

Social housing: would you choose it?

Why I wrote *Estates: An Intimate History*

1967: the end of the slums



Look-back to the early days of Chelmsley Wood and the start of new life for Birmingham's overspill. The estate was opened by the Queen in 1971



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Edge of the city



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Community challenge

- Remote
- Isolated
- Single-class
- Stigmatised
- Home

Estate carnival in the 1980s



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“The town of strangers”

- Radburn layout
- Labyrinthine
- New-fangled
- Poor transport
- Fresh start

Indefensible spaces



Bedding in

- No clear identity
- Siege mentality
- Walls in the head
- The hidden injuries of class
- “Little Minworth”

Deserted shopping parade



Decline and fall



2007: return of the slums?



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Renew the goals

- Intensive local management
- Tenure-blind housing
- Quality, quality, quality
- Better transport and schools
- Transform identity