

OP
HOUSE

who we are

OpHouse is an initiative set out as a collaboration between Kaizen Arts Agency, BlokBuild and Alice Wilson, PhD Sociology at University of York.

Kaizen Arts Agency is a community interest company working within the arts, that aims to ask questions and facilitate idea creation for more fair and just societies.

BlokBuild is a building system, classed as an MMC, who are engineering a modular cassette system in Hull. The team are currently working on an innovate UK project with We Can Make, bringing modern methods of construction into the hands of community to build houses where they are needed most.

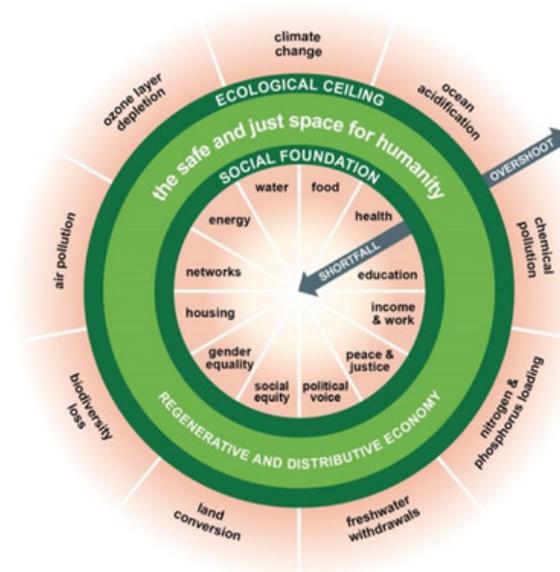
Alice is working on her PhD at the University of York, researching the social understanding and perception of Tiny House living.



Affordable housing shortages around the world have led many people to endorse innovative strategies to procure a home on a modest budget.

Public awareness of the global climate crisis and a growing sense of urgency regarding the need for lifestyle changes to ensure a reduction of personal, national, and global carbon-footprint encourages inventive housing solutions to take on sustainability as a foundational principle.

Tiny houses embody a potential technology that can strategically address both the problem of affordable housing in tandem with the perennial issue of environmental destruction and greenhouse gas emissions.



Kate Raworth: Doughnut Economics

Kate Raworth, author of Doughnut Economics asks “Humanity has transgressed at least three planetary boundaries – but where’s that pressure coming from? What’s the state of global inequality in using natural resources, within and between countries? And what are the implications for achieving equity in the Doughnut?”

OpHouse is about creating options and opportunities for people to build, within the boundaries of the planets resources, and within the needs of the community.

York is a city of human rights, pioneering vision and creative solutions. This project is part of a wider York Narrative that puts forward a dynamic vision of our city celebrating and supporting innovation across sectors. For centuries, housing in the city has been pushing boundaries and setting new standards. Now, community led housing in the city, led by YorSpace, is setting a precedent for a new way of living, and OpHouse is now playing a part in this story.

We are also working in line with the cities Cultural Strategy, creating ways to retain talent in the city of young people working in the creative industries. OpHouse aims to create a community of self builders who are themselves innovators, the project offers time and space for research and development of ideas, not just in architecture and the built environment but across a wider section of the population, inspiring, sharing and educating communities through events, workshops and creative interventions.



Minitopia Den Bosch, Netherlands



In January 2020, the average house price in York stands at c.£305k. When this is calculated for flats only, supposedly the most affordable type of property, this amount is c.£216k. Compare this to the average salary at minimum wage based on a 37.5 hour week; £13,546 per year. Not only is this amount £1,800 less than the living wage which reflects real costs of goods and services, but when compared to the average rental cost of properties in York of £1,200 per month it is revealed as insufficient to meet even the cost of accommodation alone. For young people who are more likely to be working for minimum wage, for single parents, those in receipt of benefits, and those who cannot work full time

due to unpaid but essential caring responsibilities, the situation in York is desperate regardless of whether they are looking to buy or to rent.

Sustainable inner-city development demands low-impact builds, lower ongoing resource consumption, and affordable housing expansion as a matter of urgency. Tiny houses can be constructed using low-emission materials whilst incorporating renewable energy supplies such as solar power. An estimated 40% of global greenhouse gas production is attributed to the construction industry; tiny houses, conversely, contribute towards our national and local goal of carbon-zero cities as well as providing

pioneering and radically affordable housing for York residents.

OpHouse sets out to explore ways in which we can use technologies being developed in our region and across the UK to provide affordable and environmentally responsible living that is led by communities. Over the past few years, due to demand (climate crisis/housing crisis) we have seen huge developments in technologies used in the building industries, and parallel to that, a growth of a network of community led housing projects, where skill sharing and grants are enabling people with shared desire, to take back control, and build.

BouwEXPO Almere





MUJI



KODA



Bothy Project

OpHouse is growing a community of people who want to self-build, but do not have the capital to do so at present. There is a growing demographic of pioneering house builders who are determined to live minimally, to reduce their carbon footprint and to change the way we own homes. This community will drive the first OpHouse project forward, designing and building their homes based on a 5 year temporary planning permission, using currently disused land rented to OpHouse on a low rent - this land may be owned by the local authority or other partners. OpHouse as a CIC will use funding from various sources to loan to each of the self-builders who will pay back the loan, plus running costs to the co-op

Tiny houses definitionally take up less space than conventional houses and are therefore less expensive to build and run over their lifetime and we would be looking to cap the size of the footprint of the house to 30sqm. Each Tiny House would be on an individual plot of c.100sqm and we are looking for a site to accommodate c.20 houses. By emulating existing successful models of tiny house communities being built around a shared green space for recreation and food growing as well as wildlife areas, a cascade of proven mental and physical health benefits can flow, as well as protecting and enhancing the biodiversity of the area.

The houses will be built on a varying scale of cost per sqm. Some of the

houses could be subsidised by suppliers in return for carrying out research/ post occupancy surveys following the build, some may be built using 'waste' or recycled materials. The concept is very much dependent on creativity and innovation in building, and although OpHouse is not a solution in itself to the housing crisis, it provides opportunity for piloting solutions that could be scaled up in the future. OpHouse would seek to work with universities and professionals in order to develop technologies and solutions at the forefront of building innovation in the UK.



Granby Workshop showroom at Tramway, Glasgow

OpHouse aims to create opportunities to develop skills, trades and crafts within the community. The project looks at creating a factory or fablab style community facing workshop to create a culture of making within the development itself.

Taking inspiration from the Granby Street workshops in Liverpool (Assemble), the We Can Make project at Knowle West Media Centre, and the design and make centre at Hooke Park, near Bridport (Architectural Association). OpHouse aims to become a centre for innovation and development of MMC and community building, empowering communities to build. The project also tackles the lack of creative work space in the city, and develops resilience within communities by creating time and space for ideas. The project is very much in line with the cities Cultural Strategy and wider council plan:

1. Well paid jobs and an inclusive economy
2. Creating Homes and World class infrastructure
3. A better start for children and young people
4. A greener and cleaner city
5. Getting around sustainably
6. Good health and wellbeing
7. Safe communities and culture for all

Sources

Architects Declare - <https://www.architectsdeclare.com>

Marmot Review - <http://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/fair-society-healthy-lives-the-marmot-review>

Architectural Association - <http://hookepark.aaschool.ac.uk>

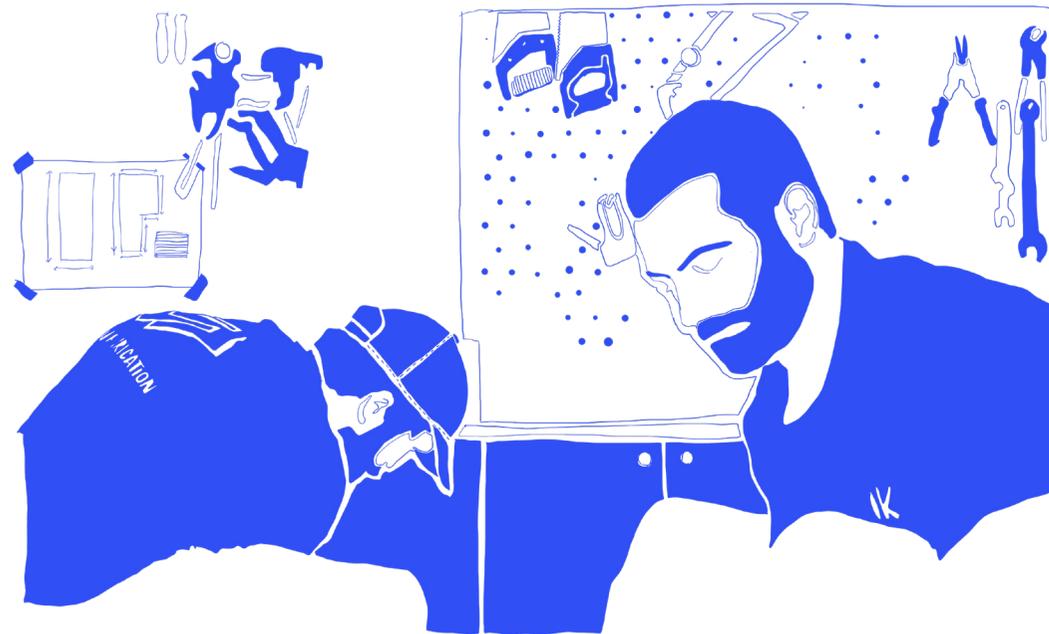
"We Can Make" in Bristol - <https://kwmc.org.uk/projects/wecanmake/>

Minitopia - <http://www.minitopia.eu>
Built In Common - www.builtincommon.org

Average House Price York, UK - <https://www.zoopla.co.uk/house-prices/york/>

UK minimum Wage - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/lpc-welcomes-acceptance-of-its-2019-minimum-wage-rate-recommendations>

Average York rental costs - https://www.home.co.uk/for_rent/york/current_rents?location=york



Blok Build Workshop, Hull