

# UD RC11: the LIVING LABORATORY

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## TOWIE

The Only Way is Essex\*

\*TOWIE is an acronym for 'The Only Way is Essex', a scripted reality television soap opera based in Essex first aired in 2010 now in its 18 season on various ITV channels. (NOT mandatory viewing!)



Essex is an English county North-East of London reaching East from the River Lee along the Thames Estuary out to the shores of the North Sea. Even before the reality TV show 'The Only way is Essex' (TOWIE) hit the TV screens, Essex has been associated in a negative way with big cars, wild nightclubs, nail bars, the big hair and the fake tans of the glamour models. These 1,300 square miles territory just East of London usually don't have the best reputation.

But this has not always been like that. Essex has always been seen as 'a place where utopias were imagined' ([www.radicalessex.co.uk](http://www.radicalessex.co.uk)). In the past it has been the cradle for British Modernism with the company towns of Silber End and the Bata Estate in East Tilbury, the modernist town in Frinton-on-Sea, but as well iconic buildings like the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club in Burnham-on-Crouch. The whole region was at the forefront of modernist architecture and a **testbed for new experimental community models**. But apart from these modernist gems the rest of the building stock has been of a very poor quality and the area has suffered from a lack of a coherent planning and a visionary urban design strategy.

Projects:

## Term 1

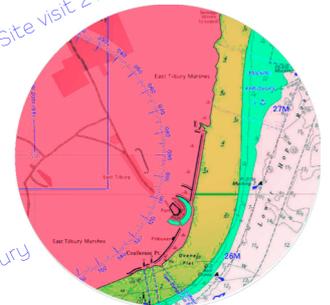
### 01\_The New Essex Design Guide (NEDG)

In response to the poor appearance of new housing developments in the area, in the late 1960's the Essex County Council agreed to give planners and architects a guidance document to define how to improve the built environment. In 1968 the County Planning Committee employed a new team of architects and planners to monitor and assess the landscape, the historic and the built environment of Essex. After 5 years of research, consultation and committee work the first edition of the *Essex Design Guide* was published. The document has been worked on since and is now still the basis for all new developments in the county having grown to over 210 pages of guidance, suggestions and regulations.

The **LIVING LABORATORY** continues the work of RC11 in the Thames Estuary with the second year working in the Essex marshes. We will start the year with a group project aiming to negotiate the chosen territory and to define each personal research agenda of each individual student for the year. This work will lead into a New Essex Design Guide and a collective model defining the new individual territories.



RC11 Site visit 2015



Site Map East Tilbury

### 02\_Housing/Making Workshops

Throughout the year we will have a series of ad-hoc workshops looking at the challenges of housing in London and further afield. We will take you on small excursions into the reality of social housing in London. In addition to this we will have additional skilling/making workshops.

## Term 2+3

### 03\_Learning from India!

At the beginning of term 2 we will go on an excursion to India looking at the cities of Ahmedabad in Gujarat, Udaipur, Jodpur in Rajasthan and finally Le Corbusier's vision for a new city in Chandigarh in Punjab.

### 04\_The Negotiated City

Using the work in the New Essex Design Guide you will embark on designing a new habitat for the chosen site in Essex. You may choose to work individually or in small groups to imagine, dream up, test, design, model, draw etc. how your proposal will play out in this radical landscape. The proposals should be radical, together they will form a new city.

We are looking to explore with you possible solutions through projects that have a real urgency. Density is key, community is essential, experimentation will be required.

It (hopefully) will not be an unsatisfactory suburbia... .

In **RC11** we would like to cultivate the interests of individual students working on shared collective approaches, developing engaging new urban scenarios and fictions. Students will be allowed to explore and test their own alternative urban experiments working on a variety of scales using the whole range of representation techniques. There has to be a spirit of experimentation to evolve new ideas and concepts.

<http://bartlett-living-laboratory.tumblr.com>  
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