**M&S: HISTORY & CONTEXT**

Lincolnshire mud and stud (M&S) has been known as the East Midlands Earth Structure Society. 1995 has been known as the East Midlands Earth Structure Society. However, in 1998, something changed. A small group of enthusiasts,Architects, historians and practitioners, rediscovered this technique and dedicated their careers to learning about M&S and spreading its knowledge.

In the new rich country they have commonly built of what is called stud and mud...buildings are of timber walled with clay... the stud–raked as large as many a’s.” Young encouraged landowners to build M&S cottage and said they were “a little bit of the old.”

Young (General View of the Agriculture of the County of Lincolnshire, 1799).

“The Mud and Stud cottages in Lincolnshire have never been in the forefront of this picturesque party because the large rooms assume too far away from great conurbations and party because the construction behind remains the same. The study has been concealed or, at least, has seemed rude and insubstantial when compared to the robust constructions of the city.”

(Brunski Ronald-William, Forward to Lincolnshire Buildings in the Mud and Stud tradition by Rodney Cousins)

Only just over one thousand M&S structures have survived into 20th century but neglect and the stigma that ‘mud and stud’ has led to the demolition of many of them?Rodney Cousins Lincolnshire Buildings in the Mud and Stud tradition, 2000)

“Such houses required no professional builders in the erection; nothing but mud and stud, one third less.” Young encouraged landowners to build M&S for its peasantry: “Smaller sort brick cottage for one family will cost £50. But of large as man’s arm”. Young encouraged landowners to build M&S for its robustness.

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**M&S: TECHNIQUE**

In 1983, many of M&S has been abandoned and even banned to be preserved with the authorities’ approval. Owners feared that once listed, buildings would be impossible to demolish. This plan changed in 1980 thanks to a project initiated by Rodney Cousins and the Museum of Lincolnshire Life. The project became a catalyst for the subsequent formation of a grassroots organization which since has been known as the East Midlands Earth Structure Society.

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Only primary load-bearing M&S structures require better quality timber. Rails and studs are relatively thin (approximately 100mm x 80mm) and are located at approximately two metre centres. Unlike most historical frame constructions, M&S walls do not have externally exposed timber. Load-bearing elements are covered under a thick external leaf of earth. This solution eliminates cracks which usual appear between load-bearing and non-load-bearing elements and thus tensional drawbacks. Timber exposed together with ceiling beams creates characteristic interiors often appreciated by inhabitants.

M&S is not found anywhere else other than Lincolnshire and using studies of many different areas. The study has been concealed or at least, has seemed rude and insubstantial when compared to the robust constructions of the city.

In the low rich country they have commonly built of what is called stud and mud. The plan of an M&S cottage is determined by the central chimney stack which traditionally divides the building into two parts. Access to the upper rooms is usually in the form of a ladder. These rooms, typically possessing a 500mm knee wall are often entirely within the roof space. Half-timbed roofs covered traditionally with thatch or reed gave those cottages their distinctive picturesque loots.

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**M&S: RESEARCH**

In 2015, 35 years after the first project that attracted public attention toward M&S, a piece of mixed method research was undertaken in order to shed light on the impact of the historical context on EMESS as an organisation.

A survey was sent by mail to all 85 M&S dwellings, out of which 23 have been returned. 12 households have agreed to participate in an extended research project which aimed at collecting evidence of living in M&S houses. The research through a 1-hour long structured interview and a walk-through the house, with the inhabitants commenting on various aspects of living and happiness. Additionally, 11 long-form structured interview has been undertaken between frame M&S and other M&S organizations.

Analyses of interviews and surveys identified main themes which reappeared in Discussions with both M&S popularizers and inhabitants of M&S cottages. These opinions and shade a light on differences between those two groups.

**OPINIONS OF M&S POPULARIZERS**

(1) Belief that vernacular architecture needs to be captured and researched for its unique values:

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(2) The belief in good environmental potentiality of M&S architecture which should be appreciated by the wider community:

Opinions on the thermal qualities of M&S vary greatly: from ‘best material, warm in winter, cool in summer’ to, ‘rather primitive ancient techniques which is valuable mainly from a social point of view’.

(3) The belief that such architecture could initiate positive social dynamics.

“Architecture is important in the community, a building can attract people if they don’t think it’s part of the community or if we help bring people together. A building has got that ability to be a part of a community.”

**OPINIONS OF INHABITANTS OF M&S COTTAGES**

(1) Emotional attachment to the houses:

“We love the property and we will live here all our lives.” When asked an open question “What do you believe are the positive aspects of living in your house?”

47% of respondents mentioned the aesthetic/placing values of their cottage without any mentioning “Looking out over the sea”.

22% mentioned that they value the atmosphere of the cottage (“I feel like I’m at home”).

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(2) Need for expertise:

Many inhabitants living in M&S houses prior challenges which could be overcome only with the help of M&S specialists.

“We knew nothing about old buildings like this at all. We wanted to restore it to its former glory. We were building our own internet EMESS, and we made quite a lot of mistakes. We went to a lot of different meetings and we got to know the professors with whom we felt lost, who knew how it was actually built, how old it was.”

“Well, without EMESS it would be almost impossible, because you get the help from the council at all. There’s a chap we deal with the houses, but you can never get hold of him.”

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When asked about the negative aspects of the current project, 30% mentioned poor thermal performance, whilst 40% mentioned the high price.

Dr Marcin Mateusz Kołakowski (University of Lincoln); Dr Magdalena Baborska-Narożyń (University of Sheffield)