

Lewis, J. and I. Kelman. 2008. "Housing, Flooding and Risk-Ecology: Thames Estuary South-Shoreland and North Kent". Journal of Architectural and Planning Research, in press.

Abstract:

A review of stated housing need and historical incidence, with table, of sea-flooding in the Thames Estuary south-shoreland and north Kent, where past and current programmes for flood protection and housing development are explored, show these two activities running in parallel and not yet integrated. Professed sustainability cannot be achieved without understanding of ecological development with increased evidence of "living with flooding". Land adjacent to the river is currently preferred as offering the most attractive sites at highest land-cost, the river being acknowledged as a landscape feature but not as a potential hazard. The thousands of new and existing dwellings that are, or will be, vulnerable to flooding, due either to over-topping of flood defences, their failure or their absence, are receiving little attention as a design issue. Elementary and regulatory planning methods appear rigidly focused on outdated issues of visual concern in which height restrictions prevent sensible upward domestic expansion. Ways for people to successfully "house" themselves in hazardous environments, inclusive of foreshores and wetlands, would offer an inclusively responsive and visually observable physical statement of successful development in an ecology of risk.

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