

<b>Institution:</b> Queen Mary University of London		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 14 Geography and Environmental Studies		
<b>Title of case study:</b> The Centre for Studies of Home: Collaborative research with the Museum of the Home		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2011-2019		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g.job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed:</b>
Alison Blunt Alastair Owens Catherine Nash <u>Former staff from UoA who contributed to underpinning research:</u> Casper Laing Ebbensgaard Richard Baxter Caron Lipman  Olivia Sheringham	Professor of Geography Professor of Historical Geography Professor of Human Geography  Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellow; PDRA  Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellow Lecturer; AHRC PDRA  Lecturer; PDRA	1999–Present 2001–Present 2004–Present  2018-2020; 2016-2017 2013-2016 2015-2018; 2011-2014 2017-2019; 2014-2017
<b>Period when the impact occurred:</b> August 2013–2019		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N</b>		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>		
<p>The Centre for Studies of Home (CSH) is an agenda-setting university-museum research partnership between Queen Mary University of London and the Museum of the Home (MoH). Through a programme of research funded by AHRC, ESRC, The Leverhulme Trust and Queen Mary, CSH has pioneered a socially, spatially and temporally expanded understanding of home; developed an intellectual framework for understanding domestic practice and personal meanings of home; and produced new knowledge about home in East London. This research programme has provided new ideas, methodological approaches, and rigorous evidence base:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to broaden and deepen museums strategic vision and scope</li> <li>• to diversify the MoH's exhibitions and collection strategy to include under-represented priority areas</li> <li>• to strengthen the MoH's engagement with its locality and to enhance residents' understanding of home.</li> </ul>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>		
<p>CSH sets the agenda for research on home within and beyond Geography and provides a model for an effective and sustained university-museum research partnership. Founded in 2011, CSH is a research partnership between Queen Mary and MoH that has pioneered work on the geographies of the domestic sphere (everyday life, architecture, interior design and material culture), home beyond the domestic (broader ideas about dwelling, belonging, privacy and security), and home within and across a range of co-existing temporal and spatial scales (domestic, urban, national and transnational). CSH's founding co-director, Alison Blunt, leads its research programme with academics, postdoctoral fellows and postgraduate students in Geography and across the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Queen Mary in collaboration with staff from the curatorial, learning and engagement teams at MoH.</p> <p>To date, CSH has secured over GBP 1,700,000 in research income in internal and external funding [EQR.3.1, EQR.3.2, EQR.3.3, EQR.3.6] and has had 13 funded PhD students, six postdoctoral research fellows, and two artists-in-residence.</p>		

The research programme at CSH has focused on six under-represented priority areas at the museum, identified and agreed by staff at Queen Mary and MoH through regular workshops and steering group meetings:

- (i) **home and work:** AHRC CDA programme of four studentships: Home-work: connections and transitions in London from the 17th century to the present, Blunt PI, 2012-15
- (ii) **home and religion:** AHRC CDA programme of four studentships: Home and religion: space, practice and community in London from the 17th century to the present, Blunt PI, 2015-18
- (iii) **high-rise homes and gentrification:** Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellowship: Home and inhabitation: a biography of the Aylesbury Estate, Baxter, 2013-16; Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellowship: Luminous Verticality: the changing geographies of East London at night, Laing Ebbensgaard, 2018-21
- (iv) **home, migration and the city:** Leverhulme Trust Artist-in-Residence Globe, Platun, 2016; Queen Mary Centre for Public Engagement Home-city-street, Blunt PI, 2017-18;
- (v) **teenage bedrooms:** ESRC PhD Inside Teenage Bedrooms, Newson, 2012-15
- (vi) **home histories:** AHRC Living with the past at home, Nash PI, 2011-14.

Through this research programme, CSH has developed:

- (i) **An expanded understanding of home** *socially* by producing new knowledge about servants and residents of high-rise housing and housing estates [3.1]; *spatially* by developing a new research agenda on 'home-city geographies' [3.2] and the intertwined geographies of urban dwelling and mobility [3.3, 3.4]; and *temporally* by developing new conceptualizations of the multi-layered temporalities of home and inhabitation [3.5, 3.6].
- (ii) **An intellectual framework for understanding domestic practice and personal meanings of home** through new conceptualizations and empirical knowledge about the relationships between identity, material culture and domesticity [3.5]; new methodologies to document personal meanings of home within and beyond the domestic interior, including 'home-city biographies' and other biographical approaches [3.1, 3.2]; and the co-creation of new knowledge and ways of working with artists and film-makers [3.4].
- (iii) **New knowledge and understanding about home in East London** through new conceptualizations and empirical knowledge about home and work for Vietnamese people in East London (including a book by Wilkins, 2019); understanding domestic religious practice and interfaith connections at home for Christian, Jewish and Muslim residents; and new collaborative work with Hackney Archives, Eastside Community Heritage, artists and film-makers, enabling new understandings about the relationships between home, neighbourhood and the city for residents who live close to the museum [3.4, 3.6].

### 3. References to the research

- [3.1] Baxter, R. (2017). The high-rise home: verticality as practice in London. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 41(2), 334-52. [doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12451](https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12451).
- [3.2] Blunt, A. and Sheringham, O. (2019). Home-city geographies: urban dwelling and mobility. *Progress in Human Geography* 43(5), 815-34. [doi.org/10.1177/0309132518786590](https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132518786590).
- [3.3] Owens, A. and Jeffries, N. (2016). People and things on the move: domestic material culture, poverty and mobility in Victorian London. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 20, 807-27 [doi.org/10.1007/s10761-016-0350-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10761-016-0350-9).
- [3.4] Sheringham, O., Platun, J., MacAvinchey, C. and Blunt, A. (2019). *Globe's encounters and the art of rolling: home, migration and belonging*. *Cultural Geographies* 27(2), 177-99. [doi.org/10.1177/1474474019879100](https://doi.org/10.1177/1474474019879100).
- [3.5] Lipman, C. (2020). *Heritage in the home: Domestic prehabitation and inheritance*. London: Routledge.
- [3.6] Blunt, A., Laing Ebbensgaard, C. and Sheringham, O. (2020). The 'living of time': entangled temporalities of home and the city. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers (early view)*. [doi.org/10.1111/tran.12405](https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12405).

**Evidence of the quality of the research**

- [EQR.3.1] Blunt, A. [PI]. (2012-15). Home-work: connections and transitions in London from the seventeenth century to the present [AH/J009482/1]. AHRC. GBP238,464.
- [EQR.3.2] Blunt, A. [PI]. (2015-18). Home and Religion: space, practice and community in London from the seventeenth century to the present [AH/M007022/1]. AHRC. GBP254,388.
- [EQR.3.3] Baxter, R. [PI]. (2013-16). Home and inhabitation: a biography of the Aylesbury Estate [ECF-2012-376]. Leverhulme Trust. GBP90,000.
- [EQR.3.6] Laing Ebbensgaard, C. [PI]. (2018-20). Luminous verticality. Leverhulme Trust [Early Career Fellow]. GBP90,000.
- [EQR.3.6] Nash, C. [PI]. (2011-14). Living with the past at home: Domestic pre-habitation and inheritance [AH/I022090/1]. AHRC. GBP292,116.

**4. Details of the impact****Broadening and deepening MoH's strategic vision and scope**

CSH has provided the intellectual framework to support the museum's move from:

(i) a focus on English domestic interiors of middle-class Londoners (The Geffrye Museum of English Domestic Interiors); to (ii) a socially, spatially and temporally expansive understanding of home (The Geffrye Museum of the Home); and (iii) its rebranding in 2019 prior to its planned reopening in 2021 as The Museum of the Home following an GBP18,100,000 Heritage Lottery Fund redevelopment project [5.3].

According to a former Curator at the Geffrye Museum, 'The research partnership with Queen Mary [has] had a transformative effect on the museum's understanding and interpretation of home' [5.1]. For the former Head of Collections and Exhibitions, 'The inclusion of CSH research material in our collections, galleries and programmes has been key to the museum's long-term strategy of becoming more relevant and more able to meet the needs of diverse local audiences' [5.2].

Research at CSH has shaped MoH's more inclusive approach to collections and exhibitions by, as the MoH Director states, 'interrogating the meaning of home for diverse audiences and challenging how the concept of home is represented in a museum environment' [5.3]. CSH has expanded the museum's research capacity and embedded research as a core activity, as evidenced by the museum's annual reports [5.4, 5.5], staff development (joint doctoral supervision by 15 museum staff), joint publications (Blunt et al., 2013; Blunt and John, 2014; Owens et al., 2016), and research events and activities (including 48 seminars, 12 conferences/workshops, annual lectures and PG study days attended by a total of over 1000 participants). CSH has 'transformed the museum into an active space for debate and dialogue and a place for new research' [5.3]. CSH is 'one of the key pillars of the museum's work. It demonstrates our capacity for partnership and collaboration. It gives us intellectual authority and gravitas, and raises our standing' [5.2]. CSH 'events, seminars and study days [have] allowed the museum's staff to engage with the most current and challenging research relating to the subject of home' [5.6].

Research at CSH has been included in the museum's annual reports since 2011. Reporting that 'much of our research is carried out through CSH,' the annual report for 2014-15 states that 'Our research programme continues to thrive, enhancing our intellectual approach and understanding of our subject area. The research supports the development of our displays and learning and exhibitions programmes in a sustainable way, enabling our staff and visitors to engage with new ideas and findings' [5.4, p.8]. Under 'Vision,' the annual report for 2016-17 states that 'through CSH ... we are both initiating new research and encouraging international knowledge exchange and dissemination' [5.5, p.3].

**Diversifying MoH's exhibitions and collections strategy into under-represented priority areas**

Research at CSH has 'given the museum the confidence and expertise to develop its practice in new ways' [5.3]. Five co-curated exhibitions displaying CSH research have addressed under-represented subjects in the museum [5.5, p.7]: *Swept under the carpet? Servants in London households, 1600 to 2000* made domestic service visible in the period rooms for the first time (c.43,000 visitors); *The Aylesbury Estate as Home* (2016; c.15,000 visitors) enabled the museum

to address social housing for the first time [3.1]; *Inside teenage bedrooms* enabled the museum to reflect young people's cultural practice and stimulated intergenerational dialogue (c.23,200 visitors); *Home thoughts: stories of living in London* (2017-18; c.18,600 visitors) featured films and displays on domestic religious practice for the first time; and *Who once lived in my house?* (2016; c.12,500 visitors) provided a new approach to thinking about home and temporality beyond the chronological history of home presented in the period rooms [3.5].

Research methods and findings at CSH inspired new museological approaches at the museum including (i) personal scenarios that put previously hidden histories at the heart of the period rooms [5.1] and informed 'a new room-set scenario in the refreshed Rooms through Time displays' (*Swept under the Carpet*) [5.3]; (ii) personal testimonies and photographs in all four contemporary exhibitions, directly influencing the museum's manifesto pledge that 'personal stories are our lifeblood' and with a long-term legacy in the new permanent Home Galleries (*Inside Teenage Bedrooms, Home and Religion*) [5.3]; and (iii) work with contemporary artists (*The Aylesbury Estate as Home, Globe*), described as 'a very good developmental step for the museum' [5.2, 5.5; 3.1, 3.4]

The exhibitions reached diverse audiences through the co-creation of school learning resources, performances, talks, tours (including for Hackney deafPLUS), youth, community holiday projects, and private view events. *Swept under the carpet* and *Inside teenage bedrooms* 'provided inspiration for a range of craft-based multi-sensory workshops' [5.5, p.8]. According to an Assistant Curator at the museum the 'depth and quality of research produced by the Centre' enabled many visitors to have 'an emotional as well as an intellectual response to the material displayed' [5.6]. One visitor to *Swept under the carpet* described the exhibition as 'inventive and insightful and a great way to bring simple, real stories of "hidden" people alive,' whilst another wrote that 'it's really made me think. [I] appreciate the way in which it draws on the current situation and connects it to the past' [5.7]. In response to the *Aylesbury Estate as Home* exhibition, an American visitor wrote that 'Everyone deserves a home. Protect the vulnerable. We're all in this together. Great exhibit!' whilst an Australian visitor reflected that it was positive 'to gain alternative perspectives about life in a housing estate. Very sad about the dispossession and displacement experienced by some residents.' Another visitor noted that it was 'such an important exhibition, noting the intersection of design, housing policy, socio-economic change and community politics' [5.7]. In articles about *Inside Teenage Bedrooms*, the *Huffington Post* reported that 'Teenage bedrooms remind us of the life-changing magic of making a mess,' whilst, for the *Hackney Citizen*, [The] exhibition shows how the teenage bedroom is 'a world of its own' [5.8].

Research on the 'Home-work' programme provided the knowledge and rationale to enhance the collections, specifically to acquire the 18th-century print 'Moll Handy', depicting a servant embodied by the tools of her trade. Research on the 'Home and religion' programme led to the acquisition of a mezuzah (used to mark the threshold of a Jewish home) from a research participant. CSH co-produced a protocol for depositing material from collaborative research in the collections. Interview transcripts and photographs from CSH research on teenage bedrooms; Christian, Jewish and Muslim religious practice at home; and home, work and migration for Vietnamese people have been deposited in the Documenting Home collection, helping to diversify and deepen the collections and to 'represent our local audiences' in perpetuity [5.2, 5.3, 5.9].

### **Strengthening MoH's engagement with its locality and enhancing residents' understanding of home**

The 'Home-work' AHRC CDA programme included research with Vietnamese residents about home, migration and the city that 'helped GM build lasting contacts with the Vietnamese community' close to the museum [5.2]. 'Home-city-street' [3.2, 3.6, 5.3, 5.10] has deepened links with the local area through two indoor street parties, artist-led workshops, a workshop at Hackney Archives, and four short films screened at MoH, Hackney Archives, Ali's kebab shop (belonging to one of the participants) and the crypt of St Peter's Church. These activities were attended by more than 250 people.



In addition, the app-based audio-walk 'Home-city stories' [5.10] was developed in collaboration with MoH and Hackney Archives (available on the [izi.travel app](#)) and runs from one to the other around Kingsland Road. 'Home-city-street' led MoH to think beyond a 'confined' sense of home to 'vistas out' into the wider city [5.2] and enhanced 'our relationship to our local communities' [5.3]. 'Home-city stories' has been evaluated with groups of teachers, students, older residents on the digital project 'Hello Hackney,' and museum and archive staff from MoH, Hackney Archives and Hackney Museum. Participants were positive about learning about 'the lives behind the buildings', hearing the voices of residents of different ages and ethnicities living in the same neighbourhood, and the importance of being reminded about racism in this area, particularly in the 1980s. For a long-term Hackney resident who works at Hackney Archives and Library, the audio-walk 'made [them] think about where [they] feel at home'. For a learning manager at Hackney Museum, the audio-walk 'gave [them] a deeper, more personalised understanding of conflicting views of Dalston as home: for example, one resident talking about Kingsland not feeling safe anymore and another saying the opposite'. The audio-walk made a group of three geography teachers think differently about 'issues of community and belonging [...] different views of people within the community; in-depth thinking; different scales and understandings of home: where you are born or where you live? [and] how areas have changed' [5.7 & 5.10].

### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- [5.1] [Testimonial] Curator at The National Archives (2018–present) and former Curator at the Geffrye Museum (2006-19).
- [5.2] [Testimonial] Head of Collections, Learning and Engagement at the Geffrye Museum (1996-2018) and co-director of CSH (2011-18).
- [5.3] [Testimonial] Director of the Geffrye Museum / Museum of the Home (2017 – present) and co-director of CSH (since 2018).
- [5.4] [Report] The Geffrye Museum Trust. (2015) Annual Report and Accounts. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/458562/Geffrye\\_Museum\\_annual\\_report\\_and\\_accounts\\_2014-15.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/458562/Geffrye_Museum_annual_report_and_accounts_2014-15.pdf).
- [5.5] [Report] The Geffrye Museum Trust. (2017) Annual Report and Accounts. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/628758/60284\\_HC\\_97\\_GM\\_Print.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/628758/60284_HC_97_GM_Print.pdf)
- [5.6] [Testimonial] National Trust Collections and House Manager (2019 – present) and former Assistant Curator at the Geffrye Museum (2013-18).
- [5.7] [Feedback] Curator (Research), Museum of the Home: (a) Visitor books for 'Swept under the carpet' and 'The Aylesbury Estate as Home'; (b) evaluation of 'Home-city stories' audio-walk. [Corroborator 1]
- [5.8] [Media] *Inside Teenage Bedrooms* exhibition: *Huffington Post* 10.10.16 [https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/teen-bedrooms\\_n\\_57f7e4d8e4b068ecb5de0eac?ri18n=true](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/teen-bedrooms_n_57f7e4d8e4b068ecb5de0eac?ri18n=true) and *Hackney Citizen* 2.11.16 <https://www.hackneycitizen.co.uk/2016/11/02/teenage-bedrooms-exhibition-geffrye-museum/>
- [5.9] [Website] Museum of the Home (a) faith and religion <https://www.museumofthehome.org.uk/explore/our-collections/faith-and-religion/>; (b) <https://www.museumofthehome.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/>.
- [5.10] [Website] Home-city-street [www.qmul.ac.uk/homecitystreet/](http://www.qmul.ac.uk/homecitystreet/) including a link to the 'Home-city stories' app-based audio-walk available on [izi.travel](#) (search for 'Home-city stories').