



THE  
**ALMSHOUSE**  
ASSOCIATION

**Almshouses 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

*How Almshouses respond to the Affordable Housing and Loneliness Crisis.*



# What is an almshouse?

## Personal view from CEO of The Almshouse Association

*“Almshouses provide a stable, warm and secure home within a robust community of light touch support allowing residents to live engaged, independent and fulfilling lives. They are started and run with compassion and thrive on companionship.”*

They should provide three things:

- A warm, secure, safe home
- A good neighbour
- Something to do, look at and be interested in”

- A good home and community for those in need for centuries to come
- Brother Tim resident of almshouse London *“I have been here ten years and I am younger and happier now than when I came through those doors.”*
- *“I found a home where I feel wanted for the first time in my life”*  
*Tina Midland almshouse.*



- Where do almshouses come from?
- How has society changed and how is it set to change?
- What is the weakness in the model?
- What part and value does architecture play in almshouse model?
- What does their future depend on?

# Where do almshouses come from?

The essence of **The Seven Works of Mercy**.

The Seven Works of Mercy are a set of charitable acts from Christian tradition, focusing on both the physical and spiritual needs of others.

The Works of Mercy address **physical needs**: **feeding** the hungry, giving **drink** to the thirsty, **clothing** the naked, **sheltering** the homeless, **visiting** the sick, visiting the **imprisoned**, and **burying** the dead.

Early almshouses were the first “**hospitals**”.

Founders act of generosity in exchange for shortened **purgatory**.

# Where do almshouses fit in society today?

How has society changed and how is it set to change?

Loneliness/family structure/social structure/work and  
role of employer/state provision

What do almshouses address?

- Isolation
- Community
- Good neighbour
- Sense of place

Why are they right today? Where are we going?



# How can almshouses survive?

Is there weakness in the model?

- Governance
- Scale
- Independence
- Buildings
- Residents
- Awareness
- Funding
- Europe lesson





# Spirit through architecture ?

Almshouses were designed to encourage neighbourly interaction in “safe” spaces?

- Courtyard – “arms around”
- Windows and views
- Benches
- Shared entrance
- Chimneys and steep roofs
- A “huddle” of almshouse cottages
- The village of 8



# Almshouses a 50 year view

- Quality and demand must remain high in all cases
- Aging and lonely population – increased demand
- Recognition and awareness – increasing credible and desirable – move to meet today's most in need
- Research – robust and consistent
- Nostalgia and buildings - desire
- Government/LG awareness – ideology
- Philanthropy – tomorrows  
“in need”
- Trustees – the backbone



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# Almshouses will thrive !

Thank you for being part of the link to the next  
century

Questions?

