the community. This is a much more difficult process, and means avoiding bringing presumptions

7 **Design workshop at co-housing project, Angel Yards, Norwich.**

8 **Community steering group and residents meet at co-design workshop to discuss new housing options, Brasted Close, 2016.**

that your approach as an architect is the right one.

AL: How did the participatory approaches that you adopted aid collective design decision-making, and what were the implications of empowering residents for your design practice as architects?

MH: At Brasted Close, the community organisers made a decision that there would be no attempt to arrive at a formal consensus on design issues, through voting for example. Instead, as architects, we were tasked with using our professional judgement to interpret residents' feedback, then summarise their thoughts and weigh it all up to

develop a design proposal. In this case, we didn't sit down to design the building with residents but, rather, interpreted discussions that we had with them on specific issues – such as the impact of the new development on their gardens, which helped us to determine the position of the building on the site. As we approached the pre-application consultation ahead of submitting proposals for planning consent, the underlying question that structured our discussion with the Community Steering Group was not 'can you sign off this scheme, please?', but rather 'can you see yourself living here?'. If the response was, 'yes we can imagine having a happy life here', then we would submit the planning

application to the local authority. If not, then we have to keep working at it together. Deciding what questions we asked, how we asked them, and the way we received and interpreted residents' responses was a huge part of the participatory design process at Brasted Close.

KB: Our intergenerational co-housing project at Angel Yard in Norwich for the developers TOWN and Sussex Street Co-housing CIC [Community Interest Company] offers another good example of empowering future residents to actively manage decision-making relating to both design outcomes and the design process itself.[7] The community group have gone on to run their own sessions using the participatory design tools we taught them with growing confidence and expertise [7]. For example, we introduced a 'traffic light' tool to the group to reach a consensus around the layout of the building, which they have used themselves to make decisions about how the building should be managed.[8] It's been exciting to observe how upskilling people allows them to build their own patterns of communication.

This shared experience will become even more important

when co-housing residents occupy their scheme on completion. There is a temptation to think about a building as being 'finished' at the moment you hand it over to residents. But really that's only the beginning. We look at design process as a means of facilitating participation in local issues, which extends beyond the singular outcome of a building. At Angel Yard and at Brasted Close, discussions about the new building also became a way for neighbours to meet each other, with the effect of strengthening local connections in the process.

AL: How does the participatory approach you have adopted for co-housing at Angel Yard compare to the co-design process at Brasted Close?

MH: At Angel Yard, we have taken the co-housing group on an even more detailed participatory design process, because decision-making is much more emotional in this case. We are talking about their money, their lives, and their family's futures – it's their everything. In this case, reaching a consensus in decision-making was important because, as future building residents, the group needed to

develop a shared understanding about design details and building management, among many other things. It's very rewarding to equip people with knowledge and tools to discuss complex design issues in a structured way and arrive at solutions that balance the emotional and financial aspects of housing development.

At Brasted Close, it was slightly different because the project dynamic was shaped by three types of community participants: members of the Lewisham Citizens' Community Steering Group who were involved from the beginning; community leaders from local schools and churches; and local residents [8]. None of them live on the project site or are paying for it, so they had a less direct stake in the outcome. In this case, they advised us as architects and tried to see what value they could add to the project, but were also happy to take their hands off the steering wheel and ask us for the answer.

AL: How did you involve neighbours in your co-design approaches at Brasted Close, to proactively create enthusiasm for the potential of community-led development? Did undertaking design workshops on the site and close to neighbours,
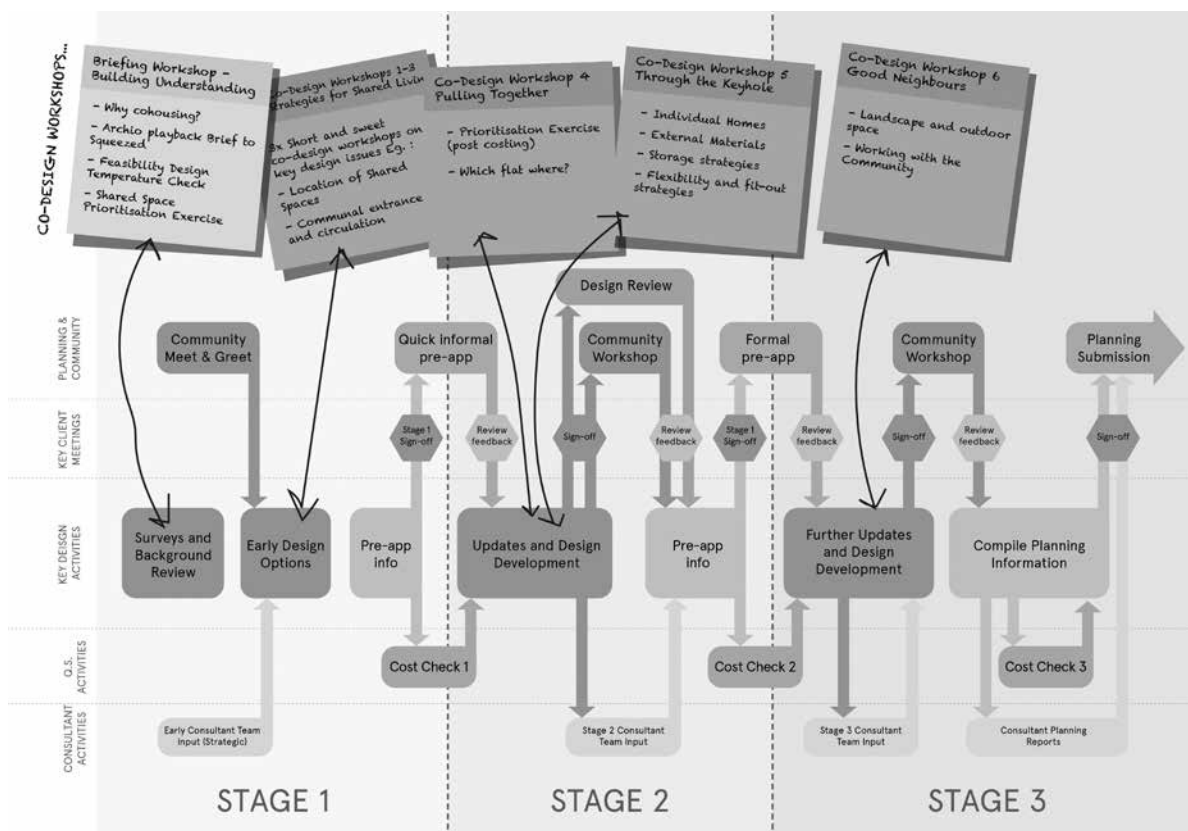
9 Example flowchart used by Archio to guide residents through the design process, and complex relationship between design iteration and regulatory processes such as development management.
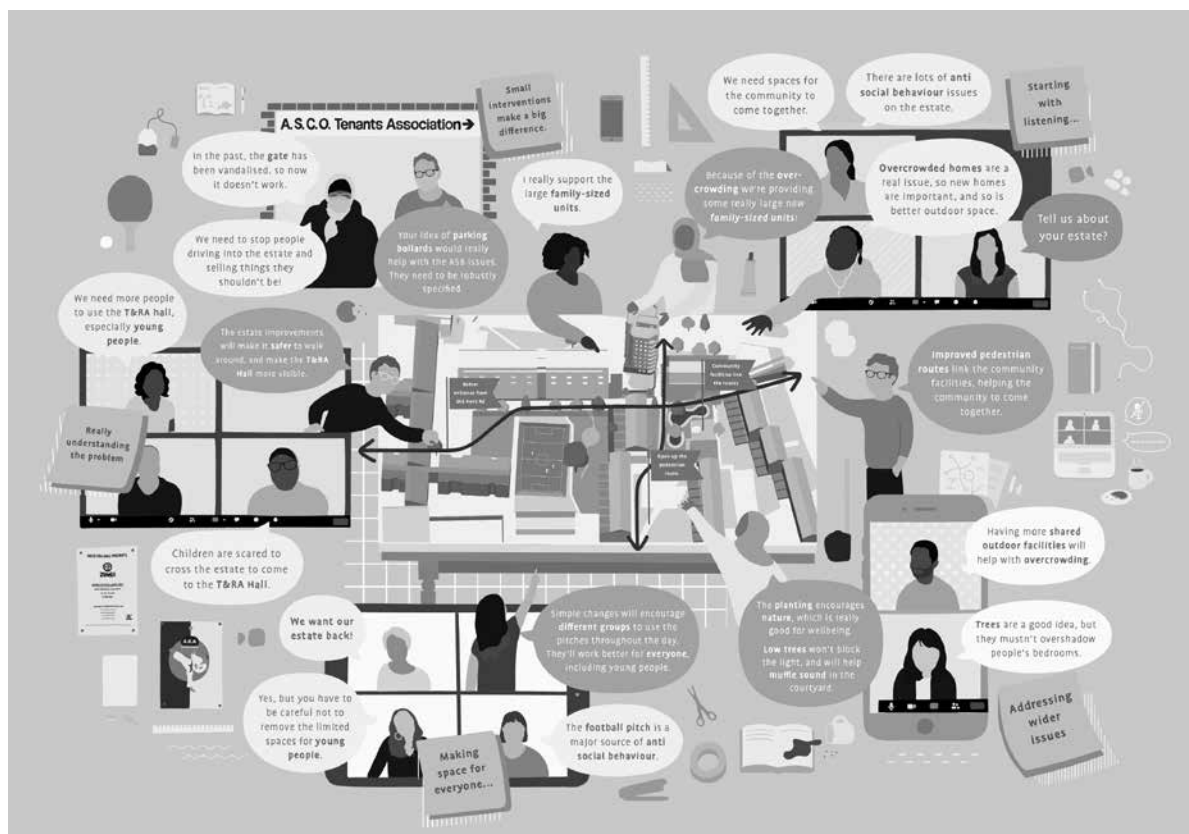
10 **Visual summary of resident feedback and the medium through which feedback was obtained, and the spatial implications for proposed built interventions, Astley Estate, Southwark.**

rather than in the studio, offer benefits to design development?

MH: We recognised that some neighbours had already experienced a long two- or three-year process of refurbishment of their housing association homes, which had been very stressful for them. Having just lived through the disruption of moving in and out of their homes, we were conscious that some neighbours would feel exhausted by the idea of being affected by the imminent construction of another building project. We felt that neighbours whose properties would be impacted by the construction of our project were owed particular consideration. So, when they asked us: 'what's it going to look like from our garden?', we said 'why don't we go to your garden and talk about it?'. Undertaking community workshops on the site meant that we were accessible, and neighbours could directly inform and challenge our perspectives during the design process.

For example, the neighbour most affected by the project, who lives on the ground floor next to the building, was initially reticent to engage with us because construction work would be

extremely close to his house. But once he understood that the project aimed to provide affordable housing, he became involved in the process and invested in the project succeeding. He recognised that his children would benefit from this type of housing in the future if it became mainstream across Lewisham. During one of the community meetings, he asked us where the corner of the building was going to be. I went onsite with him, and stood where the corner of the new building would be with my arms outstretched. He watched from his garden, and later wrote his letter of support for the project. As an architect, you don't often get an opportunity for this kind of direct engagement with residents.

DS: During participatory processes, how do you manage decision-making that may be unpopular with residents? For example, it may be necessary to remove a favoured aspect of design due to unexpected costs.

KB: I don't think managing unexpected situations is a problem if you have done participation properly. During one exchange, the Community Steering Group at Brasted Close said: 'Actually, we don't want to make all the

decisions: you're the professionals, we want you to show us you've taken on board what we are telling you, and tell us what the best solutions would be.' This was a significant moment for our professional development as a practice. It taught us that the residents had – through our process of trust-building – grown to recognise that, as architects, we had the skills to solve some of the challenging constraints that were arising in the process. At the same time, they wanted to be empowered to influence the design process and its outcomes. So far, our experience has been that we are able to avoid conflict with residents during participatory processes by having straightforward conversations.

AL: So, trust and effective decision-making can be achieved by consistently demonstrating how your professional judgement is informed by resident feedback?

KB: Yes, you have to demonstrate to residents and others that you can discuss complex issues with them in a way that they can understand, and then show that you can respond to what they have said through your design process. A big problem sometimes is that

architects and developers don't trust people enough to understand the issues that come up.

DS: How can residents engage constructively with complex development and regulatory processes where professional knowledge is usually required? For example, architects use considerable expertise to navigate uncertainty to negotiate housing quality during development management.

KB: Communicating the relationship between design decision-making and the planning approval process is challenging. I have personal experience of being part of a community group as a resident and I understand how a lack of information can be very frustrating. For participation to be effective, it is vital that residents understand what kind of input is needed at what point in the design process, as well as its interaction with other aspects of the wider design process.

At Archio, we have developed a co-design flowchart to explain the planning process to residents and communities that we use as a tool on all our projects [9]. This diagram is intended to structure conversations, and make visible the relationship between the planning process and design decision-making in community workshops, as well as through subsequent design iterations.

DS: The flowchart offers a clear indication of how different forms of knowledge from professionals and residents are synthesised into the key professional services of the architect.[9] For example, it illustrates how feedback from peers during design review, and residents during community workshops, must be co-ordinated and interpreted by the architect to develop the planning application iteratively, ahead of pre-application consultation and formal submission.

KB: Yes, exactly, we use it to chart project progress with the residents and help them to anticipate potential complications that may arise later on. We also use it to show how their feedback is employed by us to develop our design proposals alongside advice from fellow professionals. Sharing co-design flowcharts, and more detailed community engagement plans,

with residents means they can also better understand the purpose of other participatory tools. In some cases, reflecting on the relative success of ongoing participatory processes with residents can lead us to adapt our approach. For example, on a recent project, we started by trying a 'gamified' approach to decision-making. However, once we tested it with residents, it felt overly complicated and not appropriate for the group we were working with.[10] We then tried another technique, a 'prioritisation' approach, which was simpler to run and better able to support the conversation among participants in this case.[11]

AL: Have you developed any other visual approaches to demonstrate that you have taken residents' experiences into account, as well as to communicate their perspectives to others involved in the development process?

KB: At Astley Estate, Southwark, we developed an estate regeneration project that was grounded in the perspectives of residents. We captured the core outcomes of the co-design process in a single image, with the intention of providing a succinct summary of a wide-ranging process in an easily understandable graphical format [10]. Being able to represent complex discussions in a clear and simple way has helped us to articulate and describe what we heard to residents, the local authority and third parties. This has proved valuable both during the project and also in advocating

for the benefits of our co-design approach more widely.

DS: Current UK national planning policy favours planning applications that demonstrate effective community engagement.[12] How did you evidence your advanced participatory practice to planners and elected members within your planning application for Brasted Close? Was the local authority receptive to the project?

MH: We presented concrete evidence of the engagement process within our Design and Access Statement, which accompanied the planning application.[13] This included a timeline and a summary of what we did, who we engaged with, and what we learnt from each event. This meant that the planners could understand how the design had been directly shaped by conversations with the local community. But Lewisham Citizens' approach to campaigning also meant that the Mayor of Lewisham had been to the site three times before the planning application was submitted in 2018. He had been told about the project at every single open cabinet meeting for the previous two years. It became part of the local authority's commitment to deliver community-led housing on this site. Planners were invited to the community workshops, however they were unable to attend because it fell outside their formal processes.

Despite evidence of extensive community participation and resulting support, the local authority dealt with the planning

11 Community steering group and residents hand delivering the planning application for Brasted Close to the London Borough of Lewisham, 2018.

12–15 **Citizen House, completed scheme at Brasted Close, 2023.**

application in a routine way. The community delivered the planning application by hand to the Mayor of Lewisham, but I don't feel that this affected the outcome [11]. It went through the normal planning process and was judged on its own merits, which I do think is appropriate.

KB: We talked about entering into a planning performance agreement, but the small scale of the project made the cost of an agreement with the local authority prohibitive.[14] That approach might have supported a more dynamic process with the planners, which would have been welcomed by us given we were pushing an agenda centred on community empowerment.

MH: Yes but, at the same time, is Brasted Close the kind of scheme that planners should spend their time on? It's already well run by community-led groups. It could be argued that local planning authorities should dedicate more time to lower quality, developer-led

projects that are focused on building high and selling quick. What I found frustrating was that planning determination was a somewhat protracted process.

AL: What was the local planning authority's response to the community's overwhelming support for the project? How did they receive the evidence of your commitment to community participation, and your ability to justify design decision-making based on detailed work onsite?

MH: They responded with surprise, but also perhaps with indifference. I don't think the planners had ever received so many letters of support for a small scheme on a backland infill site. Interestingly, the application did not go to the planning committee, which would have been expected for this kind of tricky infill site. The scheme is only metres away from neighbours' windows and doors, which would usually generate objections. While our principal motivation for

collaborating with the community was not to de-risk planning consent, our approach did help us win overwhelming support and reduce objections to the scheme which could have jeopardised approval.

Clients often look to Archio to de-risk the planning process, because we are experienced in community-led design. But we see it from a different angle. If you think of local residents as guiding, informing, and improving the design process, and its outcomes, the risk is reduced in any case because you are talking about things and understanding them together from the very beginning.

DS: Finally, did the participatory processes you adopted result in unexpected design outcomes, or challenge your preconceptions of residents' needs and aspirations for their neighbourhood?

MH: The residents' vision for their new public realm surprised us. By discussing with the community what was working well and what was

lacking in the existing public realm, we ended up unveiling the history of their past attempts to build a community garden on the site. Their long-held desire for a shared communal space in the estate had never materialised. So we worked with them to imagine a new place for people to come together. Initially, we imagined a communal space centred on community growing. But then we walked the estate with the residents, and realised that what people wanted most was a place for a bench or barbecue. There were lots of leftover pieces of grass where residents could plant something if they wanted, but they had nowhere that felt like the heart of the neighbourhood; somewhere where you could sit and watch your child play. Listening to residents totally changed our understanding of what constituted useful public space within the neighbourhood, and we ended up designing a large, hardwearing landscape to encourage safe communal play [12–15]. Direct participation of residents in the design process flipped our assumptions, which I think is really healthy.

Notes

1. Lewisham Citizens is part of South London Citizens, a chapter of Citizens UK founded in 1989 to offer intensive training for community organisers. It now represents a diverse membership of over 450 civil society organisations committed to challenging injustice and building stronger communities. See: Citizens UK, *What is Community Organising* <https://www.citizensuk.org/about-us/what-is-community-organising/> [accessed 27 September 2022].

2. London Community Land Trust works with residents in London to create permanently affordable homes owned and run by local people. London CLT, *London Community Land Trust* <https://www.londonclt.org/> [accessed 27 September 2022]. Community Land Trusts are defined as non-profit, community-led housing organisations that acquire land through purchase or gifting, and develop and manage housing for sale or rent to ensure long-term stewardship and affordability in perpetuity. See, for instance: Louise Crabtree-Hayes, 'Establishing a Glossary of Community-Led Housing', *International Journal of Housing Policy*, 28:1 (2023); Wendy Wilson, *Community Land Trusts* (London: House of Commons Library, 2017); Tom Moore and Kim McKee, 'Empowering Local Communities? An International Review of Community Land Trusts', *Housing Studies*, 27:2 (2012), 280–90; and Helen Jarvis, 'Community-led Housing and "Slow" Opposition to Corporate Development: Citizen Participation as Common Ground?', *Geography Compass*, 9:4 (2015), 202–13.

3. RIBA, *Plan of Work 2020: Overview* (London: Royal Institute of British Architects, 2020). The RIBA Plan of Work provides a standardised description of professional services offered by architects from project inception to building use. The intended outcome of Stage 0 is to confirm the best means of achieving client requirements.

4. London CLT, *Citizens House, Unity Way, Lewisham* (2023) <https://www.londonclt.org/citizens-house> [accessed 15 January 2023]. Residents at Citizen House – the completed scheme at Brasted Close – became eligible for homes at 65% of open market value (£272,000 for a two-bedroom home, and £215,000 for a one-bedroom home) by being members of London CLT, living in Lewisham for at least five years, obtaining a mortgage for between 5% to 10% of value of the home, and demonstrating housing need. This housing allocation policy is intended to support people whose continuing connection with Lewisham supports the running of local infrastructure and culture (for example, teachers and artists).

5. Haward expands on Archio's emerging approach to measuring social value with residents in discussion with Nicola Bacon. See: Nicola Bacon, Mellis Haward, Dhruv Sookhoo, Ava Lynam, *People Powered Places: Social Value – Applying Social Measures to New Neighbourhoods (Workshop 1)* [video], Metropolitan Workshop (24 June 2021) <https://metwork.co.uk/research/people-powered-places/> [accessed 15 January 2023].

6. For a reflection on the application of practical techniques for co-design across Archio's portfolio of projects, see: Kyle Buchanan and Sarah Ahmed, 'Co-Design Tools: Regenerating Communities', in *Collective Action! The Power of Collaboration and Co-Design in Architecture*, ed. by Rob Fiehn, Kyle Buchanan, Mellis Haward (London: RIBA Publishing, 2023), pp. 12–21.

7. TOWN is a profit-with-purpose developer that aims to build homes and neighbourhoods to improve the quality of people's lives and enhance sustainable ways of living. TOWN acted as development manager for Angel Yard, Norwich, to develop an intergenerational co-housing scheme of around thirty-three apartments and houses with a common house offering leisure and shared amenities arranged as a perimeter block around a garden. For an accessible overview of co-housing in relation to other current models and practices of community-led housing in the UK, see: Martin Field, *Creating Community-Led and Self-Build Homes: A Guide to Collaborative Practice in the UK* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2020).

8. In a 'traffic light exercise', participants mark an idea or proposal red, amber, or green to indicate their preference. It can be a useful way to give shape to priorities while avoiding direct disagreements.

9. Alongside literature reviews, case studies, interviews, expert-led workshops, and focus group discussions, Archio's co-design flowchart tool informed aspects of the development of practical guidance for community engagement by Metropolitan Workshop, developed in collaboration with The Glass House Community-led Design and community representatives. A key element of the integrated pack of guidance is a graphic overlay onto the RIBA Plan of Work of principles and recommendations for more effective and meaningful community engagement during architecture and planning projects. See: Ava Lynam and Dhruv Sookhoo, *People Powered Places: Practice Guide to Community Engagement* (London: Metropolitan Workshop, 2022) <https://metwork.co.uk/research/ppp-practical-guide/> [accessed 15 January 2023]. For insight into the practice-based research programme in which People Powered Places is situated, see: Dhruv Sookhoo, 'Strategies for Collaborative Research in Architectural Practice', in *Collective Action!*, pp. 1–11.

10. Gamified approaches refer to methods of framing collaborative decision-making in game format as a way to collectively think around a problem and illicit discussion in a more easily understandable way.

11. Prioritisation approach refers to a participatory method through which different ideas and suggestions are discussed and prioritised by consensus, which is helpful in situations when it is not known what will be deliverable within a project brief, for instance.

12. Current national planning policy and guidance in England encourages local authorities and applicants to proactively engage local communities in the design of developments in their area during development management through recommended processes and design governance. See: Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), *Guidance: Design: Process and Tools* (2019) <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/design> and Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), *National Planning Policy Framework* (2021) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications> [both accessed 15 January 2023].

13. Design and Access Statements are intended to be concise, proportionate reports accompanying a planning application, which demonstrate the design principles that inform the proposed development and its approach to local context. DLUHC, *Guidance: Making a Planning Application* (2021) <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-an-application> [accessed 15 January 2023].

14. Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) are agreed by local planning authorities and applicants to set timescales for decision-making and necessary resources to progress planning applications through pre-application, determination, and potentially post-application stages of development management. DLUHC, *Guidance: Before Submitting an Application* (2019), <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-an-application> [accessed 15 January 2023]. PPAs are commonly funded by developers when pursuing complex or large-scale applications, and adopted by local authorities to compensate for reduced public funding. See: Patricia Canelas, 'Challenges and Emerging Practices in Development Value Capture', in *Planning Practice: Critical Perspectives from the UK*, ed. by Jessica Ferm and John Tomaney (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), pp. 70–84.

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Competing interests
The authors declare none.

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Mellis Haward is a chartered architect and director at Archio. She specialises in community-led design and has contributed expertise to studio units at University College London exploring community participation (with Buchanan). She is a member of the Urban Design London Environmental Design Review Panel and Hackney Regeneration Design Advisory Group.

Ava Lynam is researcher and PhD candidate with the Urban Rural Assembly project at the China Centre and Habitat Unit, TU Berlin, where she examines rural-urban transformation in China and Southeast Asia. She is Researcher in Residence at Metropolitan Workshop. Her research interests in co-production during planning draws on her experience of housing projects in London and Dublin.

Dhruv Adam Sookhoo is a chartered architect, chartered town planner, and Senior Lecturer in Architecture and Urbanism, Manchester School of Architecture. He is former Head of Research and Practice Innovation, Metropolitan Workshop, and Visiting Lecturer, Newcastle University, where he completed doctoral research examining the practices adopted by architects to negotiate housing quality during development management.

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