Living in the Past: Preservation, interpretation, and engagement, and the 19th – early 20th century home

Kirsten Jarrett
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- Investigating materiality of domestic life in industrial communities during the 19th – mid 20th century
- First stage: pilot – targeted samples within four Derby study areas
- Testing methods to facilitate residents of small housing to record the material traces of everyday activity left by earlier occupants
- Integrating other sources, e.g. demographic data, photographs, oral history, and family histories
Public and Community Fieldwork

- Basic standing building investigations
  - Primarily photographic recording; occasional measured surveys
  - House exteriors & outbuildings – especially WCs (‘Toilet Histories’); occasional interiors – preferably during renovation (‘DIY Archaeology’)

- Garden topsoil artefact surveys
  - Including demolished housing plots

- Surface artefact surveys
  - Public spaces: Demolished housing plots & ‘dumps’

Community workshops & exhibitions
Study Area 1: Allestree Village

Preliminary census analysis indicates employment of residents in local textile mills & agriculture

Extents of late Victorian settlement
Study Area 1: Allestree Village

Village includes a small number of 17th - 18th century houses. Most small dwellings: 19th century.

Some buildings
Demolished late 20th century
Nearby 18th century + Rubbish dump
Study Area 1: Allestree Village
18th – mid 20th Century Rubbish Tip
18th – mid 20th Century Rubbish Tip

Charcoal & clinker, as well as ceramics, glass, animal bone, leather, & occasional metal
18th – mid 20th Century Rubbish Tip
18th – mid 20th Century Rubbish Tip
Study Area 2: Little Chester

Demonstration Case study ‘No. 8’
Study Area 2: Little Chester

Speculatively built late C19 – early C20 terraced houses
Study Area 2: Little Chester

Local industries include:
- Railways
- Foundries
- Textile Mills

‘Chester Green’
Study Area 2: Little Chester

‘Chester Green’

Housing built in late 19th century by local industrialist for workers

Case Study ‘No. 8’

Some industrial buildings survive
'No. 8' Building investigations Test case – late 19th century
Discovered traces of early activity – despite extensive renovation: used evocatively in exploring diachronic changes in domestic environment & use of space
Inside cupboards
Ground Floor back room

Paint in scullery
Buildings depicted: similar to demolished local framework knitters’ cottages

Graffiti on external wall, near scullery door & kitchen window

Rear yard & garden

‘Peopling’ the past: Childhood & neighbourhood
Study Area 3: West End – ‘Vanished Community’
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19th century housing demolished during 1930s & 1960-70s ‘slum’ clearances

Replacement housing built on plots in 1970s by Local Authority

Late C19 / Early C20 terraced houses
Study Area 3: West End – ‘Vanished Community’

High density housing:
• many courts
• some ‘back-to-backs’
• some four room houses
• many two-room housing,
• several streets of late C19 – early C20 speculatively built six room houses

Industries mostly textile related:
Many tape mills & dye works
Study Area 3: West End – ‘Vanished Community’

Few surviving early – mid 19th century houses
Study Area 3: West End – ‘Vanished Community’

Surviving 19th – early 20th Century industrial buildings & pubs
Pre-construction excavations of Derby University Business Centre: site of demolished housing
Sites of demolished housing

Post-demolition made ground did not involve importation or removal of soil

Potential for artefacts associated with C19 housing to surface within modern gardens
Sites of demolished housing

Brief survey revealed 19th century ceramics

Former housing plots on recreation ground
Study Area 4: Friar Gate – Ashbourne Road

Exploring autoethnography as a stimulus to community participation
LIPCAP team member: 6th & last generation to inhabit street of ‘almshouses’, adjacent County Gaol – demolished during 1970s ‘urban improvement’. Extended family network nearby
Study Area 4: Friar Gate – Ashbourne Road

Above: County Gaol facade

Below: nearby housing & railway buildings
Study Area 4: Friar Gate – Ashbourne Road

Surviving mid 19th century dwellings: former social housing
Late 19th – early 20th century suburban small terraced housing: speculatively built after extension of tram-line, which provided transport to urban industries and commerce.
‘Lymehurst’
built 1925-31

Larger houses in or near study areas

Early features revealed, recorded & reinstated
Comparisons: ‘Lymehurst’

Stratigraphy of erosion to wall paint and floor suggests position and phase of furniture

Phases of fireplace modification, suggesting correlations with changing use of domestic space
Comparisons: ‘Lymehurst’

Marks on ‘Lounge’ floor indicating position of furniture: provoking questions surrounding changing use of domestic space

‘Lounge’ wall graffiti: evoking questions surrounding influence of wider changes upon local attitudes & behaviour
Early 20th century house used as ‘Scattered Home’ for children

Comparisons: Edwardian Children’s Home
Rails in children’s home (below) - to protect walls from damage by beds - comparable to examples in institutions, such as workhouses.

Southwell workhouse, Notts.
Industrial housing in other areas

Ashbourne, Derbys.
Industrial housing in other areas

Discovery of hidden spaces – popular stimulus for ‘historical imagination’!

Ashbourne, Derbys.

Walled-in scullery ‘copper’ alcove - discovered during building surveys
Industrial housing in other areas

Heanor, Derbys.

Photo by house owner
Industrial housing in other areas

Heanor, Derbys.

Photo by house owner
Visualising the Home Environment and domestic material culture

Historic Map overlays
Visualising the Home Environment and domestic material culture

3D reconstructions
Visualising the Home Environment and domestic material culture

Open source mapping to display discoveries
Handling Collection

Learning aids & oral history mnemonics
What is this house?

- Private dwelling
- Built late C18 by local industrialist Strutt for factory workers

Long Row, Belper
Derbys.
Care (& display) in the Community

Derwent Valley World Heritage Site Open Days

Historic Industrial Domestic Buildings

Who lives there / visits?
• Owner-occupier
• Visitors = neighbours & those / with family previously employed in local factories

Long Row, Belper
Derbys.
Care (& display) in the Community

Derwent Valley World Heritage Site Open Days

Historic Industrial Domestic Buildings

Why open to public?
• Initially to “get to know neighbours”
• Research by occupant and historians reveal local & wider historic value

Long Row, Belper Derbys.
Lymehurst ‘1930s House’
Now recruiting project volunteers

Living in the Past
Community Archaeology Project

Email: info@livinginthepast.org.uk  www.livinginthepast.org.uk
Twitter: @UrbArc20  Facebook: Lip Cap  Page: UrbArc20
http://www.flickr.com/photos/living-in-the-past/