

Institution: Anglia Ruskin University
Unit of Assessment: 13 – Architecture, Built Environment and Planning
Title of case study: Raising the profile of Almshouses and supporting the management of housing for people in need
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: June 2016 to December 2020
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:
Name(s): Dr Alison Pooley Dr Federica Pascale Role(s) (e.g. job title): Principal Lecturer in Architecture Senior Lecturer in in Architectural Technology Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: September 2012 to December 2020 August 2015 to date
Period when the claimed impact occurred: June 2016 to December 2020
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) Almshouses are a unique housing provision, currently accommodating over 36,000 people (in 30,000 dwellings) in the UK, creating a resilient and sustainable community housing resource model which increases both the availability of, and access to, social housing primarily for older people. Research undertaken at Anglia Ruskin University on almshouses has resulted in: • raised awareness of almshouses amongst the public, practitioners and the UK government through a UK national press campaign, publication of practitioner guidance, a housing blog to members of the UK Housing Learning and Improvement Network, and through evidence presented in debate in Parliament; • enhanced management systems within the Almshouse Association (AA) through support for its Futures Group, and the underpinning of the AA's 10-year development strategy to deliver 5,000 new almshouse dwellings and to upgrade existing almshouse dwellings to accommodate older people and those living with dementia.
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words) The international research in resilient social housing underpinning this impact case study is drawn from three interrelated projects: <i>The role of almshouses in the 21st century: a scoping review (reference 1) funded by the Almshouse Association (AA).</i> Pooley (Principal Lecturer in Architecture, ARU, to December 2020), with Pannell (an independent researcher) and Francis (ARU, returned to UoA3) worked closely with the AA, its constituent member charities and their residents, to produce a 'State of the Art' report identifying how the almshouse movement is viewed by different stakeholders, how it engages with these stakeholders and how different management and trustee charities operate. The report identified the challenges faced by the AA in promoting new almshouses, and presenting their benefits to

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local communities and residents, to the UK Government and to the wider social housing stakeholder community. The findings contained in the report provided the robust evidence base to support the AA in its mission to promote the continued provision and delivery of almshouses within the UK.

Resilience and Community: models of housing for an ageing population (reference 2) funded by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Research Trust.

Pooley and Pannell, worked closely with almshouse charities (Bristol Charities, St Clements Danes Holborn Estates Charity, Winnocks and Kendalls Charity, Thorngate Churcher Trust, John Eastwood Homes), practitioners (Proctor and Matthews Architects) and Wilms-Floet (Assistant Professor, TU Delft) to identify the current and potential future contributions that the AA could make to the provision of housing for older people and others in need, to identify key technical and development issues in almshouse construction, and the challenges of renovating existing housing stock to address the accommodation needs of older people, and those with dementia. The report identified the need for closer collaborative relationships between all stakeholders involved in the delivery of new social housing, the development of clear design guidance around lifetime homes, and for a robust evidence base to support the business case for almshouse provision as part of the UK social housing infrastructure.

Independent living for older adults (references 3 and 4) funded by ARU.

Pascale (Senior Lecturer in Architectural Technology, ARU, 2015-date) and **Pooley** undertook research to better understand the challenges posed to housing providers by older residents and those living with dementia. The research developed a framework for assessing the age-appropriateness of housing (reference 3; with Luciano and Polverino (University of Naples Federico II)) and identified the factors that affect the uptake of technology to support 'ageing in place' at three built environment scales: home, street and neighbourhood, and in urban, semi-urban and rural locations (reference 4; with Francis, and Futch, a practitioner). The research identified the incentives and barriers for older adults to engage with technology. This work provided direct input into the guidance developed for the operational management of almshouse charities.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Published Outputs

1. Pannell, J., **Pooley**, A. and Francis, S.A. (2019). *The role of almshouses in the 21st century: a scoping review*. Almshouse Association Report. Available from ARU on request.
2. Pannell, J. and **Pooley**, A. (2020) *Almshouses: a model of community housing for an ageing population*, RICS Research Publications. Available at: <https://www.rics.org/uk/news-insight/research/research-reports/almshouses-a-model-of-community-housing-for-an-ageing-population/>. Submitted in REF2.
3. Luciano, A., **Pascale**, F., Polverino, F. and **Pooley**, A. (2020) 'Measuring Age-Friendly Housing: A Framework', *Sustainability*, 12 (3). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12030848>
4. Futch, J. **Pascale**, F., **Pooley**, A. and Francis, S.A. (2019) 'Current Uptake of Technology Related to the Built Environment to Support Older Adults to Live Independently in Their Community', *Urban Planning*, 4 (2). DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17645/up.v4i2.1919>

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External Grant Funding

5. PI: **Pooley**: 'State of the Art' report on the role of almshouses in the 21st century, 2018-2019. Commissioned by the Almshouse Association, £9.5k.
6. PI: **Pooley**: 'Almshouses: a model of community housing for an ageing population', 2018-2020. Funded by RICS Research Trust, £13.5k.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Our research has provided empirical evidence to **inform policy debate** in Parliament, placing almshouses clearly on the social housing agenda. Our research has been used as the knowledge base to support **new service delivery models** for the Almshouse Association and the trusts and charities it represents, **raise awareness** of the almshouse social housing model to housing stakeholders through the Housing Learning Information Network (LIN), and underpin **new best practice guidance** on almshouse design and procurement to professional architects and surveyors, **supporting independent living for older people and those with dementia**.

Raised awareness of Almshouses amongst the public, practitioners and UK Government

Whilst almshouses have been part of social housing provision in the UK for over a millennia, awareness and understanding of their role amongst social housing practitioners has been limited, with the focus being primarily from an architectural and social history perspective rather than as part of the solution to the UK's housing crisis. To address these issues the Almshouse Association (AA) commissioned a 'State of the Art' report on current and future role of almshouses to provide a resilient and sustainable community housing model for older people and others in need (research reference 1); the RICS funded a research project aimed at raising awareness of Almshouses (research reference 2). Alongside this ARU funded work on independent living for older adults (research references 3 and 4). Based on the results from these studies:

- The AA launched a UK press campaign to raise awareness of the almshouse model amongst the general public (source 1).
- The Housing Learning and Improvement Network (LIN) published practitioner guidance on current challenges and future trends as part of their Viewpoint series (source 2) and posted an editorial and video citation (source 3) to the full RICS report in their resources library for their 25,000 housing, health and social care professional members. The Housing LIN also host an Almshouse blog by **Pooley** and Pannell and planned a series of HAPPI Hour virtual workshops (HAPPI – Housing our Aging Population Panel for Innovation) that drew on the independent living work of **Pascale** and **Pooley** (source 4), raising awareness of almshouses among practitioners. Although taking place in January 2021 having been delayed by Covid, the workshops were conceived and developed during the REF impact period.
- The AA and Housing LIN provided evidence in briefing to MPs ahead of Parliamentary debate on the role that almshouses could play in future UK social housing provision and how they could help address the UK homelessness problem (source 5 and reported in *Hansard*).
- The RICS published the report *Almshouses: a model of community housing for an ageing population* on its website (see link, research reference 2) in December 2020, where it is freely available for download by RICS members, the wider practitioner community and the general public.

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Enhancing the work of The Almshouse Association and wider almshouse community

The momentum generated by our research has led to the establishment of the Futures Group within the AA (**Pooley** is one of the four members of this Group, the others being the CEO of the AA, the CEO of the Housing LIN and the Director of Matter Architects), which has the strategic remit to promote and support the development of almshouses within the UK. In particular our work has been fundamental to the AA's 10-year development (design and procurement) strategy which commits by 2030 to establish ten new almshouse charities, to deliver 5,000 new almshouse dwellings, and to upgrade all existing housing for their residents to better than the Decent Homes Standard, including enhancements to better accommodate older people's needs, and of those living with dementia (source 6). **Pooley** has also presented the practical implications of her research to the wider almshouse community, for example at the AA AGM and Conference (June 2019) and at the Larger Almshouse Charities Network Group (LACNG) event held in Birmingham (September 2018) at which she was keynote speaker (source 7). Her audience included sixty charity trustees, clerks, almshouse scheme managers and CEOs from charities across the UK.

Our research has also provided the evidence base to support almshouse charities to make effective business cases for new developments. For example, the Legacy East Almshouse Partnership (source 8) has used the findings our research to promote their future development work to policymakers and planners and as a lobbying tool an information point for those within the professions who believe almshouses are only of historic interest. The Calder Valley Community Land Trust has used our research to promote almshouse developments with funders, landowners and local authorities (source 9). **Pooley's** research has also forged new relationships between the AA and their Dutch equivalent Landelijk Hofjesberaad (LHB) bringing them together for the first time in a forward-looking and strategic dialogue (source 10).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. The Almshouse Association, 'Read All About It!' webpage collating and linking to media stories on almshouses, at <https://www.almshouses.org/news/read-all-about-it/>. Includes e.g. 'Almshouse Boom Helps Poor Pensioners', *The Times*, 14 October 2019.
2. Housing LIN Viewpoint 100 Almshouses for the 21st century: transformation in progress. <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/type/Almshouses-for-the-21st-century-transformation-in-progress/>
3. Video testimonial on the importance of the RICS Almshouse report and the HAPPI design guidance by CEO of the Housing Learning and Improvement Network (Housing LIN) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Egjtoa2166l&feature=youtu.be>
4. HAPPI workshop for Housing LIN members on HAPPI Hour - The future role for Almshouses in shaping local communities. <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Events/HAPPI-Hour-The-future-role-for-Almshouses-in-shaping-local-communities/>
5. Letter from CEO, Housing LIN.
6. Letter from Chair and CEO, The Almshouse Association
7. LACNG AGM and Seminar Programme, September 2018
8. Letter from Chairman, Legacy East Almshouse Partnership
9. Letter from Secretary, Calder Valley Community Land Trust
10. Letter from Chairman and Honorary Chairman, Landelijk Hofjesberaad

