Article

Negotiating Shared Lives: Territorialisation and Conviviality in an Urban Community Land Trust

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Abstract: Urban Community Land Trusts (CLTs) have been acclaimed for their politically transformative potential: de-commodifying land and providing permanently affordable housing under community control. Few studies include CLT residents and this paper features two case studies to help fill the gap. St Clements in East London, UK, and Citizens House, Southeast London, both created by London CLT, collectively have 34 households living in them. Unlike more geographically focused CLTs, London CLT provides governance, knowledge, and skills to support people across London to build the affordable housing they campaign for. The selection criteria prioritised the needs of those failed by the existing housing market, who had long-standing connections to the borough, and contributed to community life. London CLT hoped residents would have a transformational impact on the neighbourhood, spreading the ethos of community control. Using the conceptualisations of territorialisation and conviviality, new knowledge has been produced about residents' experience of negotiating shared lives. While residents are happy with their homes, and value the neighbourliness that comes from knowing others better, investing time and energy in more organised activity and decision making has been slow. The two spaces display both the affectivity and distancing associated with territorialisation and the 'rubbing along' and ambivalence of conviviality.

Keywords: Community Land Trust; territorialisation; conviviality; community; London CLT; St Clements; Citizens House

1. Introduction

"Community can be the warmly persuasive word to describe an existing set of relationships, or the warmly persuasive word to describe an alternative set of relationships. What is most important, perhaps, is that unlike all other terms of social organization (state, nation, society, etc.) it seems never to be used unfavourably, and never to be given any positive opposing or distinguishing term". (Williams 1985, p. 55, original emphasis)

Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are acclaimed for their politically transformative potential: fusing community-owned land, permanently affordable housing, and ideological commitment to community involvement (Davis 2020, 2022). Originating in the US Civil Rights movement, CLTs are proffered as vehicles for galvanising opposition to the property industry and its state allies, freeing land from speculators by promoting non-capitalist forms of ownership and giving dwellers control over their homes and neighbourhoods (Thompson 2015, 2020; Rowe et al. 2016; Williams 2018; DeFilippis et al. 2019). UK CLTs gained traction in the early 2000s (Hill et al. 2020; Moore and McKee 2012; Mullins and Moore 2018) amidst sharply rising house prices, declining social housing, and a burgeoning private rented sector (Lowe 2011). Recalling pre-industrial and pre-enclosure society and early 20th century garden cities, Diacon et al. (2005) claimed that CLTs redefined

the commons by capturing the land value and locking in future increases for perpetual community benefit. Early adopters were rural and coastal areas, where scant social housing, combined with retirement and second homeownership, jeopardised low-to-middle-income earners' ability to remain in places they considered home (Paterson and Dunn 2009; Aird 2009). Urban CLTs, concentrated initially in London and Liverpool, were credited with more radical ambition, their impetus coming from contrasting impacts of uneven urban development (Thompson 2015).

CLTs are "democratic, non-profit organisations that own and develop land for the benefit of the community" (CLT Network n.d.). 'Community' here is defined geographically, and while repeatedly mobilised to describe the process of obtaining, developing, and stewarding land, little attention has been paid to its meaning for CLT residents (Kruger et al. 2020). This paper begins to fill that empirical gap by considering London CLT's[1] two projects, St Clements in East London, UK, and Citizens House in Southeast London, viewed through the lenses of some of the 34 households living there.

In 2017, residents began moving into 23 properties gained as part of the affordable housing quota for a private sector redevelopment of St Clements: a former workhouse and psychiatric hospital in Mile End, in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (Bunce 2016). Nine percent of the 252-property development was a partial realisation of original intentions; nevertheless, they were the UK's first urban CLT homes, their price calculated to be affordable to leasehold buyers with median incomes. Leases require resales to use the same formula, ensuring the archetypal perpetual affordability inherent in CLT models (London CLT n.d.). At the time, property prices in Tower Hamlets were on average 12 times the annual income (ONS 2024). Housing inequality is exacerbated by the Borough's geography. Containing some of the country's most socially deprived neighbourhoods, its eastern and southern fringes are juxtaposed by international centres of capitalism: the City of London and Canary Wharf (Watt and Minton 2016). In 1981, a record 82% of Tower Hamlets' population lived in social housing, falling to 36% by 2021 (Watt and Minton 2016; ONS 2023). The average wait time for a three-bedroom social housing property is now seven years, even for the very highest priority applicants (Tower Hamlets Homeseekers 2024).

Applicants for St Clements needed to prove they could afford a CLT, but not open market, property, have at least five years' connection with the Borough through residence, work, family, or community participation, demonstrate an existing contribution to community life, and be supportive of London CLT's values (London CLT n.d.). The last two criteria had the lowest weighting in selection, but formed an important aspect of London CLT's spatial imaginary.

In 2023, Citizens House in Sydenham, London Borough of Lewisham, became London CLT's second project and first direct development. Sydenham, a location for wealthy 19th century surburbanisers, and later the middle-classes, also became renowned for 'corporation suburbia' (Crookston 2013), its early council estates built to garden city principles (Municipal Dreams 2017). Close to "South London's green lungs", Sydenham Woods (Chivers 2021, p. 6), Citizens House was built on the site of dilapidated garages on a council estate, itself surrounded by Victorian and Edwardian housing. The selection criteria and affordability calculation developed for St Clements was adopted for Citizens House, in another Borough experiencing housing pressures. Waiting times for two-bedroom social housing properties, even for statutorily overcrowded applicants, can be up to 10 years, while property prices were on average 12 times the incomes in 2023 (ONS 2024).

London CLT's mission statement is threefold: providing permanently affordable housing; creating homes through the involvement of local communities; and transforming neighbourhoods by creating well-designed physical spaces, encouraging community control, and integrating new developments with existing communities (London CLT n.d.). This paper focuses on the third ambition, exploring the experience of residents making a home in the context of London CLT's aim to transform communities. The next section briefly describes the emergence of UK CLTs, and how London CLT's spatial imaginary was shaped by its morphogenesis in the East End.

1.1. Background

UK CLTs emerged alongside the New Labour government's policy of devolution to communities and, following a 2006 National Demonstration Programme, gained legal status in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 (Aird 2009; Moore 2018). Political support continued under the Conservative–Liberal Democrat coalition following the 2010 election: CLTs finding favour with Prime Minister Cameron's 'Big Society' of community-based action, considered by many to be a smokescreen for austerity, state retrenchment, and swingeing welfare cuts (McKee 2015; Jarvis 2015; Studdert 2016).

Moore (2021) found rural CLTs reflecting members' desires to control speculative development, harmonise new housing with natural landscapes and the character of village life, while providing affordable housing for those sharing an emotional place attachment. The morphogenesis of urban schemes has been associated with distinct spatio-temporalities, grassroots activism, 'globally mobile ideas', and broader social and political ambition (Thompson 2015, 2020). Moore et al. (2018) found urban CLTs pursuing community-owned businesses, offering apprenticeships, volunteering opportunities, and encouraging greater citizen participation. In Liverpool, CLTs are built on the legacy of earlier co-ops built by their working-class residents (Thompson 2015, 2020), similar to US urban CLTs drawing on localised memories of the Civil Rights Movement and trade union organising (Rowe et al. 2016). Values and spatial imaginaries were formed from situated struggles against disinvestment, dilapidation, and gentrification. These 'protective' campaigns, Watt argues, are the "dominant approach to urban space…defending place/s from the coercive, avaricious actions of developers and their state allies" (Watt 2016, p. 12). For Thompson (2015), Liverpool's Granby Four Streets CLT was animated by 'everyday acts of commoning', distinguished from 'community' by its interplay between physical space and cooperative, relational, place-based social practices engendering reappropriation and decommodification, removing the space from the control of market forces.

> "Whereas community suggests members are bound together by a shared identity or homogenous culture, commons transcends identitarian concerns and points towards common interests in owning, governing and maintaining a set of shared resources". (Thompson 2020, p. 12)

The origins of London CLT which, in addition to St Clements and Citizens House, has plans for developments in several other locations in the capital, were, like other urban CLTs, firmly rooted in place. However, rather than defending specific 'emplaced' communities, they looked to create housing for those failed by the existing market. They are part of a long history of East End civil society combining philanthropy, social work, and radical community organising, infused throughout with religious faith (Back et al. 2009). Civil society institutions, dominated initially by faith organisations, formed The East London Communities Organisation (TELCO) in the late 1990s, the founding branch of the community-organising charity Citizens UK (Warren 2009). Along with low wages, TELCO's 'community conversations' identified housing as the primary local concern, with both becoming initial campaigning priorities. There is also a deep history of grassroots organising around access to affordable housing and against displacement in the East End. The Communist Party led rent strikes in the 1930s and squatting by Bengali residents in the 1970s both involved multi-faith and secular community organising (Glynn 2005), while more recent battles have been fought against state-led regeneration, the financialisaton of social housing, and gentrification (Watt and Minton 2016).

Gaining influence, TELCO supported the London 2012 Olympic bid on the condition of it being a Living-Wage Games and leaving a legacy of affordable CLT homes (Bunce 2016; Smith 2020). When the Olympic Delivery Authority reneged on the deal, attention switched to St Clements hospital. Closed since 2006, and owned by the Greater London Authority, the site was put out to tender, and though London CLT's bid lost to a large developer, further lobbying saw an agreement brokered for the 23 CLT homes.

Undertaking research before St Clements was occupied, Bunce (2016) also conceptualised TELCO's campaign, involving hundreds of East End residents in organised actions as commoning. Despite concessions to the state and private enterprise, they produced a "discursive and material commons" (Bunce 2016, p. 136). London CLT had demonstrated that even in a neoliberal and gentrified space, community ownership and management could thrive.

The commons is a useful conceptualisation of community-led housing (CLH), the collective term used in the UK to describe a range of housing typologies providing alternatives to the mainstream market and state forms (Mullins and Moore 2018). Arbell (2023) describes the confluence between the subjectivities, vision, and practice of commoners. Similarly, distinguishing between minimalist approaches which restrict collaboration for the provision of affordable housing and maximalist approaches extending to collective living are helpful for comparing schemes, as well as identifying different attitudes within (Arbell et al. 2020; Arbell 2023). Whether commoning remains the most appropriate concept for London CLT's developments though is debatable. Firstly, the vision came, for the large part, not from residents themselves, but a conception of space by CLT members initiating the development, albeit with community consultation. Secondly, existing community involvement and broadly supporting the CLT is not necessarily the same as having a commoner's subjectivity.

Thirdly, Thompson (2020) argues that CLTs can, at best, only be proxies for a housing commons: even co-operatively owned property is property, an anathema to the idea of a commons. London CLT's model is essentially one of private ownership, albeit affordable ownership with price controls restricting its exchange value. DeFilippis et al. (2019) argue that even CLT ownership that challenges market domination can help reinforce the hegemony of private homeownership. Similarly, Rowe et al. (2016) argue that schemes confronting powerful developer interests may simultaneously encourage petite-bourgeoise attitudes to property.

US studies of existing housing organisations adopting the CLT model to increase the supply of affordable housing have also brought concerns about the diminution of radical community control principles (Williams 2018; DeFilippis et al. 2019). Kruger et al. (2020, p. 39), meanwhile, found little evidence of a sense of community amongst Minnesota CLT homeowners, with bonds "too thin to be particularly meaningful in their lives or their self-definitions". While allowing for Arbell's (2023) qualification that commoning attempts must be contextualised by the domination of housing by neoliberal economics, this paper takes a different conceptual approach.

Territorialisation (Brighenti 2010; Brighenti and Kärrholm 2018, 2020) is used as a lens through which to consider St Clements and Citizens House as lived spaces. While often associated with spatial theories, territory "is not defined by space, rather it defines spaces through patterns of relations", allowing for a focus on the associations residents have with each other and their physical space (Brighenti 2010, p. 57). Territory's components include spreading feelings and affects, creating atmospheres which, while perceptible, "often escape univocal categorizations" (Brighenti and Kärrholm 2020, p. 47). Attempts to name such atmospheres often resort to 'community', a problematic concept demonstrated by this paper's epigraph. Adding to reconceptualisations of community that began with Walkerdine and Studdert (2012), this paper uses conviviality, both to complement territoriality in describing residents' negotiation of the challenges of living shared lives (e.g., Wise and Noble 2016) and as an outcome of urban encounters (Nowicka 2019).

1.2. Territoriology

Territoriology (Brighenti 2010; Brighenti and Kärrholm 2018, 2020) draws attention to everyday inter-relations between people and their social and material spaces, providing descriptive terms for subsequent actions, responses, and outcomes of encounters. Territories are neither 'objects' nor already delineated spaces, but are co-constituted by relationships and borders.

> "Relations produce boundaries, boundaries produce relations, and the repetition
> of these relations and boundaries produces territories". (Brighenti and Kärrholm
> 2020, p. 100)

Territories are *affective*, facilitating the sharing and proliferation of emotions, feelings, habits, and attitudes while involving the *management of critical distances* to regulate interactions, balancing connectedness with privacy (Brighenti and Kärrholm 2020). Territories are *expressive*, producing signs and symbols to convey messages within and beyond borders, *functional* to manage relations, and both *inclusive* and *exclusive. Animistic moments* occur when actants are gathered and emerge as a collective entity: "space is set into play, and different aspects of life are at stake" (Brighenti and Kärrholm 2020, p. 7).

Territorialisation occurs between and within households. "Ecological and spiritual factors are intermingled" by domestication and the familiar blends with the unfamiliar (Brighenti and Kärrholm 2020). Similarly, Soaita and McKee (2019) describe home as an *assemblage* of material, social, and emotional components: the co-constitution of territory by a unique household and a unique house. Domestic territorialisation has a temporal aspect, through the quantity and quality of time spent there, of *frequentation* (Brighenti and Kärrholm 2020).

1.3. Conviviality

CLTs were not the only mobilisation of 'community' across political and policy agendas in the early 2000s. However, reviewing the academic and policy literature, Walkerdine and Studdert (2012, p. 2) found

> "a paucity of concepts. . .[that] make community into a 'spray-on term', in which
> there is little reference to concepts but in which implicit meanings emphasize the
> significance of community as an object and downplay the importance of social
> relations and experience".

Subsequent conceptualisations begin with *sociality*, the "totality of interaction with other people in everyday life" (Studdert 2016, p. 24). It is from these more immediate relationships that more permanent forms can develop. A key measure for whether lived spaces match the conception of London CLT is whether sociality translates into effective forms for the organisation of their expressive and functional endeavours.

One outcome of attempts to reconceptualise community has been the reappearance of *conviviality*. Initially surfacing in discussions of race, multi-culture, and hyper-diversity (Gilroy 2004, 2006;; Back 2009; Vertovec 2013), conviviality has been adopted to analyse relations across social class (Edensor and Millington 2009), gender (Morawska 2014), and between neighbours (Wise and Velayutham 2014). Commonly associated with lively, happy cordiality, its academic use relies on its etymology of 'with' and 'living', or in its Spanish form, *convivencia,* 'shared life': "a sense of 'rubbing along' [which] includes not just 'happy togetherness' but negotiation, friction and sometimes conflict" (Wise and Noble 2016, p. 425). Thrift (2005, p. 145) contends that even prosaic, quotidian, often fleeting encounters can spread affects with the potential to reset urban politics and restructure cities around "intimacy, kindness and compassion". Conviviality has been associated with how space is designed and organised to create optimum, affective environments (Nowicka and Vertovec 2014). Amin (2008) links it with the "condition of 'situated multiplicity'", borrowing from Massey (2005), the 'throwntogetherness' of "bodies, mass and matter, and of many uses and needs in a shared physical space" (Amin 2008, p. 8). However, the design can only create the opportunity.

> "Conviviality is about potentiality and location: about creating local spaces which
> offer a possibility for something to come to exist while remembering that the
> expected might not occur". (Nowicka and Vertovec 2014, p. 347)

2. Materials and Methods

St Clements and Citizens House, London CLT's two sites with residents in situ, provided the case studies for one of the authors' PhD theses. When research began in June 2021, only St Clements was complete and occupied, with builders having recently started on the site that would become Citizens House. London CLT's staff member initially had concerns about encouraging resident involvement due to 'research fatigue'. These novel schemes attract considerable attention, with several residents engaging with the media and hosting site visits. Consultants were helping to establish a Resident Management Company (RMC) at the time while, like the rest of the country, residents were dealing with the uncertainties of COVID-19 restrictions.

After being invited to London CLT's AGM in September 2021, face-to-face contact provided opportunities to engage with residents directly, relieving the need for the staff member to act as the intermediary. Two residents offered a tour of St Clements, a first visit to the site which sits between noisy, bustling traffic on Mile End Rd and the peaceful, "tangled nature reserve of Tower Hamlets Cemetery" (Sinclair 2018, p. 58). Enclosed by the walls and porticoes of its former life, St Clements has the feel of an enclave.

Mindful of intruding, the methodology initially relied on meeting people at organised events with the hope of onward introductions. Messages went on St Clements' social media channels and while data protection prevented London CLT providing contact details, later in the study, they encouraged involvement directly. Between September 2021 and October 2023, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 14 residents from 10 households, in homes, local cafes, or online during Covid-19 restrictions. Research also included participant observations of shadow RMC meetings and London-wide CLT events. Interviews were also undertaken with Board Members past and present and other staff members.

Unfortunately, due to their absence from meetings and events, with no response to social media messages, or later direct encouragement, the researcher was unable to meet with any of the Bengali households, around a third of St Clements' CLT residents. The findings, therefore, remain partial.

Citizens House research began in October 2021, with observation of information events for potential buyers, followed by online selection interviews, and early meetings involving successful applicants. Between June 2022 and March 2023, interviews were undertaken with nine of the 11 households before, or as they moved in, again, both in-person and online. Second interviews were conducted six to nine months later with the same households. Citizens House research has more successfully reflected the diversity of its residents than St Clements, who again faced a barrage of media exposure and interest.

The research data were subjected to "thematic analysis…a foundational method for qualitative analysis" (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 78). The researcher preferred manual systems that "maintain a closeness to the interview data", helping to discern "themes in an organic manner" (Mattimoe et al. 2021, p. 11). The system chosen was an amalgam of "meaning condensation" (Kvale 2007) and "systematic text condensation" (Malterud 2012), systems with a "responsible level of methodological rigour" (Malterud 2012, p. 795) while retaining interviewees' "rich and nuanced descriptions" (Kvale 2007, p. 8).

Data were analysed by reading interview transcripts to build an overall picture, before re-reading and separating the text into meaning units: "a text fragment containing some information about the research question" (Malterud 2012, p. 797). Both the meaning units and the whole interview were separately condensed, or summarised, from the perspective of the interviewee before themes were developed. The themes inevitably reflected the shared experience, over the same time frames and in distinct stages, residents had gone through: their previous housing need and its impact; connection with the neighbourhood; the importance of remaining in the area; how the connection to London CLT was made; experience of the selection and allocation process; the period between selection and moving in; moving and settling in; the difference the move has made; involvement in the RMC, community events, and London CLT; what residents have found most important about living in their new home; and how things may develop in the future. Themes and codes, the

more individual responses to similar events, were put onto a spreadsheet and synthesised, summarising common aspects while taking care not to reduce the importance of individual experiences and opinions.

The names of all participants in this paper have been replaced by pseudonyms.

3. Results

This section focuses on how the lived space experienced by residents compares with London CLT's conception. It begins, in 3.1, by looking further at the spatial imaginary's development and how each site afforded it different opportunities. Sections 3.2–3.5 outline how the themes that are relevant to this paper: pre-occupation community building, moving and settling in, connecting with other residents, and involvement in the functional and expressive aspect of community life unfolded at St Clements and Citizens House, respectively.

3.1. London CLT's Spatial Imaginary

While Liverpool's self-built co-ops left "cultural sediments and political seeds" for future CLT activists to revitalise (Thompson 2020, p. 95), so TELCO and London CLT trod a path laid by the East End's social and political history. Nineteenth-century alliances were built there between Christian notions of self-help, charity, and philanthropy and political calls for social justice (Ackroyd 2001; Back et al. 2009). TELCO's decision to take on housing development themselves, rather than simply campaign for better housing, was also influenced through connections with US CLTs via community organisers who supported TELCO's growth. Later, those advising London CLT on its housing model brought long histories of involvement in CLH, drawing on London schemes such as the Coin Street co-ops on London's Southbank and Walterton and Elgin Community Homes in North Westminster. It was, however, the history and potential of multi-faith and secular community organising that led to the East End being chosen as the base for a new 21st century organisation, blending US style community organising with the autochthonous heritage of the East End (Warren 2009): a conjunction of the 'social' and 'political' left (Sennett 2013); the community organising and welfarist traditions (Balazard 2011; Wills 2012).

Back et al. (2009, p. 9) contend, of Tower Hamlets, that "it is not possible to describe a civil society that has been, at any point in the last 200 years, in any meaningful sense universally secular". It was a Quaker, Neil Jameson, who led the formation of an alliance of local faith institutions, along with educational establishments, to form The East London Communities Organisation (TELCO) in the late 1990s, the founding branch of the community organising charity Citizens UK (Warren 2009).

St Clements

London CLT had limited input on the design and build of St Clements, though they insisted the architects undertake a well-attended community planning exercise. The primary manifestation of the spatial imaginary was the idea that residents selected with a history of community service and contribution would have an affective relationship with others, spreading the attitude throughout St Clements and beyond. A former London CLT Chair explained how many of those moving to St Clements were important contributors to the local community, making them ideal candidates to help transform the neighbourhood through a culture of sustained community action. All those moving to St Clements, he said, were,

> "either in a terrible state of housing, in temporary housing, or in housing which was much too small for the size of the family that they had, all of them doing really important jobs in the community. And who loved the work they were doing, didn't want to leave". (Former London CLT Chair)

They were to become,

> "a sort of animating group. . .become the sort of movers and shakers to help other people to integrate and feel part of the community there. . .one of the things that

we did with the London CLT eligibility criteria was to say, not only do you have to have the right finance, not only do you have to be in unfit housing, not only do you have to be part of Tower Hamlets community for five years . . .do you have any involvement in the community yourself?. . . that counted, that sort of community-mindedness we thought. . .trying to gauge whether the people would be a fit with what we were trying to do in the longer term, which was to develop community". (Former London CLT Chair)

There were other opinions; another former London CLT chair said he wanted "people to buy our homes because it was just the best financial decision they could make for their families. . .I don't want them to have to like, buy into it culturally". However, the selection criteria, and the framing of London CLT's mission and impact has continued to centre the importance of community contributions and a wider social impact.

Citizens House

TELCO's success gave rise to other London Citizens branches and when Lewisham Citizens undertook a listening exercise, housing was again a top local priority. After a lengthy campaign beginning in 2014, Lewisham Citizens supported by London CLT were offered a set of dilapidated council garages. This time, London CLT developed the 11 flats, all for CLT residents, themselves, with architects appointed to facilitate the community-led design. The spatial imaginary of active, connected, affective residents could now be expressed in and facilitated by the design. Several features were designed to afford maximum connectedness, including a zigzag setting of balconies allowing residents to talk to each other while overlooking a new public space, created by opening an existing route through the estate (London CLT 2023). Influenced partly by pre-occupation activities at St Clements, assumptions were made about the future residents' territorialisation. The architect explained:

"everyone in there is going to. . .really know each other. . .move at the same time, all have gone through a very rigorous allocations process. . .They'll have like lunches and things, and they'll have WhatsApp groups from day one. . .We had to push for, like extra wide walkways at the back so that people could sit and chat. . .You can design in like looseness that people would be up for. . .front gardens on the ground, which are next to a public space and next to a carpark, essentially, we've designed with no boundary at the front garden. . .to create a variety of levels of privacy and like interaction. . .We had places where we felt like a window was a bit close to a walkway, but then we thought, well, they're going to know everyone anyway, you know, there's a different attitude to it. . .you're not having to guess. . .how private people might want to be". (Architect, Citizens House)

While St Clements is firmly rooted in the place-based history of the East End, Citizens House has a different relationship to Lewisham. Despite Lewisham's reputation for radical housing alternatives—the first purpose-built housing co-operative (Hands 2016) and the self-build scheme of the German architect Walter Segal (Ward 1985)—Citizens House is less a product of place-based history than of ideas spread horizontally across geographies, via 'mimetic' networks of activists (Chatterton 2016) in branches of London Citizens.

TELCO, London CLT, and then Lewisham Citizens initiated the territorialisations of St Clements and Citizens House. Drawing on Lefebvre (1991, 2013), Brighenti and Kärrholm (2018) describe how intense investments of energy in a set of beliefs can incite rhythms, in turn producing the relationships to constitute territories, enabling the affective spread of attitudes. TELCO and Lewisham Citizens attracted an investment of time and energy in regular campaigning activity and wanted those rhythms to continue. The question was whether applicants were prepared to invest time and energy in the credo once housed, and so between allocation and moving in, they were gathered for a series of community-building events.

3.2. Pre-Occupancy Community Building

At St Clements, meals, coffee mornings, London CLT AGMs, and a campaign for community space all provided animistic moments (Brighenti and Kärrholm 2020), the affective transfer of feelings, attitudes, and capacity amongst the individuals intended to engender their emergence as a collective. Most residents welcomed the opportunity.

> "From the moment we started going to information evenings, to starting to apply, we started to build relationships". (Alice, St Clements)

The events gave everyone a chance to form bonds that would be strengthened after moving in.

> "They were brilliant, because when we moved, we knew everyone...I felt like I moved in with my friends really...people I knew and I trusted, and I had quite good relationship with so, it's been amazing...and it continues". (Joanna, St Clements)

Not everyone appreciated the organised attempts at spreading positive moods. Nathalie, a resident London CLT board member, was less enthusiastic, feeling a disconnect between establishing the functional elements, such as securing mortgage offers from lenders unfamiliar with CLTs, and imposed expressions of community.

> "It was a bit infantilising, some of the efforts to bring us together in very wholesome, supervised ways... I found it hard to sort of be on the board side...and then being in the sort of, you know, happy summer camp world...we're grownups...we all knew there was something special about, you know, this ambition of living in a place and shaping that place and contributing more than you might if you're just moving anywhere...we didn't need to be told how that should manifest itself, we could have done that ourselves". (Nathalie, St Clements)

Nathalie exposes the difference between 'community' imagined as a 'thing', developed through intervention, and as sociality, engendered by the 'being-ness together' of everyday interactions (Studdert 2016). There were variations in how central community was to applicants' territorial imagination. For Leon, it was an afterthought, his initial interest being "the hope of having a place... I don't think we were, from the beginning, we were very sure how it even works". Sophia said the CLT fitted with her political outlook, while for Gabriel, obtaining the "space that we wanted" was the primary concern, but he appreciated being "part of a ...bigger project", where "the community and everyone gets together".

While having good neighbours to get along with was important, housing need rather than creating an 'intentional community', as with other forms of CLH, was the primary motivation. Previous housing circumstances such as overcrowding, insecurity, poor quality conditions, and being unable to leave the parental home illustrate that while the greatest impact of the housing crisis is on the least well-off, in London at least, it increasingly affects those with higher incomes (Watt and Minton 2016).

Citizens House

Most Citizens House residents initially met at an event to choose kitchen worktop finishes and tiles. True to the London Citizens community organising style adopted by London CLT, it was followed by a 'getting to know each other' exercise. Olivia, describing herself as socially very uncomfortable, said it,

> "was kind of my nightmare because it was sitting in a circle and then it was like, okay, everyone turn to the person next to you...find out something about them, and then introduce them to the rest of the group...which was quite stressful, but it was fine. And I did it. And yeah, it's been really nice to be familiar with all those people now and know who's moving in". (Olivia, Citizens House)

For Lynette the encounter answered questions about who she would be sharing her space with, whether this was an ideological project rather than a more prosaic search for somewhere affordable to live.

> "I was kind of thinking, what is everyone gonna be like? Are they gonna be super young, super old. . .have really interesting ideas, be really outlandish. . .they're just really ordinary, you wouldn't spot them in a crowd sort of people". (Lynette, Citizens House)

At another in-person gathering, prospective residents discussed their hopes and fears, identifying three territorial boundaries: the domestic, the environment of Citizens House, and the wider estate. They hoped the flats would become homes and that they would get to know each other: understanding each other's diverse needs and capacities, learn to manage conflict, and build genuine relationships. Things were less certain when considering crossing the boundary with existing residents: what their exact role would be, how to relate to others, and what *they* might want from connecting. There was talk of holding a barbecue in the community space and inviting the neighbours surrounding Citizens House. Amongst the next steps, each resident would meet one other for coffee and a WhatsApp group would be set up. The intentions and apprehension were summed up by Lynette:

> "a real fear is that we move in and not do anything, because that would be a massive shame. . .That'd be a missed opportunity to kind of get caught up in the busyness of everything and not seize the day". (Lynette, Citizens House)

Other pre-occupation gatherings were all online, lacking the energy and rhythm of the in-person conversation, while the planned one-to-one coffee meetings did not happen. Sam reflected,

> "I was one of the ones who's like, hey, let's actually keep in touch with my neighbours and so on. But my work has just been absurd. So I've kind of put it on the backburner, but I'm gonna try and pick it up again". (Sam, Citizens House)

Connor had little enthusiasm for the community aspect but, given his flat was a 'bargain', said he was willing to play his part. After instigating a discussion about parking, he reflected that,

> "the community part is hard, not because I'm afraid to give, but because some people just don't do that. Some people respond slow, lacklustre, for various reasons. And like I'm not the kind of person likes chasing". (Connor, Citizens House)

3.3. Moving and Settling in

St Clements

Alice and Martin's move into their new home was accompanied by expressions of both the domestic and communal, as keys and a campaign lemon tree were handed over in a ceremony attended by TELCO's founder,

> "Oranges and Lemons the bells of St. Clements. So they made it that old East London cockney rhyme into a symbol to say 'Boris Johnson here is a lemon tree and an orange tree, this is a symbol. You will give that back to us when the site is delivered. . .Neil and Jean asked if we wanted to be the guardians of that lemon tree. . .a lovely gesture and again brought it home. . .this has been blood, sweat, and tears. . .not just any old housing chain". (Martin, St Clements)

For Brighenti and Kärrholm (2020, pp. 114–15), domestic "expressions are always singular and unique", creating territories with distinct moods and feelings.

> "[Home] borrows its strength and stability from territorial associations to other homes as well as appropriations made by other parts of the family. . .neighbors, friends, and so on. . .home is always a complex territorial conglomerate".

Alice and Martin's assemblage engrained a territorial association with TELCO's credo of active citizenship, while Lisa's were replete with memories of the East End council estates she grew up on, a sense of community she wanted to recreate, partly by inviting neighbours into her home. To complete her assemblage, Lisa "had to buy a disco ball—that was just like part of what I needed [laughs]". Opening her home 'virtually' during the Covid-19 lockdown, and with little furniture at that point, Lisa's domestic territorialisation was especially 'singular and unique'.

> "I just used to skate around, on my skates in here...it was just me that was locked down. So I kind of reached out and just made this little group, just the 'sourdough starters'...just to kind of get to know people in a way". (Lisa, St Clements)

Brighenti and Kärrholm (2020) describe the spatio-temporal establishment of domestic territory through frequentation as appropriating the space, spending time, and establishing the rhythms of home while simultaneously assembling the material, social, and emotional aspects (see also Soaita and McKee 2019).

St Clements interviewees were overwhelmingly positive about it as a place to live. Nathalie described the material, social, and emotional assemblage constituting her home, revealing the way her territorial associations prolong into the surrounding green spaces.

> "It utterly transformed our life. And although these problems, such as they are, they are a bit all-consuming at times...how the resident management company will, will run and the kind of huge responsibilities that will have to be taken on...we have our own home, which is big enough, in the place that we set down roots 20 years ago...Cemetery Park down there, green space over there, the canal there, you know, the schools that, the friends, the neighbours...that's still there every day". (Natalie, St Clements)

Nathalie identified problems that were repeated in most interviews: conducted seven years after construction began, builders remained on site. A combination of COVID-19-related delays and complexities in refurbishing listed buildings were believed to be the cause. Scaffolding, protective sheeting, and hoardings gave a sense of permanent impermanence, while lifts and door-entry systems were regularly out-of-order. Bins were considered unfit for purpose, and many said service charges were high. Despite this, the positives outweigh negatives and there is relief from the poor housing conditions previously experienced.

Citizens House

Citizens House residents reflected on their experience six-to-nine months after moving in. Most were positive about the benefits the move had brought, with security and stability most cited, along with the sense of freedom and independence. Lynette said that Citizens House feels very safe, partly because residents had the chance to get to know each other before moving in.

> "there's a lot of things that I think now we probably all take for granted...there is that sense of community...it's kind of what I knew growing up...security with my neighbours, so it's nice to have that again". (Lynette, Citizens House)

Several Citizens House residents had moved out of their family homes for the first time, some in their thirties. For Olivia, suffering with social anxiety, the move has been especially meaningful.

> "I love it. It's my favourite thing...I don't think I'd realised how stressed I was all the time, just like socially drained...now that I've got my own space, I'll have, like, friends around to visit me, which is really nice". (Olivia, Citizens House)

3.4. Interacting with Other CLT Residents

St Clements' spatial configuration is an important determinant of connectedness and shared lives. CLT homes are 'pepper potted', spread out amongst several of the newly

built blocks, rather than sited all together. However, five ground floor maisonettes in an L-shaped block are all inhabited by CLT residents. Each has a small private patio, enclosed by a low-rise metal fence, looking onto a patch of grass. Proximity affords casual, friendly sociality and an affective space enabling the spread of neighbourly, supportive feelings and attitudes.

> "we are on same level. . .there's a backyard, where the kids play. So, we meet, and we speak. . .it's quite communal actually. . .you can just go out and have a drink or coffee and invite friends, or then you see your neighbours, the kids. . . they'll be out playing, so that will be our communal space". (Gabriel, St Clements)

Thrift (2005, p. 145) refers to "lighter touch forms of sociality", or gatherings, as less intense arrangements than formalised attempts to build 'social capital' or 'transformative communities'. The green space has been appropriated and territorialised by the five families, with each installing a method for scaling the fence: a bench, steps, or a chair on either side. The territory is co-constituted, as Brighenti and Kärrholm (2020) suggest, by the relations between neighbours, and the boundaries established by where relationships take place. The territory is not a space predetermined for sociality, but has been established by the embodied energy of movement, the space of home prolonging into its immediate surroundings, aided by frequentation. As well as being affective–expressive, Sophia noted how relationships had functional aspects,

> "you share same houses, same sizes, same issues, the bills are similar. So then it immediately starts creating a sense of solidarity".

Casual encounters morph into more organised forms, providing experiments in new ways of living alongside one another (Thrift 2005), finding better ways to navigate the here and now, making the best of the 'throwntogetherness' that defines space (Massey 2005). If the rhythms required to territorialise St Clements, in the transformational way London CLT envisaged, require a highly intensive investment of energy, this lighter touch effort may fall short, at least in the short-term. Gatherings though, argues Thrift (2005, p. 144), are not apolitical, they

> "privilege a little more expectation of involvement which do not however try to go over the affective top. . .these are attempts to foster an expectation of civility which does not try to set its hopes too high. . .the 'goal' is to construct counterpublics that are based on a certain conviviality. . .".

Elsewhere at St Clements, Martin said he could not "leave the house without talking to at least two other residents", while Darren spoke about community being a "quite practical, low level, everyday thing that makes life a little bit nicer and easier. . .". Territory also involves the management of distances though (Brighenti 2010). Lisa, conscious of her tendency to over-commit in her enthusiasm for being outgoing, sometimes needs to "back away", wary also of relationships made too quickly:

> "I prefer to stand back a while before I jump in. . .it just gives me time to kind of work out whether people are being genuine or not. . .there's an element. . .that are very religious and are very much, 'you need to come to my church'. . .so it was a good kind of lesson in how to be really diplomatic, but very, very strong as well about actually, you need to back off at this point". (Lisa, St Clements)

For Massey (2005, p. 41), "the throwntogetherness of place demands negotiation" and considering others' personal space is essential, while respect is a "territorial device, insofar as it is both expressive-affective and functional to distance management" (Brighenti 2010, p. 68).

Citizens House

Pre-occupancy community building at Citizens House was less extensive than that described at St Clements, more functional, and mostly online, but most felt the opportunity to get to know each other helped them feel connected, enabling a supportive atmosphere.

"There was no sort of awkwardness at the beginning. . .you instantly are saying hi to people that you've, you already know, and you're already really familiar with. Everyone's really helpful". (Olivia, Citizens House)

Moving in around the same time, all first-time homeowners in a new build, residents relied on each other for information about their home's mechanisms and idiosyncrasies, with WhatsApp being the primary communication tool.

"When you need something, you need information for something, it's always someone who has go first through the similar problem. . .they can. . .facilitate the information that you need to solve the problem". (Dominic, Citizens House)

When residents have asked for help, they have found it forthcoming, sometimes being able to return the favour. Dominic though also notes variation in how people choose to relate to each other and manage distances. He finds his fellow residents

"really considerate and really open. I have to request twice help to move uh stuff around the house, heavy stuff and got help from different neighbours. A few times I was asked to help people. . .OK, not everyone is that open, but everybody will be open enough to be friendly and polite". (Dominic, Citizens House)

Connor, however, perceived an imbalance in contribution and, despite his initial misgivings, feels he has shown a commitment others lack.

"I'm one of the people who communicate the most. . .Someone had low [water] pressure and didn't really understand what was going on, and someone taught me, so I taught them, and I went into painful detail in the group chat. . .where there's some people who never helped, ever and only speak in the chat when they're having problems". (Connor, Citizens House)

Residents had seen less of each other than expected, either informally or in organised ways, Jacob describing community life as a "slow burn". Some reported regular impromptu meetings and others very few. When they do happen though, most find people are pleasant and signal future intent, even if it is not followed up:

"Some of us see each other just outside the front door sort of thing. . .there's always a conversation, there's always stuff to talk about. There's always, 'we really need to catch up'. . . There's a lot of like, this sense of camaraderie when we see each other on the street, you know?". (Lynette, Citizens House)

While some appreciate the wider landings for the additional space they give, Patrick said, "I still hardly see people around", while Eliza said,

"the wider landings are nice [but] there are only 11 of us. . .it's not often that you pass. . . maybe when I get down to the bottom, sometimes somebody's getting their post in, or somebody might be doing something in their garden. . . I'd be like hey!". (Eliza, Citizens House)

Sam is one of those on the ground floor who is very visible in his garden. He agrees that people have not been as social as he thought they might, but still his experience differs from other places he has lived.

"I feel a lot more comfortable when I just bump into people and just catching up. And there's a real neighbourly aspect to here, that's just actually quite pleasant".

Contrary to architects' expectations about residents expecting less privacy though, Sam covered his large window at the front of the building, not liking the exposure.

"It will never be a window you look through because that's just not workable. It felt weird when it was like that". (Sam, Citizens House)

In terms of other features designed for connectedness, several residents said that in summer they had seen others on their balconies which had helped them to connect:

"I always see the flat above and to the left. They would always have their flowers out...like watering whenever I see them. And I'm sitting out there, they're like, 'hi, how are you?' So yeah, like little chitter chatter here and there". (Nadia, Citizens House)

The area in front of the building designed for community events and casual socialisation remains unused, despite one resident putting chairs out as encouragement. Lynette felt the nature of people selected, with busy city lives, often in public-facing work, and making community contributions leaves little time for connecting with their immediate neighbours. Eliza thought the group lacked an 'orchestrator', while Sam senses diverse personalities, acknowledging his own gap between intention and practice.

"It's just the clash of cultures between different people in a community...Like who's quite laissez faire, who is quite laid back, and who is quite kind of like, no, no, we've got to be organised. I think I'm kind of a horrible combination of—wants to be quite organised, but hits, hits a point and runs out of energy". (Sam, Citizens House)

Though the design of the building, the drawing of boundaries, and the organised gatherings have provided affordances for higher levels of sociality, as discussed in part one, "the expected might not occur" (Nowicka and Vertovec 2014, p. 347). Wise and Velayutham (2014) argue that spatial arrangements are not always enough, with conviviality also requiring the presence of 'transversal enablers', who have the ability and time to build trust within and across boundaries.

3.5. The Functional and Expressive Components

St Clements

Functional and expressive aspects of territory for St Clements residents include the RMC, picnics, and annual St Clements day celebrations, all contributing to affectivity–distancing and inclusion–exclusion. Consultants supporting the RMC reported an initial predominance of white, male, private (i.e., not CLT) leaseholders (Firth and Lee Page Associates 2021). Social housing tenants were largely absent, there were concerns about disparity with the estate's demographics, and potential for perceptions of 'them and us' exclusion. Nancy noticed comments about social housing tenants on St Clements social media groups making 'knowing' assumptions about un-neighbourly behaviour:

"instances of what I would call snobbery from the private residents...when there are problems with people dumping rubbish by the bins, there's sometimes an insinuation that 'we know who that's by' kind of thing. We don't actually". (Nancy, St Clements)

Nancy distanced herself from the RMC after challenging 'private' leaseholders advocating for St Clements to become a gated community.

"I was at some of the meetings where they had the consultants come in and talk about it. I think I probably got into an argument with someone about the gated community and thought, I'm not coming here every week to argue with people and that was it". (Nancy, St Clements)

Nathalie thought the diversity of expectations from different tenures may mitigate against residents successfully working together. Some 'private' leaseholders have let their properties; Nathalie says their tenants have "no idea what they're moving into".

"Everyone's coming with very different expectations of what, what 'they' do for us, whoever 'they' is, you know, everyone who comes in with a CLT brain is trained and is programmed to think there isn't an us and them, there's just we, we fix, you know, we'll try and work together to fix things. But not everyone's arrived with that...". (Nathalie, St Clements)

As well as creating bonds between CLT residents potentially creating boundaries with other tenures, there can be a tendency to mythologise attributions. The assertion that CLT residents naturally work together to fix things is not supported by the absence of many from the territory's functional and expressive aspects. For Ben, some display ingratitude and a lack of responsibility.

"[This] sense of entitlement. 'Oh, that's not fair. Why am I paying this?'. . .'I never agreed to this. it's somebody else's fault'. . . this lack of taking responsibility. . .they were given this great opportunity, and now you're moaning about stuff that you were told about. . .It's a parking free development. Everyone was made aware of that prior to purchasing, but some people ignore that. . .kick up a fuss about it, park where they want to, take their license plates off their cars and just leave them around. And that includes CLT residents. . .that is disrespectful to the community around you, especially considering we are meant to be community orientated". (Ben, St Clements)

Despite showing support for the CLT forming part of the selection criteria, Ben said many do not attend AGMs. While he became a resident board member, he is less involved at St Clements itself, due to work commitments. Others struggle to commit to regular involvement, the rhythms of active citizenship needing to "accommodate—or be accommodated by—other rhythms and commitments of work, family or domestic life" (Lyons 2019, p. 54). This arrhythmia could lead to the exclusion of those unable to commit time, but also to distancing. Sophia recognises it is easy to overcommit, while many residents seem not to feel the obligation.

"I see a lot of neighbours just do not participate when they're called. . .I thought they were clear from the beginning. They said it in the application. Alright, but yeah, sometimes it can get a little bit like, oops, I don't know where to fit that in now". (Sophia, St Clements)

Ella, who has a history of housing activism and interest in alternative housing forms, said,

"I personally have found that, since moving in, I haven't been involved in the CLT in the ways that I thought I would, or said I would, because I'm just a bit exhausted. Like, I've got it now, thank you. And there's still the sort of challenge of surviving day to day you know, living off a wage that's basically less than full time between us". (Ella, St Clements)

The need to recover from the impact of previous poor housing conditions was mentioned by several interviewees, but Ella is also concerned that the CLT ethos becomes crowded out, mitigating against lived space fulfilling its conception.

"Perhaps I had the very naive kind of thought that this would be some sort of utopia, some sort of community where there was like minded people. And there are, but we are only 23 units within 252 or something. And yeah, so I've, I've kind of like not wanted to participate as much". (Ella, St Clements)

One further reflection from Ella relates to the situated nature of sociality (Amin 2008; Wise and Noble 2016), with different practices and territorial relations applying in different spaces and contexts. For Ella, St Clements is associated less with public displays of sociality and exerting 'dweller control' than with a place to 'perform home' (Richardson 2019).

"We are quite private people, because so much of my kind of art practice and teaching is face-to-face social engagement. . . maybe part of me is kind of like, this is home? I can't, I can't keep performing that role". (Ella, St Clements)

Martin has been a consistent presence at RMC meetings, his community organising background, providing an interest in governance and resident control and enhancing the experience of a shared space. For Martin, being an active citizen is time-consuming but rewarding.

> "It's fascinating to go through the process of, what does it take to manage your own piece of shared land…we can set a precedent…a bit like Robinson Crusoe on the island, right? Suddenly you find yourself on your island and it's yours to govern. Can we set an example of good government, with a small 'g' and happiness and fun and shared sense of, even disagreeing, like, do we find a good way of disagreeing?". (Martin, St Clements)

For Thrift (2005), informal gatherings allow a slightly increased level of involvement without polarising but, nevertheless, not avoiding different opinions; working through conflict. Martin and Nathalie have tried to persuade those remaining interested in the RMC to think beyond problems with the developer to how residents from different tenures can live better together. However, with the completion date continually pushed back, much of the groups' energy has been lost and interest has waned.

Alongside the functional RMC, the expressive signs and symbols communicating St Clements' distinctiveness have been the business of the outreach and communications group. Sophia says their use of oranges and lemons on leaflets is more than a "cheesy fruit representation", working also as "light touch history", providing identity.

> "People see the flyer in their house, they understand, oh, that must be from the resident management company. There's some community event happening, you know, it's always the same branding, but also goes into their houses and sort of feels inviting". (Sophia, St Clements)

The St Clements Day celebration in November 2022 was preceded by an RMC AGM. Afterwards, residents shared food and welcomed in local traders who helped children make pizzas or serviced bikes: light-touch integration with like-minded neighbours rather than the more proselytising transforming neighbourhoods. There were crafts and activities and, with St Clement being the patron saint of blacksmiths, a local metal artist who helped children forge ornamental oranges and lemons. Joanna though was concerned that some social housing residents felt excluded or were managing distances:

> "I saw neighbours who I know and I talk to because they have kids …and I thought, oh brilliant, they're kind of getting themselves together to come and join and they didn't". (Joanna, St Clements)

The atmosphere is casual and low-key and the core of the gatherings comprise those attending the RMC meetings, and CLT residents, to differing degrees, appear to be fulfilling their roles as animators of 'community', or they at least make efforts to be sociable. St Clements Day, like other community events, is small in comparison with the size of the site and Lisa reflects that time and energy is needed for things to develop, sensing that many residents are unused to such commitment. Alice, however, is concerned that the atmosphere at St Clements could become too passive, masking an undercurrent of disempowered grievance. She wanted to build on the CLT's initial spirit of experimentalism, while acknowledging that bold approaches to animating space might bring tensions.

> "Let's continue [experimenting]… with the understanding and the openness that it might cause some crazy tension. But I think that's also good… ". (Alice, St Clements)

Citizens House

Only one in-person meeting had taken place in the nine months after residents moved into Citizens House, when they shared their feelings of being on a "shared journey" and now "regrouping". They felt 'privileged', 'intrigued', 'excited', and a sense of 'gratitude'; communal living was "unfamiliar", and most felt they lacked experience. A poor performance by the property management company meant some wanted to explore performing tasks such as cleaning and gardening themselves, while others wanted to "figure out how we want to work together" first, that "nothing is urgent", and the group should "make decisions without pressure". Another agreed, adding it was important to "bring it back to why we all bought these homes in the first place". Despite residents' primary motivations

for moving to Citizens House being a housing need, they valued the accompanying collectivity. However, a suggestion of buying a communal lawnmower prompted an alternative of renting from a 'library of things', exposing differing perspectives on ownership, sharing, time for communal tasks, expectations, and standards. Identifying an issue of potential conflict and exclusion early on, one resident wanted to "hear everyone's voices in the room". Debating various communication methods for 'fun' and 'business' led one resident to manage distances, saying they "don't want to hang out every day", but preferred face-to-face communication for anything important. The group remained positive about outreach to neighbours, but agreed that "we need to organise ourselves together first". There was agreement at the end that there were "good vibes" and the group would "grow into this together".

Discussion had been circumspect and respectful, pragmatic, and cautiously optimistic; reflecting afterwards, London CLT's Communities Manager called the interactions "mundane", but "meaty and profound". For Archer (2022, p. 2), the community-led housing sector is prone to over-optimism, while much of the academic literature relies on generalised "rhetoric of collectivism and its virtues". In contrast, Citizens House residents were involved in the hard labour of negotiating shared lives. Sennett (2013, p. 5) defines cooperation as "an exchange in which the participants benefit from the encounter", but the "challenge of participation is to make it worth people's time" (*ibid.* p. 234). These are animistic moments, when relationships are formed, boundaries established, affects spread, and distances managed. Each resident left with their own view of whether it was worthwhile, determining what form territorialisation takes. Interviews some months later revealed that there had been no further face-to-face meetings. It was casually noted in one online meeting though that a communal lawnmower had been bought. An issue that seemed to symbolise early tensions had ended in a small victory for cooperation!

Connor, an RMC director, has found it exhausting getting functional meetings arranged and decisions made. He senses little will to make time for important discussions, or else decisions are deferred in favour of everyone's voices being heard, or for fear of not everyone agreeing. He is concerned that a lack of commitment becomes contagious and feels he has "become less invested". As someone not directly involved with the functional elements though, Eliza had noticed the directors were,

> "very diplomatic. . .a lot of. . .doodle polls. Um, which is nice. . ..If a problem is like, shall we cut the grass on Monday or Tuesday, I don't know, sometimes I'm like, we don't need a doodle poll for this guys, like in my head. But it's nice, so it makes everyone feel valued. . . shall we put sticky labels on the bins?. . .I'm like, just whack 'em on, you know".

One reason organising gatherings, events, and meetings has been difficult is that freedom from housing stress gives residents part of their life back, time they often want to spend doing things they previously could not. Hackett et al.'s (2019, p. 4) study found that the ontological security CLT dwellers experienced could lead to an "opening up of possibilities and the unfolding of life in ways not previously possible". This effect was described, variously, by all residents of Citizens House.

> "We've been going off and doing things because this place is now our security and our home that lets us go off and do those other things in our life. . . it's so rewarding to be able to do that. . .it feels like the beginning of something quite different". (Sam, Citizens House)

Counterintuitively, the security of home has meant that Lauren felt less urgency to make connections, understanding they can unfold more slowly, allowing recovery from the stresses of previous poor housing conditions.

> "All of us in this building have all come from some kind of housing stress. That's why we're here. . .And whereas before in unstable housing, I think I wanted to feel grounded in something. . . I really made so much effort with the local community, neighbours instantly because that would have been my grounding

and sense of belonging. . .I'm still interacting with people here. It's just allowing myself to be slow with the process because we actually feel like we're not going to get kicked out in three months".

Patrick too was discovering new things,

"just kind of exploring different sides of myself and navigating it all, it's just very exciting so, yeah, I'm enjoying it".

He thought that greater sociality would come with time, saying that residents had expectations of themselves as well as London CLT's, but notes also that small acts of recognition from neighbours and those he returns, however fleeting, can lift spirits.

"And that's good enough for now do you know what I mean, the rest will happen in time".

4. Discussion

Successful London CLT applicants had a rare opportunity: buying an affordable home, relieving themselves of housing stress, and meeting their future neighbours before moving in. This paper has used the concepts of territorialisation and conviviality in helping to understand the experiences of London CLT residents from the time they were offered a home at St Clements and Citizens House, to moving in and experiencing. The concepts have helped to compare the lived experience of residents with the spatial imaginary of London CLT. This discussion sets out how the concepts have helped draw a conclusion that while residents have overwhelmingly benefitted from being relieved of poor housing conditions, sociality has not yet taken on forms that demonstrate the common interests in governing and managing shared resources associated with commoning. Instead, the territorial atmosphere collectively engendered more closely resembles both the acknowledgement of shared lives without them becoming too central, a sense of 'rubbing along' accompanied by the ambivalence associated with conviviality (Thrift 2005; Wise and Noble 2016).

4.1. Managing Relationships Through Territorialisation

London CLT hoped that pre-occupation introductory gatherings would provide animistic moments, points in time that shape the way territories evolve and define future relationships. They wanted to translate credo into practice, transforming strangers thrown together by circumstances into collective entities able to exercise and spread community control. The selection criteria were designed to promulgate community and engender affective atmospheres of transformational active citizenship. This research shows mixed results. At St Clements, some residents established distance early, absenting themselves from events, leaving a smaller group to carry through London CLT's intentions. In the lengthy period between allocation and moving in, enthusiasm from some dissipated, and while affective exchanges formed lasting relationships, these generally resulted in highly valued friendly neighbourliness rather than enthusiasm for the more intense investments required to exercise control. Affective attitudes may have instilled a certain weariness, impacted undoubtedly by feelings of powerlessness relative to the developer, but a lack of involvement by a proportion of residents may have led to others feeling less inclined to prioritise involvement over other aspects of their lives. The size of the development and being outnumbered by other tenures with different concerns has also been a factor in some residents deciding against investing energy. The group of active CLT residents has continued to shrink; those most involved had a previous connection with TELCO and are more engrained in the community organising culture.

No Citizens House residents were previously connected with London Citizens, and despite the design and clearer territorial boundaries affording greater opportunities for sociality, these were yet to gather momentum or intensity. The group lacks the enablers needed to go beyond the sense of friendly neighbourliness. Few though have experienced even that much living elsewhere, while for others, learning to live on their own for the first

time is enough of a challenge and adventure without thinking about leading outreach to other parts of the neighbourhood.

This research reveals a gap between utopian notions of CLTs as new urban 'commons' and experiences of everyday life. Affectivity is accompanied by distancing, inclusion by exclusion, and rhythms of existing commitments mitigate against new rhythms of active involvement. Thompson (2015) identifies a difference between disconnected, alienating relations of mainstream housing and the 'do-it-yourself' ethos of Liverpool's housing alternatives: a spatial imaginary of dweller control, with inhabitants and developers in synergy, sharing a commitment to collectively manage their space. This research shows the difference is only partially recognisable in London CLT developments. Some residents have been constant CLT champions, remaining active where they live, sitting on London CLT's board and attending events. As Kruger et al. (2020) found, there is evidence that CLT staff, board members, and some residents share interests and perspectives. Especially at St Clements, CLT residents have tried to raise more esoteric matters such as governance arrangements and how people from different tenures might share a common space, but these have largely been unsuccessful. The very notion has seemed difficult to articulate and abstract amidst more pressing concerns.

Despite the selection criteria, some residents can be said to have adopted an attitude more closely resembling Thompson's (2015) description of mainstream housing relations of 'passive entitlement' rather than dweller control. Undoubtedly, the COVID-19 lockdowns had an impact, halting any rhythms of community life being established and meaning that regaining momentum has been challenging. Most residents, either by choice or necessity, have prioritised domestic life and wider urban territories of work and sociality. For many, a great weight was lifted from their shoulders after moving to their new home, leading some to turn inwards to mentally recover from the strain they were under, frequenting domestic territory and focusing on family. Others have looked outwards, enjoying new possibilities now they have the security of a home. Most residents maintain some connection, attending occasional events and meetings without taking leading roles which can feel like additional work they do not have time for, or for which they feel they lack the requisite skills. Some, having got involved, have stepped away. The very public-facing work roles that many have can lead to a desire to retreat to the privacy of home, now far more welcoming than where they lived before.

4.2. Community, Sociality, and Conviviality

It might appear that attempts to establish and spread community have faltered at both St Clements and Citizens House. This may yet turn out to be a temporary setback; at the time of writing, the developers have finally left St Clements, though a good deal of outstanding issues remain. They will not hand over control to the RMC though until the final building, originally envisaged as a community hub, is sold. Once this happens, CLT residents may lead the way to greater dweller control. Animation at Citizens House may be a slow burn, and once residents are properly settled in, recovered from the strains of previous housing circumstances, and trust begins to build, then sociality may increase, meetings take place, and events might be organised in the shared community space.

Paying attention to how residents describe sociality challenges some of the more optimistic assumptions made about CLTs and their politically transformative potential. Following Studdert (2016), the absence of or low level of interest in more overt functional and expressive aspects of life at St Clements and Citizens House does not signal a lack of sociality or the community needing re(building). The same is true of the neighbourhoods before the CLT residents arrived. The notion that London CLT's developments would 'transform' the neighbourhood must itself be built on assumptions of something lacking that needs an intervention by more civic-minded people. Thrift (2005) cautions against elevated expectations of gatherings and sociality, arguing that although a slightly greater level of involvement can be encouraged, people tend to be

"more often than not ambivalent about the dilemmas that they face and often prefer that things should remain that way: they don't want them to become 'issues' that they have to explicitly address". (Thrift 2005, p. 143)

The developments are not alone in experiencing challenges in participation levels, and increasing involvement can become an organisational obsession (Arbell et al. 2020). London CLT assumed that by selecting already community-minded people, they would plant the seed of mutuality and cohesion and residents would be equipped to deal with the challenges along the way. Richardson (2019, p. 12) raised the possibility that people may "perform in the quest to get a home, and then…perform differently within and from the place we consider to be home". Undoubtedly this was a factor for some applicants, given their difficult housing circumstances, and the chance of somewhere affordable, secure, and of decent quality to call home. The accompanying obligations may have seemed appealing, ambiguous, or the cause of anxiety, but were secondary considerations to an affordable home. Some with track records of community contribution in other fields were those who talked of needing to establish distance, when the assumption would put them at the forefront of spreading positive affects.

This is not to make a judgement on residents. For some, the stress of previous housing meant a need for a greater frequentation of home, with calls to become involved invading the privacy of weekend breaks from work or precious family time. Often, these are new families, with children born after they moved in. Wise and Noble (2016) highlight the spatial and temporal dimensions of diverse types of sociality: whereas the community contributions people previously made were contained bursts of activity in public spaces, the new expectation was of more intense, sustained relationships and activity around the private space of home. Consequently, some chose to 'give back' through involvement in London CLT's board rather than the more immediate and personal surroundings of home and a few objected to the expectation of performing 'work' as a reciprocal gift in exchange for the right to decent housing. At Citizens House, a resident who was unenthusiastic about the community aspect at the application stage tried to take a lead in the functional aspects of the RMC, before becoming frustrated.

While sociocratic-type methods in the functional aspects of territory, such as resident meetings, can ensure all voices are heard in safe environments, they can sometimes bemuse those unused to them. Previous research suggests that deliberative, participatory methods used in cohousing schemes can be exclusionary due to their association with the White middle-class progressive left with high 'alternative capital' (Jones 2017; Arbell 2022). The fault lines are less pronounced in London CLT, with the people experienced in community facilitation being broadly liberal, but with a wider range of backgrounds. Sennett (2013, p. 9) has argued that the demands of modern society have weakened cooperation and de-skilled people in the art of mutuality, meaning "we are losing the skills of cooperation needed to make a complex society work". Certainly, time is a factor, as is many residents being used to more temporary, superficial relations and bonds with previous neighbours. There is also a sense that people want to avoid the open displays of conflict that come with the negotiation of differences in formal settings, especially doing so with people they may see on a regular basis around their home.

Wise and Noble (2016) are critical of academics attaching abstract attributes to conceptualise conviviality without testing them empirically. This research has shown limitations in the way that London CLT employed abstract attributes to underpin their selection criteria and to set objectives for intense, transformational investments of time and energy in community building by new residents. Conviviality is mostly experienced in the moment, where solutions to issues are more likely to come from situated improvisation than through more notional deliberation (Laurier and Philo 2006; Wise and Noble 2016). Conviviality does not mean the absence of conflict, instead conflict is an essential part of how living together is worked through. The research would suggest that selecting residents, in part, by previous community contributions may be exclusionary. Even if, at the selection stage, it is not a decisive factor, it may stop people unsure of how to value and express their con-

tribution from applying. Moreover, it may not help in building successful neighbourhoods. As Wise and Noble argue, living together requires

> "practices of recognition, enquiry, negotiation, incorporation, care and accommodation [that] are not simple attributes of already civic-minded people, but forms of labour which create relationship and meaning". (Wise and Noble 2016, p. 426)

5. Conclusions

This research contributes to the growing body of the literature on CLH, and in relation to studies of CLTs, provides a perspective from residents on their experience of living in CLT homes, which is largely missing from UK studies. There is considerable variation, both between and within CLH typologies, including among CLTs: rural and urban, for example, and between those emanating from emplaced struggles against external threats and those starting from a position of creating new affordable housing. While the conceptualisation of commoning is suitable for many CLH schemes, including some CLTs, the research conducted with residents at St Clements and Citizens House led to a different approach. It found London CLT's credo to be more closely affiliated with its roots in London's East End and that this history engendered the social imaginary and expectations rather than the subjectivities, vision, and autonomous practice of residents (Arbell 2023). As well as contributing to the literature on CLH, this study has added to the body of work on 'community' that follows Walkerdine and Studdert's (2012) call for new conceptualisations. It has found that there was a sense of 'throwntogetherness' (Massey 2005) experienced by London CLT residents, to which they responded by territorialising (Brighenti and Kärrholm 2020) to both spread affects and manage distances, while creating an atmosphere of conviviality: of everyday friendly neighbourliness and with an ambivalence about any wider social impact.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, R.R., A.H., A.P. and N.-D.O.; methodology, R.R., A.H., A.P. and N.-D.O.; formal analysis, R.R.; investigation, R.R.; data curation, R.R.; writing—original draft preparation, R.R.; writing—review and editing, R.R., A.H., A.P. and N.-D.O.; supervision, A.H., A.P. and N.-D.O.; funding acquisition, A.H., A.P. and N.-D.O. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Note

[1] Originally established as East London CLT, the name changed to London CLT when campaigners in Lewisham asked for help to develop what became Citizens House. For simplicity, this paper refers to London CLT throughout.

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