

This study traces the processes of group formation in one emerging co-housing project in the UK. It focuses on the multi-scalar dynamics of community building to identify opportunities and obstacles for future cohousing, especially senior, development.

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# Interdisciplinary Thematic Questions

- How and why are cohousing groups assembled?
- How do members' age, class, race/ethnicity, gender affect their communities?
- How does participative design influence communitybuilding processes?

- What are the costs and subsidy implications of cohousing?
- What sort of ownership structures are required?
- What are the relative roles of the housing association and the members in finance and decision-making?

- How and why was this South London location selected?
- What does cohousing tell us about meaning and making of alternative (ageing) places, and cosmopolitan geographies of inclusion/exclusion in London.

Methods

- participant observation
- interviews
- focus groups



Geography

# Featherstone: profile and emerging findings

#### **FACTS**

#### History:

Formed in 2011 by 2 housing insiders seeking to transform vacant 18 bedroom mansion in South London.

#### Process:

Monthly meetings, with lunch; Periodic design workshops; Negotiations with HA and LA's.

> Age group: 50+ Members: 17

Funded: Housing Association & members

Conditions: 50 yrs.old & broadly committed to co-housing ethos

Values:

not formally established. Interest in 'community' and 'green' living.

Despite

policy and government support, local community does not yet know enough about the concept of co-housing. Perceptions seem to be that they are just another large housing development, in it for the profit without consideration to neighbours.

The

elaboration of financial and legal arrangements has been more timeconsuming and complicated than anticipated. Due to lack of clarity regarding financial and legal requirements, final group and individual commitments, as well as design, still hang in the air.

Raises questions regarding ties to localism policy: is the onus on planners or local residents? How will this tension develop?



## Actors

#### **Political**

- Local Authority committee members
- Planners
- Central government

### Academic

- Sociologists
- **Urbanists**
- **Economists** Geographers

## Design

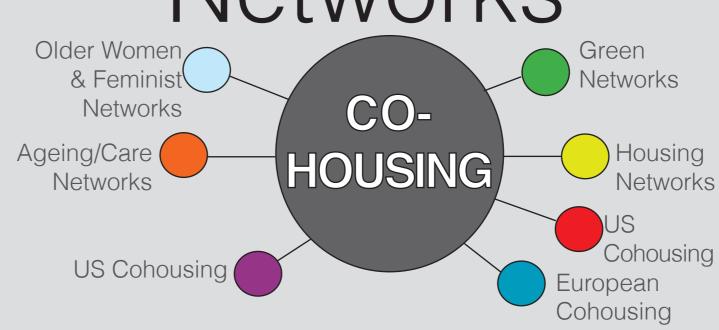
- PTEa architects
- Green and self-build consultants
- Members

### CoHousing

#### Finance & Property

- **Local Authorities** Land-owners, developers & banks
- Residents
- Existing & would-be members
- Neighbours

## Networks



### precedents

Scandinavian & US, UK HAPPI report, M. Brenton

## future future

## UK, Dutch, Danish & German communities