

RED ROAD DIALECTOGRAM NO 1: THE CONCIERGE STATION

The Concierge Station (see overleaf) is one of a series of Dialectograms produced during the final days of the Red Road housing scheme in Glasgow, in this case, with the cooperation of the concierges stationed at 10 Red Road Court. I compiled the drawing through regular visits with the team, speaking to them a bit, listening a lot more and archiving the visual and anecdotal material I needed to get a feel for the place. Prints of the final piece were donated to the Concierges while the original was given to the collection of the **People's Palace Museum**.

For more information on Red Road and to view the drawing online, visit www.redroadflats.org.uk.

Others in the **Red Road** series include:

Red Road Dialectogram No 2: The Niven's at S(i)even, 93 Petershill Drive

Red Road Dialectogram No 3: The Mecca Bingo, beneath Petershill Court

High quality prints and posters are available - email glasgowdialectogram@gmail.com for details.

Future series of Dialectograms will feature **THE BARRAS** and **GLASGOW GREEN**.

JOHNNY RODGER

has written several works of fiction and non-fiction and major works on contemporary and modernist architecture in Scotland, and edited the seminal work on famous Glasgow architectural firm, Gillespie, Kidd and Coia. **Beasts in the Field**, his collaboration with composer Stephen Davismoon and the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland, will be performed at various venues in 2011.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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GLASGOW DIALECTOGRAMS CHAPBOOK NO: 1



...ARE NOT MITCH MILLER'S LAST WORD

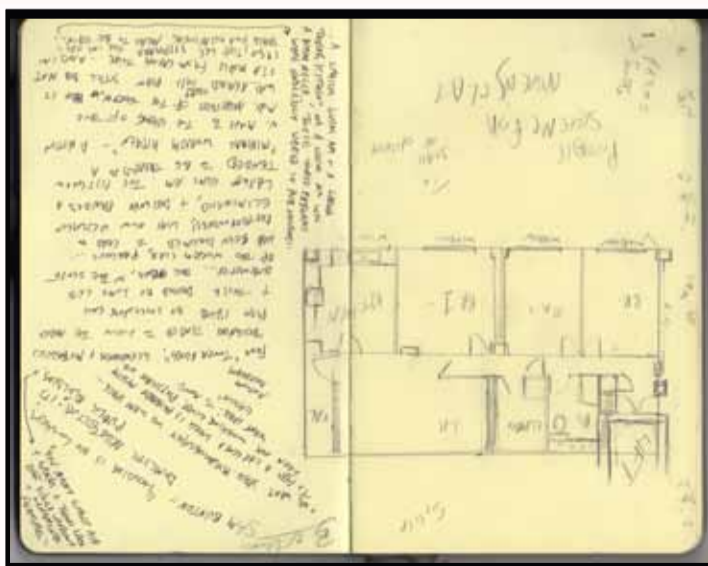
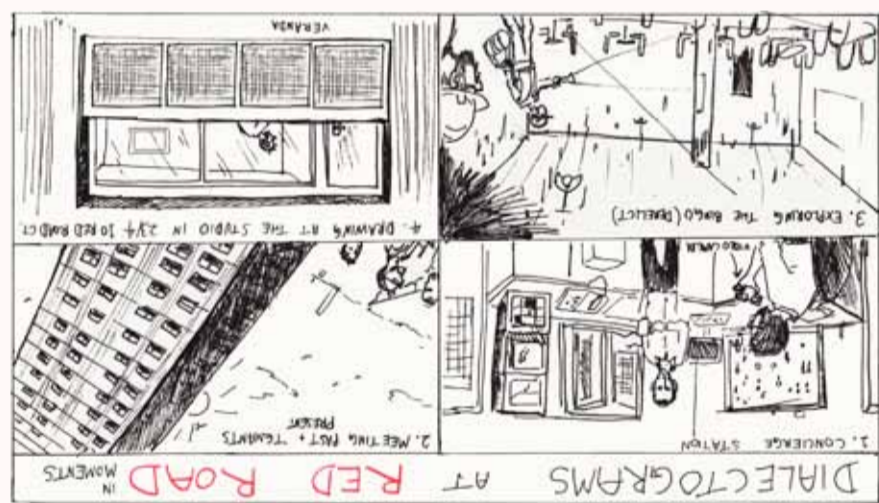
UN figures show that by the early 1960s Scotland's percentage public housing building output was the highest in the world (ie higher than Soviet Russia, Communist Eastern Europe or China). Much of this output was in the form of high rise housing.

MITCH MILLER'S ARE NOT UN OFFICIALS

High Rise or Multi-Story housing had initially been very expensive to build, but with certain technological advances --including the introduction of the tower crane in 1951-- numbers of houses could be produced very quickly. In 1957 government subsidies for each floor over the 6th were brought in: suddenly it was cheap as well as quick to build 'em high.

MITCH MILLER'S ARE NOT SUBSIDISED BY THE GOVERNMENT

In Glasgow itself production increased from 60 multi-story houses in 1959, to 2383 by 1964. More high-rise housing per head of population was built in Glasgow --largely in the 60s and early 70s- than any other city in Europe.



www.dialectograms.co.uk

Except from my notebook, taken from architect Sam Buntun's original 1964 drawings (available at the Mitchell Library). The notes are mostly from Glendinning and Muthesius' 'Tower Block: Modern Public Housing in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland', which has a number of quotes from Buntun that give insight into his aims, intentions and vision for the Red Road scheme.

THE DIALECTOGRAM

Incorporating elements of diagrams, maps, graphs, comic strips, oral history, documentary and graphic art, a dialectogram is produced over a long period of collaboration with its subject. A diagram, a dialogue, a dialectic, a diatribe, but also a dialect of technical drawing based on the dynamics and particularities of the space and its inhabitants -- hence, Dialectogram.

JOHNNY RODGER

MITCH MILLER'S ARE NOT JUST LANGUAGE

So what was it like to live in these spaces? --you're unlikely to find out by poring over the pure, calm, just, platonic language of the original architectural draughtsman. No life there. But check out Mitch Miller's rough inkies, they are the word on the streets-in-the-sky. The dialect rough and ready of how you gotta live.

MITCH MILLER'S ARE NOT FOR THE BIG BOYS

That's probably just as well for Sam Buntun who built Red Road flats as reputedly the highest residential buildings in Europe in the mid sixties. Buntun was an architect, but he wanted to wheel and deal with the big boys, and built the flats as a package deal for Glasgow Corporation.

MITCH MILLER'S ARE NOT A CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

No-one suggests such criminal activity was widespread. And Scottish people were already more used to living in high buildings in their cities than their English neighbours, so didn't experience such a sudden popular rejection of high rise.

MITCH MILLER'S ARE NOT STUFFED WITH NEWSPAPERS

But the poor quality of these buildings soon made itself felt: when the corner of one package deal high rise in London (Roman Point) collapsed in 1968 killing four people, the inquiry discovered that newspapers had been stuffed in some of the joints rather than concrete.

MITCH MILLER'S ARE NOT CRAMPED

Still, these houses were often so much of an improvement from cramped slum conditions of working class areas which had caused the need for the massive post-war housing output in the first place. Separate rooms for living, eating and sleeping and poorly maintained facilities.

MITCH MILLER'S ARE NOT POKY WEE

Except the tenants. Instead of the balconies, fresh air, light, space and foliage of the early 20th century modernist ideal of high rise living, they often got houses thrown up quickly, often poorly built, damp, with poky wee windows, dark corridors and poorly maintained facilities.

MITCH MILLER'S ARE NOT BUILT IN FACTORIES

Everybody won. The local authority got buildings cheaply --no architects or difficult admin or contracts had to be involved-- the construction companies brought in standard designs from places like Scandinavia, plonked the ready-made buildings down and made a lot of money. Wimpey, Reema, Bovis and Crudens all built factories in the proximity of Glasgow.

MITCH MILLER'S ARE NOT STANDARD SIZED

It wasn't long before the big construction companies were moving in on a very lucrative market. They offered 'package deals' to the city authorities, whereby they would build standard sized and designed buildings on any brown field site as it arose --typically after tenement clearance.

MITCH MILLER'S ARE NOT LARGELY IN THE 60S AND 70S

