



BUILD TO
RENT FORUM

Theme for 2021:

'Build to Rent - 'Back to the Future' - 'Sustainable Living'

Tuesday 29th & Wednesday 30th June 2021

Day two of the Build to Rent Forum was filled with yet more engaging debates and expert insights.

Co-living as a concept

The first two sessions of the morning focussed on co-living, with an indepth look at how it has evolved so far and what is needed for it to grow further.

From a design perspective we learned that flexibility and choice is key to creating successful co-living developments. Tim Chapman-Cavanagh from Asseal talked us through the design process and stressed the need for being innovative with the design of living space and storage. He especially emphasised the benefit of living spaces being able to be adapted as end user needs change.

When it came to the panel debate, the resounding message was that the basis of co-living is still being defined and developed. Whilst it is currently aimed at younger, single renters in larger cities, there is a general belief that the model has the potential to appeal to a much wider demographic.

We also heard how BTR and co-living developments can provide a catalyst for the regeneration of zones of a city. The example for this is Greystar's 'Our Domain' scheme in Amsterdam.

Single-family housing

Whilst the focus of BTR has traditionally been on multi-family housing, we were treated to insight on the growing demand for single-family housing. The shift, we were told, will be from apartments to houses and a family demographic. The appeal for investors is that when it comes to renting, families will historically stay for longer than individuals do.

Locations of single-family schemes is particularly important as it differs to the current city-centre model that most developers currently use. Instead the desire of the end user demographic is to have good transport connections into town and city centres, but also have access to good schools and plenty of green space.

The rise of flexible working also provides a real opportunity for single-family housing because the provision of amenities can mean that people can 'work from home' without having to be stuck in their home, through the provision of shared work spaces.

One challenge for developing housing schemes from the rental market is that people don't want to live on building sites. For traditional house builders this is not such an issue because people accept it as a short term inconvenience for long term gain, but renters won't have that attitude. This is where modern methods of construction could hold a valuable answer because of the speed with which a development can be delivered.

Urban Living and town centres

When it comes to reinvigorating the high street and the UK's town centres, having people living centrally could be vital. Our panel looked at the topic of 'living about the shop' and the feeling was mutual that BTR developments could hold the answer. One thing they all agreed on was that to successfully bring residential developments to high streets, it needed the active support of local authority leadership.



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Bringing people to live in town centres needs more than just the housing delivered though as to appeal to renters there needs to be a sense of place.

Active later living

The twilight minutes of the conference was dedicated to later living,, but more specifically active later living and the idea that the older generation want places where they can retire to but still live full and active lives as part of a community.

One of the most striking statistics to come from the session was that in America, Australia, New Zealand and Canada, between 5-7% of over 65s live in retirement communities, yet in the UK that figure is under 1%. When you consider that the over 80s population is doubling and that the 'baby boomer' generation is the wealthiest ever, that provides an attractive opportunity to investors.

As with every other sub-sector of Build to Rent though, planning was deemed to be a big hurdle that needs knocking down as the current system isn't set up to know how to handle and categorise it.