

# LOFT<sup>®</sup>

**BUILD TO REGENERATE**  
360 EDITION

# 360

# RESIDENTIAL

## FEAUTURING

Amber  
Homeviews  
UKAA  
Dandara Living  
Greystar  
& more

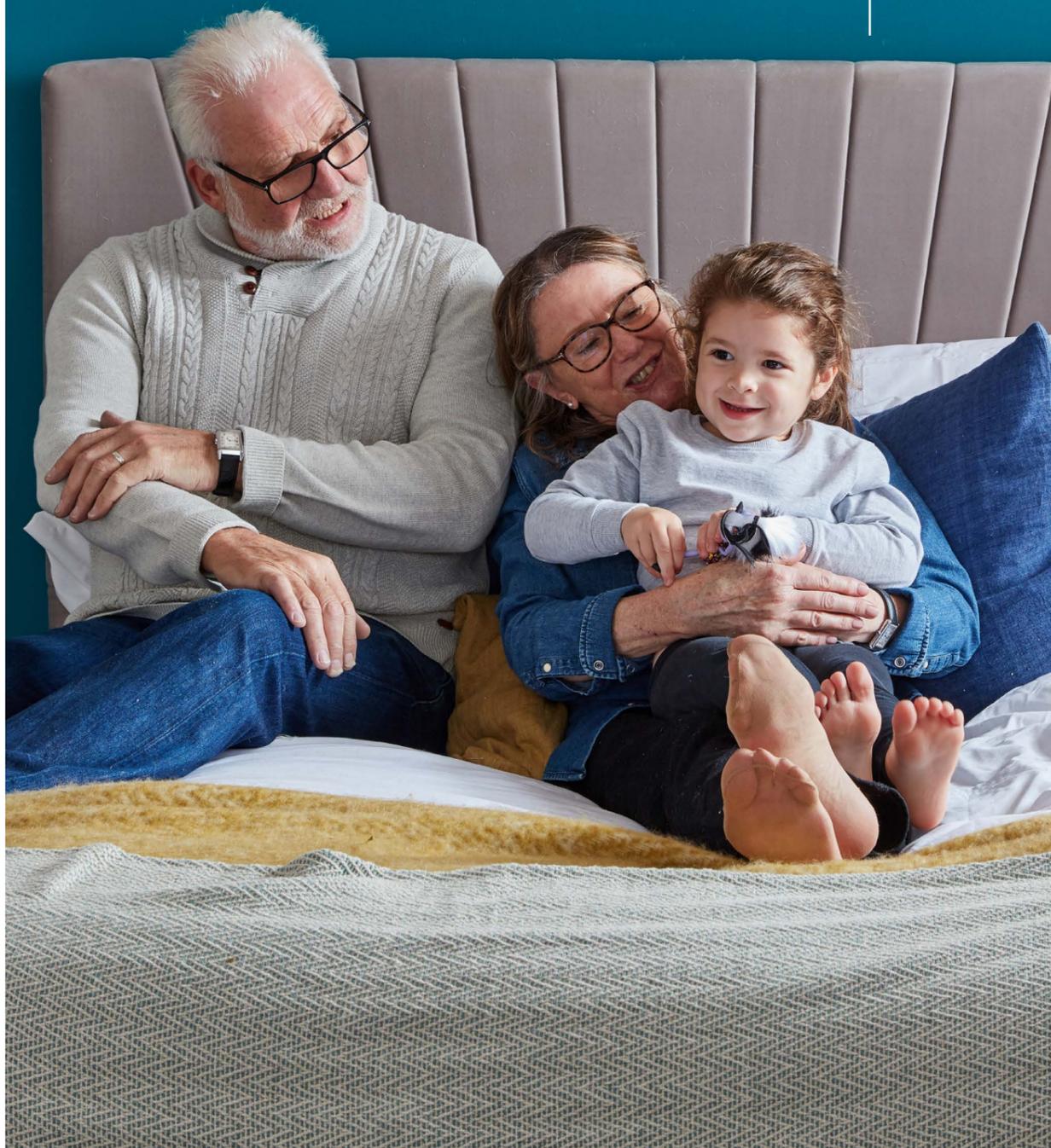
BUILD TO RENT | HMO | COLIVING | RESIDENTIAL FURNITURE  
SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING | STUDENT



**SECTORS**  
 BUILD TO RENT  
 HMO  
 COLIVING  
 RESIDENTIAL FURNITURE  
 SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING  
 STUDENT

**SERVICES**  
 DELIVERED  
 ASSEMBLED  
 INSTALLED  
 REMOVED  
 REPLACED  
 RECYCLED

**PRODUCTS**  
 LIVING ROOM  
 DINING ROOM  
 HOME OFFICE  
 BEDROOM  
 ACCESSORIES



# LOFT'S FULL CIRCLE APPROACH

**360 service, 360 products, 360 sustainability, 360 innovation.** LOFT has provided a 360 solution for residential interiors for 20 years.

Positioned perfectly in the centre of the residential marketplace, we advise, and add value for landlords, investors, residents, agents, developers, contractors, & operators. As our portfolio grows, so too does our circle of knowledge, connections and expertise.

As a central support function for lettings, property management, residential wellbeing, and community development, we have an incredibly balanced and deep understanding of both landlords and residents. We use our People First ethos to tap into the most current needs of our audiences and consistently deliver for them.

With a proven track record in adapting to the demands of the residential marketplace, pioneering interior trends across buy to let, student living and build to rent, our flexibility across the entirety of the property sector has sustained our growth.

Our position within the marketplace has allowed LOFT to bring together leaders and innovators from across the industry to create "Residential 360". A thought leadership journal that offers a 360° holistic insight across the property sector. We discuss key topics for the future of residential investment, technology, sustainability and lifestyle – we hope you enjoy.



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 PROPTech  
 BUILD TO RENT  
 RESIDENTIAL TRENDS

An aerial photograph of a winding river cutting through a dense, lush green forest. The river flows from the top left towards the bottom right, curving through the trees. The foliage is a vibrant green, with some darker patches of trees. The overall scene is serene and natural.

# ENVIRONMENTAL & SOCIAL GOVERNANCE

**PROCUREMENT, PRODUCT, CIRCULAR ECONOMY,  
INCLUSION, LOFT®.**

ESG is more than good intentions. It's about creating a tangible, practical plan that achieves real results. It's about embedding environmental, social and economic to create a 360° ESG infrastructure that serves to create a brighter future.

# POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Build to Rent (BTR) has seen substantial growth of stabilised assets over the last five years, and as a result, new on-site teams and positions are being created on a weekly basis. The sector has been responsible for providing hundreds of jobs in local communities and has also shown incredible resilience so far throughout the COVID pandemic. Therefore, we must study how, as an industry, we ensure we **Attract, Assess, Onboard,** and **Retain** the talent that gives our building communities the best opportunity to thrive. Listed below are our four building blocks that we work with our clients on to ensure they maximise their chances of success.

## ATTRACT

We must never forget that many job applicants may not even know what the BTR sector is or the acronyms and job titles that are put into job descriptions. Always make sure your job descriptions and advertising capture your company's tone of voice and values, but make sure the description of the role would be clear to somebody who has not ever worked in real estate but captures their transferable skills.

## ASSESS

A job interview is as much the candidate selling to you as you are selling to them. Areas to consider when running a recruitment process:

- Make sure you have the right amount of interview stages relevant to their role.
- Are they the right length? Not too short, not too long.
- Are relevant stakeholders trained to interview and clear on what competency framework they are working to?

## ONBOARD

The great news is that at this stage you have found a successful candidate! However, this can be the most volatile period for people potentially exiting the process. To mitigate these problems always have a clear post-offer engagement strategy and ensure internally everyone is aware and accountable to the plan.

## RETAIN

Retention of good people is much more important than attraction and the first six months is when you can really work to cement the relationship. Make sure your organisation has a clear training and development plan. One of the top reasons for people leaving an organisation is due to a lack of progression and training. Schedule lots of opportunities to communicate to people new to the organisation and always be willing to adapt to feedback.

BTR can be a shining light in the labour market and will keep playing a major part in recognising and repurposing skills from industries that have sadly been hit by the pandemic. Invest time into your recruitment and development programs and your building communities will thrive as a result.

## WHY YOUR BUILDING IS ONLY AS GOOD AS YOUR PEOPLE



**RP**

RED PENNY & PARTNERS

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# IT'S TIME FOR BTR TO GO GREEN...



You'd be surprised how many people have told us that they've switched to green energy tariffs, celebrating: "We've done it. Our business is Net Zero!" Unfortunately, a get out of jail free card like this just doesn't exist. But remember that doing the right thing by the planet will open new doors of opportunity going forwards.

Profit and purpose are finally starting to align. ESG scores are anchoring businesses who look after the planet close to the shore – where they can enjoy cheaper capital, better brand image, and greater prosperity. Conversely, those who pay no attention to sustainability will remain in choppy waters.

It's now more important than ever for you to weave Net Zero into your decision-making. And that is why I wanted to share three simple tips which I hope will help you to progress your Net Zero plans in 2022.

#### PLAN AHEAD

Some transformative changes have taken place these past five to ten years, and the next decade will see greater change still.

But while the private sector has shown time and time again how it's capable of readjusting to new climates and demands, we should all be preparing today for the policies of tomorrow.

The UK government has set ambitious targets for itself in recent years, most notably committing to achieving Net Zero by 2050. It's therefore only reasonable for businesses to consider what compensatory steps the legislature might take should our national progress towards that goal slip.

We know that regulations will tighten. We know more ambitious commitments are on the way. So, why are we waiting for the inevitable?

The faster you get ahead of the curve, the more likely it is you will safeguard return on investment, establish an advantage over competitors, and keep investors happy – and at bay.

Investors are becoming increasingly aware of the impact ESG scores have on their portfolios. Thanks to factors such as ESG, Net Zero is no longer something they – and, consequently, you – can afford to ignore.

#### TRACK PROGRESS

Not only does the BTR sector need to plan ahead when it comes to Net Zero,

it must also evaluate its short and medium-term progress on a regular basis.

I would recommend setting incremental targets every couple of years, with a quarterly review process in place to make sure that everything and everyone is on track. Setting consistent, achievable, but ambitious targets for your operation will help to develop cadence and establish a sense of genuine accountability – something which is so important in this sort of endeavour.

Furthermore, if you haven't already, consider tasking an employee or a third party with the responsibility of championing Net Zero, just to ensure it remains on the agenda. Without that internal or external advocate reminding you to keep on top of things, it can be easy to forget how important this is.

#### START WITH THE LOW-HANGING FRUIT

If your Net Zero strategy is currently just a blank sheet of paper, start from the point of view that you need to be as lean as possible.

"Lean", from my perspective as someone who works in the energy industry, refers to operational expenditure (i.e., the price you pay per unit of energy). We start here not because you should be overly concerned by what that amount is, but because this is what will drive decisions regarding return on investment moving forwards.

The same goes for your energy supply: who your energy supplier is will impact your future opportunities. If you've already signed up to a five-year fixed price with a REGO-backed supplier, reopening the conversation with them and exploring potential opportunities could be an option; but while not all suppliers will allow for this level of flexibility, what matters is that you have a vision of what you want from your energy and any future contract.

Once you have a strong understanding of what your energy budget is going to be for the next few years, you can then concentrate on investing in new technologies which will help you to reduce energy consumption. This will likely provide payback in less than two years.

If the BTR sector is to remain competitive, it needs to stay lean and save money – and, contrary to popular belief, driving towards Net Zero will help do that.



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*Nick founded Amber in 2009. The energy management consultancy supports businesses to strategically cut costs, reduce carbon, and drive towards Net Zero. It is a trusted partner across many sectors, including Build to Rent and Purpose-Built Student Accommodation.*

# ...OR GO HOME!



# HOMEVIEWS: A KEY ESG BENCHMARK

HomeViews has recently been recognised as a key assessment criterion for Community & Customer Engagement by the NextGeneration Sustainability Benchmark for UK housebuilders.

Executive Committee members Homes England, JLL, the UKGBC and Lloyds Bank selected HomeViews as one of the 2022-24 benchmarking criteria in response to the platform's dominant market coverage of verified residential property reviews and its rapidly growing visitor numbers.

HomeViews data will be used alongside information from the **Home Builders Federation** (HBF) to assess housebuilders on Community & Customer Engagement – one of the 15 ESG criteria assessed.



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## WHAT IS NEXTGENERATION?

The **NextGeneration Sustainability Benchmark** is an annual benchmarking standard that assesses the UK's 25 largest housebuilders, as well as additional member companies. The Benchmark's main objectives are to achieve greater transparency and accountability in the industry, and to drive continuous

improvement via healthy competition around ESG principles.

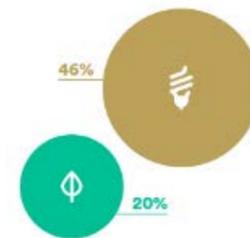
These goals align perfectly with those of HomeViews since its inception. The review platform was founded to provide consumers and the industry with greater transparency around performance and quality, and supply data insights that allow the industry to make targeted strategic adjustments.

Leading UK developers, housebuilders and housing associations are also recognising HomeViews as a crucial window onto resident sentiment, as well as a powerful marketing tool that positions residents as their biggest advocates. An enviable list of more than 40 partners includes **Berkeley Homes, Hill Homes, Barratt London** and **Network Homes**.

## SUSTAINABILITY: THE RESIDENT PERSPECTIVE

A vital contributing factor to HomeViews being recognised as a key ESG for UK housebuilders is their **Sustainability Insights Report: The Resident Perspective**. The Sustainability Insights Report took reviews from 3,200 residents surrounding the topic of sustainability and delivered some extremely insightful results and opinions of modern residents.

About 46% of reviewers who said that sustainable features were important to them included 'energy saving measures' within their selections, but only about 20% indicated 'building environmental ratings' as being important to them.



The importance of this resident data and report as a whole is multi-faceted. It will give developers and operators a better understanding of resident demand for specific sustainable building features, enables the industry to promote properties more effectively and it indicates key areas where consumers may require more

Some of the key findings of the report were:



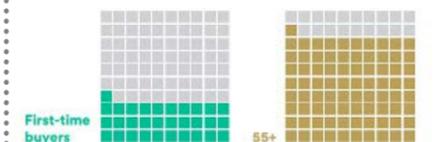
Almost 70% of reviewers indicated that **sustainable building features** were important to them.



**Recycling services** were by far the most important sustainable building feature across all new build residents, with **energy saving measures** the second most important and **renewable energy** a close third.

education on the significant benefits offered by specific sustainable technologies or strategies. But the hope above all else is to provide the industry with the insights it needs to create homes that are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable for the future.

Less than a third (31%) of first-time buyers said that sustainable building features were important to them, while 81% of 55+ age bracket said that these features were important to them – the most for any age category.



**Sustainable construction methods** and **smart features** were not highly valued by residents. Sustainable construction was the least important sustainable feature to tenants, while owners valued smart features the least.



**Download the full HomeViews Sustainability Insights Report here** to gain full insight into residents' relationship with sustainability and how it is impacting the residential marketplace.



HOW WE PRACTICE “PEOPLE FIRST” IN OUR MISSION TO

# END HOMELESSNESS

Our mission is to end homelessness. It sounds simple, but it is anything but simple. Homelessness has a myriad of causes and implications. Since our founding, we have worked tirelessly and relentlessly towards that goal. We now provide over 2,000 units of accommodation up and down the country. Along the way, we have found that getting someone a roof over their heads is just a first step.

Being focussed on people means that we are with our residents for every step of their journey. Our teams work with Lotus residents to provide them with the life skills they need to support themselves as they move forward. To help provide that, we are launching a retail arm called Lotus Living.

Lotus Living will not only provide funds for Lotus Sanctuary to help in the vital work we are doing. It will also be a fully integrated and crucial part of many residents’ journeys. Our Passport to Independence programme will provide work opportunities in Lotus Living sites, allowing those that we have helped to build skills in a wide range of fields from customer service and merchandising to warehousing and stock production.

The truth is that people create waste. As we build our retail arm, we are also making “Planet First” one of our core principles as we strive towards increased sustainability.

Lotus Living’s stock will be powered by donations from both the public and partner organisations. This way we aim to be saving thousands of usable goods from landfill to repurpose for a second life. Our network of DropPoints will support the donation process, allowing people to donate their clothing and household items at partner locations. Our relationships with companies like LOFT® give both us and our partners the opportunity to ensure that furniture or other goods that would either be thrown away or burned for energy an extension to their usable lives.

The extension to the life of clothing items is obvious. A new owner means dozens – if not more – of wears for clothes that would otherwise be discarded. With furniture, Lotus Living residents will be guided in repair and upcycling work. The residents learn new skills that allow them to develop themselves and build better lives while we simultaneously do our part in tackling the culture of disposable goods that has emerged in the last century. When a resident is in need of anything that Lotus Living has in stock, we will provide it to them at no cost; and when they are ready to leave Lotus’ supported accommodations, we will be in a position to offer them a starter pack at a significant discount.

We see this as a win-win-win. Our residents are supported through additional funding, opportunities, or

much-needed goods. Our customers are delighted with their new-to-them items. We and our partners have contributed to building a more sustainable future.

This is Lotus Sanctuary and Lotus Living’s offer to both people and planet. Both are at the core of our work and are the driving principles of our operations.



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# FURNISHING SOCIAL IMPACT HOUSING WITH LOTUS SANCTUARY



Part of LOFT®’s commitment to people is giving as many people as possible equal opportunities to enjoy beautiful and comfortable interiors. Everyone should have the opportunity to call a place home and have a sanctuary to feel safe and comforted in. That is why we partner with a UK-based community interest company with the pure intention of housing and empowering people across the country who are facing homelessness. A company that we share a vision and ethos with of creating a better future for all by starting with giving people the security of a home refuge.

Having started in 2018 with the humble beginnings of one property aiming to house people who were sleeping rough in the streets, Lotus Sanctuary is currently operational across the UK with over 400 units of transitional housing. They wish to provide units of accommodation for its residents that provide inspiration and a fresh perspective, while experiencing what the comforting cradle of a home can feel like. But to experience a home unit in this way, the interiors must match the aspirations set for the aspirations

of the project – that’s where LOFT® comes in.

## UPCYCLING FURNITURE TO UPGRADE INTERIORS

As it is a vulnerable demographic of people Lotus work with to re-home, striking the right feeling within the home units is essential to ensuring they feel immediately at ease when they are introduced to them. We proudly donate a large range of LOFT® furniture to furnish the homes within the Lotus Sanctuary network, from beds and sofas to chairs and tables and everything in between. The majority of the furniture supplied is either returned orders or ex-display. In some companies, this category of furniture would be counted as “unused” – but not at LOFT®. We saw the opportunity to not only help people in need and help create authentic home environments but also keep the landfills that bit emptier by upcycling our furniture to give it a second life.

We also contribute to Lotus through their retail branch, Lotus Living. Part of LOFT®’s partnership with Lotus

is to provide a turnkey furnishing solution for homes within the Lotus Sanctuary housing network, using core and surplus stock at an agreed lower price point to help support the cause and create homes that are immediately ready to be lived in. Being in the position to positively contribute to such a worthy cause and create crucial interiors across the social impact housing sector is such a meaningful branch of our work and allows us to give back to the collective community that has supported us as a company throughout the years.

Another huge part of our work with Lotus is through their new retail branch - Lotus Sanctuary has evolved its foundation to set up a retail arm, Lotus Living. LOFT® donate samples, graded stock and furniture we have previously removed from properties across the UK as part of our replenishment solution – Lotus Living benefits massively from these donations and goes a long way to bolstering this innovative re-employment solution.

# VOX: SUSTAINABLE BUILD TO RENT



**We are in a climate crisis and the construction industry is responsible for 49% of carbon emissions in the UK. Last year at Glenbrook we decided to get all our new BTR schemes assessed by an external carbon consultant.**

Since 2016 we have delivered four BTR schemes for institutional funds across Liverpool and Manchester. With another six in the pipeline, we made the decision to start measuring our carbon performance on all new development.

The reasons for this were threefold. Firstly, in a world of sustainability declarations and intentions, we want to demonstrate that green principles are at the heart of our developments. Secondly, understanding how our developments perform gives us additional comfort when proposing carbon reduction targets to planners,

and thirdly, ESG is increasingly on the agenda of our funding partners – they want to see a strong track record and commitment to ongoing innovation.

To start, we needed a benchmark. This would allow us to understand our carbon footprint, show us what we were doing right and identify areas for improvement.

Our scheme VOX, a 280-flat scheme built on a disused industrial site in Manchester was the obvious choice to test our performance. The scheme completed in January 2021, and is our fourth BTR scheme, so demonstrating an evolved Glenbrook product. From inception, well-being and sustainability were at the heart of the design and, with our consultants, we endeavoured to deliver on these areas as efficiently as possible, within the development budget.



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## FORENSIC ASSESSMENT

Engineering, energy and sustainability consultancy Hydrock were instructed to undergo a forensic whole lifecycle carbon assessment by delving into the 'real life' embodied carbon footprint. This included examining the extraction, assembly, maintenance, replacement and disposal of the materials and systems that made up the building design.

Hydrock applied the London Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI) benchmark to measure the carbon footprint of the development and identify areas for carbon reduction.

VOX performed well. The scheme's embodied carbon equated to 495 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e/m<sup>2</sup> which reflected a 37% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, relative to standard industry practice, making it compliant with the LETI Design 2020 target for upfront embodied carbon (495 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e/m<sup>2</sup>).

This was made possible through a combination of factors. Firstly, a "fabric first" approach to the thermal envelope resulted in a highly insulated and air tight façade." We did this while also focusing to reduce materials where possible. Reducing the floor slab thickness by a few millimetres

saved 291m<sup>3</sup> of concrete and took 48 concrete trucks off the road. By laying the slabs earlier and allowing them to settle, our contractors reduced the volume of aggregates and materials required.

## STEPS TO NET-ZERO

But there is always room for improvement. Hydrock's report told us a further 24% reduction in whole-life emissions could have been achieved at VOX with further interventions. This includes increased use of renewable energy. VOX utilises one roof for PV cells (the other houses a gym, wellness suite, tenant lounge, and rooftop garden with running track) however there is additional opportunity to improve through the introduction of air source heat pumps.

Air source heat pumps require an upfront cost. We are exploring the viability of these systems and expect the technology will start to become more efficient and affordable as we move towards the revised Part L of the Building Regulations which are due to come into effect by June 2022.

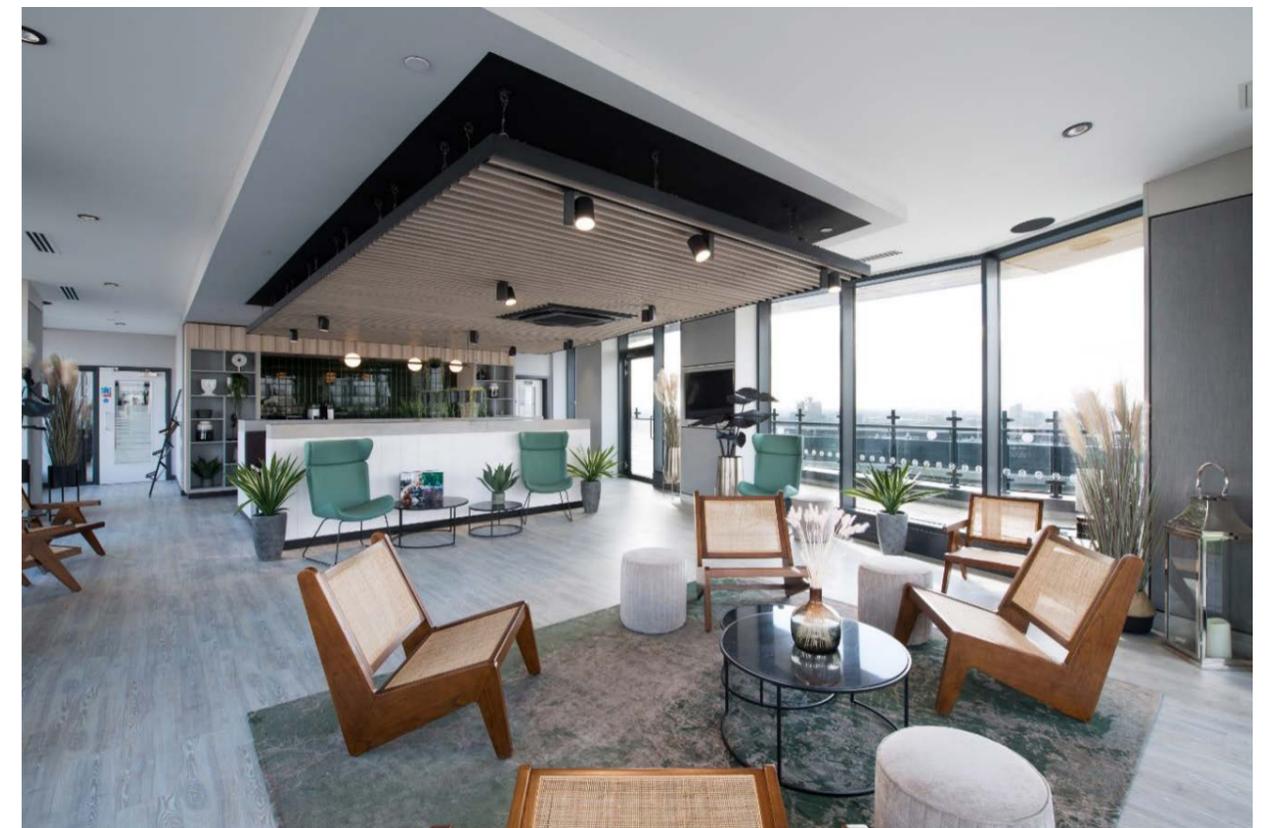
A greater focus on occupancy behaviour to reduce energy usage and exploring offsetting emissions off-site will also help. We are working with

the BTR property managers on the schemes we have delivered, exploring the best ways they can help over 2,000 tenants reduce their operational carbon footprint. Whilst we can't make people change their behaviour, we can try and make it a bit easier.

This includes a soft-landing approach to handover with training on heating and hot water systems and clear tenant-user guides. We also host feedback meetings with scheme managers once the development is fully occupied to assess the performance of the M&E design and installations.

Over 1,000 people work on each of our developments, including consultants, designers, contractors, sub-contractors and scheme managers. We rely on each person doing whatever is possible within the development constraints to deliver the greenest possible solution.

This includes our funding partners who we expect to have a genuine passion for delivering on their ESG targets and futureproofing their schemes. It's only through a combined effort, through shared values and aspirations, that we can move towards a net-zero offering.



# MORE TREES, PLEASE!

Back in 2020, LOFT® collaborated with UK tree planting company Gone West, a UK based tree planting company that aim to generate ethical, green jobs and help establish, or restore, natural habitats. With the help of this partnership, LOFT® have pledged that for every apartment we furnish we would plant a tree to not only balance our environmental footprint but give back that bit more.

Through the help and guidance of Gone West, LOFT® have planted 5000+ trees to date and all trees have been hand-planted by LOFT® employees. It is greatly beneficial for LOFT® employees to personally plant these trees as it gives a hands-on perspective of the company's commitment to sustainability and also gives a sense of collective accomplishment. We do not plan on slowing down in our tree-planting endeavours either as another company-wide tree-planting day alongside Gone West is planned for this Summer. Every tree planted is another step closer to our ultimate goal of Net Zero, the ultimate achievement of mirroring our ambitious sustainability goals and company vision.

Gone West are specialists in native woodland creation. So far, they have planted over 5 million trees worldwide - but these trees planted signify more than improved biodiversity and sustainability. These trees have equally positive social benefits as they do environmental by creating positive work for people who need it most, they have engaged businesses in the battle against climate change and they have protected communities around the globe. Over 200 people have been trained as planters, receiving sustainable employment and a path towards better living conditions.

By supporting local projects around the globe with native trees and the resources to plant them, Gone West aim to change lives. Gone West targets the ecological, social, and economic value that comes with planting trees. In return, they receive the inspiration of watching local communities grow and thrive alongside them. To achieve the amount of carbon offsetting needed to battle climate change, we must work together to ensure the future is greener for us and generations to come.

"Giving back for us is not only planting trees, but it's also thinking about how we run our businesses, how we source our products and materials, and how we can create jobs and take care of the vulnerable members of our society."



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# A SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION TO HOMELESSNESS

The number of homeless people on UK streets has increased dramatically over the past 5 years. That's before the inevitable impact of the pandemic, that of course had massive knock-on impacts to homelessness in the UK. The government estimates 1 out of every 200 Britons are currently homeless and 1 in 3 evictions would have been avoidable had it not been for Covid. So, we decided we had to step up and do something to help, and in 2018 we did.

With help from my Aunt & Uncle and a local Manchester developer, Capital & Centric, my wife and I bought a luxury tour bus to convert to temporary emergency accommodation. We couldn't afford a building and a bus didn't need planning permission! We called the charity 'Embassy' and became unusual ambassadors on a world tour of Salford. We quickly realised short term emergency accommodation wasn't enough, so 5 months after our first guest stepped onto the bus, we employed our first full time Resettlement Manager.

Now we have employed several resettlement workers. This, coupled with growing offers of work from local companies meant we quickly became a resettlement programme. The impact the bus had was immediate. The very first homeless man to set foot inside the bus burst into tears and said, "now I feel valued". The bus did not just offer accommodation and comfort for these men, but great fun too with the latest gaming equipment, smart interior, memory foam private beds and a deeply inappropriate champagne fridge. We were soon taking excursions to the beach and camping spots on the weekends to give our people a change of scenery and something to look forward to.

But we began to realise that shelters were a dumping ground of sorts and that local authorities simply didn't have enough council housing. For example, we recently housed a man with no criminal or addiction history who had been in a shelter, waiting for council housing for 7 years. He's

32. Think of everything you have accomplished in 7 years; this man was unfortunately one of many who simply could not get a foothold to begin improving and progressing.

Within weeks of opening the shelter we decided to shift to private landlords for housing. To make this viable we undertook a lot of business networking, resulting in 22 companies partnering to employ our residents full time, including LOFT®. LOFT® are the perfect example of the kind of relationship we aspire to build. From their fundraising, volunteers, furniture supplementation for events and for people as they get housed have all served Embassy amazingly.

The shelter where almost all the men were in full-time work or education was unusual. The PRS landlords were still weary of accepting homeless men as residents. Only 1 in 25 would take our men as residents. It was hard work, so we began to formulate a plan. What if we could take out the middlemen and become the landlords

instead? We met with Capital and Centric and Peel L&P and formed a steering group. Peel offered us 1.5 acres in the city centre for a lease of 125 years and what followed was nothing short of a miracle. 25 companies, in the middle of the first lockdown came together entirely virtually to design and prepare every aspect for planning free of charge – the idea of The Embassy Village was born. With the help of Arcadis, Deloitte and John Matthews Architects among others, we secured planning for 40 homes, a training base, offices, indoor social space, sports and garden amenities. It should have cost £300,000 to get to planning. I spent less than £1,000.

So far, we've helped 46 men move from street to next accommodation of which only two ever made it into council accommodation. Training we offer in shopping, cooking, budgeting plus full-time employment is working extremely well. We are offering an alternative route, where we end the person's homelessness on day

1 and facilitate a real practice run at managing a home and renting. It means all their mistakes are made with us ahead of making good tenants in the future.

The Embassy Village will begin construction in Spring 2022 and LOFT® are generously supplying us with all furnishings. LOFT® also introduced us to Gone West who are planting enough trees to counter the carbon the village will produce and giving our residents the chance to get out of the city and plant with them – leading to the potential for full-time work for those that want it. Working closely with companies, including in the property sector is proving to be extremely fruitful for not just our company, but Manchester as a whole. Together we can combat homelessness and create a better world for everyone.

Find out more about The Embassy Village or see how you can get involved here - [embassyvillage.co.uk](https://embassyvillage.co.uk)



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# I WANT PLANTS®

## X LOFT®

We are I WANT PLANTS®, a leading horticultural company supplying and installing stunning live/artificial green infrastructure displays, artificial floral installations and dazzling custom made trees.

And we are the very proud inventors of HYVERT Living wall systems (registered design - Patent Pending), a nature based solution which is helping to create a more sustainable, less polluted environment - scientifically validated by Manchester Metropolitan University with research still ongoing.

Our incredible project work can be found in Hospitality, Commercial, Education and Care sectors across the UK, within bars, hotels, spas, workspaces, roof gardens, student accommodation and more!

As two Mancunian family businesses, our Managing Director (MD), Richard

Rowlands recently met with LOFT®'s MD, Benjamin Hall, to look at how both companies could work more closely, since they shared similar core business principles around the importance of biophilic design using design-led products to deliver a great customer experience.

**How could we, at I WANT PLANTS®, share our unique designs with LOFT® clients?**

The answer, a collaboration between each company's in-house Design teams, will mean that alongside fantastic combined interior design creativity, thanks to our impressive stock levels at I WANT PLANTS®, we will also have the ability to exclusively fulfil the volume and demand required by LOFT® clients.

Exciting times ahead for two Manchester companies!



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@ in  
**I WANT PLANTS®**

## ECOLOGICAL AND BIODIVERSITY SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES

PROVEN PREDICTIVE MODELLING

**01 /**  
REDUCING AIR POLLUTION

Particulate matter and bioaerosols heavy metals absorption.



**02 /**  
IMPROVING BIODIVERSITY

HYVERT qualified as equivalent to native scrubland which supports cultivated grasslands or amenity lawns.

**03 /**  
ENHANCING PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL WELL-BEING



Interior and Exterior applications.



**04 /**  
IMPROVING ENERGY PERFORMANCE

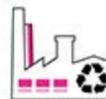
Urban Island Heat Effect/Biological Skin.

# HYVERT I WANT PLANTS®

Through predictive modelling and multidisciplinary research across eight key Sustainability Measures, I Want Plants are the only business that can deliver a tailored biophilic solution for your business.

**05 /**  
NOISE ABATEMENT

Species that are better at reducing decibel pitch levels.



**06 /**  
ETHICAL MANUFACTURING

HYVERT modules and frames made from recycled car batteries.

**07 /**  
RAINWATER RE-UTILISATION

Rooftop surface water capture and re-utilisation into irrigation system.



**08 /**  
EFFECTIVE CARBON REDUCTION

Absorption of CO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> contributing towards carbon reduction programs.



# THE REUSE REVOLUTION



Here at Reuse Network, we operate across sectors and within the heart of our communities to tackle poverty and inequality to offer a better and brighter future for all.

As a charity ourselves, we understand the unique nature of the sector. Working side-by-side with our members, we help them raise income, reduce dependence on grants, provide better access to more household goods and create opportunities for those in need.

In 2020, the entire reuse sector prevented 111,664 tonnes of products from going to landfills and we have no plans of stopping there!

## A SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION TO TACKLING WASTE

We are building meaningful connections between our commercial partners, member organisations and members of the public to divert usable household items from landfills and into low-income households. In addition to this, reuse alleviates poverty, saves hundreds of thousands of tonnes of CO2, and supports a vast, growing network of people through volunteering, employment and training opportunities.

We work with a large and growing number of commercial partners to help them develop strong, shared social responsibility and circular economy strategies. This helps our partners lower their waste disposal bills, lighten their carbon footprint and make tangible contributions to society by simply extending the life of their products. The result is vastly more usable household goods ending up in homes that need them and not in a landfill.

Started in the 1980s as a way of diverting household items from landfills, the reuse sector has grown to become much more than simply a redistribution exercise. Our members are now seen as pillars of their communities, providing local people with job and volunteering opportunities, offering debt advice, running food banks and hosting creative upcycling sessions.

## CHANGING LIVES THROUGH REUSE

Every day we are giving unwanted items a second chance. But we do more than that.

The impact of reuse goes far beyond just environmental impacts. Whilst the country shut down throughout the pandemic, Reuse Network members stepped up to provide a vital lifeline to those facing crisis as a result of ongoing lockdown restrictions. One Reuse Network member, Rummage

Rescuers, diversified beyond furniture provision to support the varying needs of its local community throughout the pandemic.

Rummage Rescuers CIC is a community-based not-for-profit organisation based in Blackburn and Lancashire aimed at alleviating poverty locally via collaborative working partnerships. The charity was at the forefront of the COVID-19 response, supporting thousands of local people who were forced into dangerous and sometimes life-threatening situations. The organisation was able to work quickly and its creativity in its response flowed. Many services in the local area focused solely on food, meanwhile Rummage Rescuers took a holistic approach to address the wide-ranging needs in its local communities.

Rummage Rescuers were able to provide cookers for families to have warm food, provide nappies and baby milk to families with young children, provide equipment to disabled people, make PPE for frontline workers and give isolated people hope and contact.

## HOW TO DONATE YOUR UNWANTED GOODS

We use your unwanted household items and give them a second chance. By doing so we are helping low-income households create sustainable homes.

The donations we receive are repurposed and reused for people who need them. For us to be able to pass them on, they need to be in good condition. The donations do not need to be new, but any furniture and office equipment should be clean, free from major rips or stains and in good, usable condition.

Upholstered furniture like sofas, armchairs or mattresses must have a fire label otherwise we will not be able to accept it. We cannot pass items which we do not know are safe.

And finally, any electrical devices should be clean, safe and have evidence of a CE mark.

As a rule of thumb, ask yourself if you would use it?

## WANT TO JOIN THE REUSE REVOLUTION?

If you'd like to work with us and our network of charities to help divert items from landfills and support low-income households, please contact our Commercial Manager, Hannah Jordan at [hannah.jordan@reuse-network.org](mailto:hannah.jordan@reuse-network.org).



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**reuse**  
NETWORK



**SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS**

As an interior furnishing company, we install and remove huge quantities of furniture weekly. But by far the most common piece of furniture we have to deal with is mattresses. Mattress disposal is a problem in the UK as sadly thousands of 'finished' mattresses end up in landfills every single day. Over 7 million mattresses were disposed of in 2019 by households, businesses and service providers at great cost and effort. Mattress disposal costs households, businesses and service providers an estimated £20 million, excluding transport and handling costs. It is an issue that affects individuals and businesses in multiple ways but more importantly, it is affecting our planet negatively.

Even though we have partnered with specialist recycling companies for years to recycle the mattresses responsibly, we still felt like there was more to be done for this ongoing problem. So we partnered with a revolutionary UK based recycling company that creates a sustainable and renewable circular economy from recycled mattress materials. This forward-thinking supplier is an

industry leader and is paving the way toward a circular, regenerative economy for mattresses and many other products. These mattresses are created from 95% recycled materials, in particular previous mattresses and beds.

They divert mattresses and beds from landfills to their specialist centre where they then strip them down into their raw components and begin the manufacturing process of creating a new mattress. As one of these mattresses is then no longer wanted, it can return to be stripped again to create a new one.

This approach of proactive reuse and aggressive minimisation of discard will help prevent a shift from the current landfill crisis to a manufacturing crisis – current industry practice is leading to a landfill mattress ban. By changing this linear culture of "make, break and throw away" to a circular "make, break and re-make" ethos, the list of ecological and economic benefits created for all is endless.

**AFFORDABLE SUSTAINABILITY**

LOFT® are proud and excited to be the exclusive supplier of this new age

of sustainable products. The idea of a circular economy is something that we have been incorporating into our practices for years, through our upcycling of furniture and substantial charity donations. We envisage of future of totally regenerative furniture and furnishings, but to achieve that we need 2 things - the products need to be of high quality and they need to be affordable.

The comfort of these mattresses is a testament to the quality of engineering that goes into creating them. The absolute pinnacle of recycled technology by incorporating built-in sanitized hygiene all topped off by 3-layered memory cooling foam. LOFT® wish for every home in the UK, and beyond, to have a Regenerate Mattress so that the circular economy can continue to spin across a larger scale. This is exactly why the prices are so affordable, sustainability should be accessible to all.

Check out our range of Regenerate Mattresses to join the circular economy and sleep easy knowing you put the planet first.

# PLANET APPROVED PRODUCTS: REGENERATE MATTRESS

Sustainability is not just a term we use lightly at LOFT®. It is a guiding principle for every aspect of our operations and a core value for our business as a whole. As a People First company, the ultimate way to put people first is by firstly ensuring our planet is as clean and green as possible. It is important to take a step back and re-evaluate to ensure we are pushing our sustainability measures far enough.



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# WHAT IS PEOPLE FIRST DESIGN?

## PEOPLE FIRST, TOGETHER

"People First Design" should not be confused with traditional, human-centred design, which often encourages individualism, rather than togetherness. Individualism, which is on the rise, is a fundamental obstacle to our collective ability to address the most pressing issues we face as a society today.

For decades now, designers have been taught to consider human needs in their work – only human needs. But design that is good only for people, without looking at the well-being of our planet, has got us into big trouble.

While human-centred design is (in theory) inspired by the principle that broader human-centric systems should be considered, in practice, the needs of the individual user tends to eclipse the consideration of communal needs.

Addressing communal needs requires inspiring a collective effort and collective behaviour - collective effort often requires individual sacrifice. "People First" means encouraging collective behaviour, discussing, and designing solutions that are more circular, more inclusive, more available, and more accessible to many more people.

"It doesn't matter if you design a fantastic sustainable product if no one can afford or access it. If we can design inclusively – not just products, but supply chains, manufacturing, distribution, etc. – we can empower many more people, both individually and as part of a system, to tackle the biggest challenge of our generation - climate change" says Johanna Fabrin, Strategy Design Lead at Space 10 Research & Design Lab, Copenhagen.

**"People First" means Planet First because there is no separation between human beings, our planet and nature - we are intrinsically linked.**

Design that is not good for our planet, is fundamentally bad for our people - it's time for us to move away from Human-centred design and work towards **Humanity-centred design**.

## HUMANITY-CENTRED DESIGN

Humanity-centred design is a practice where designers focus upon people's needs, not as individuals but as societies and cultures, inherently linked with the health and well-being of community and our planet.

*"We should not see people and the planet in competition with each other" Fabrin continues; "Humans should be part of the equation, but not at the expense of everything else. We can only create a good life for people if we create a good life for the planet."*

We must rethink the relationship between humans, design, construction, technology, and our planet, realising they are a complex system of interdependencies. Approaching everything we design as part of a huge, interconnected system means that we start with a values-based approach: a regenerative attitude, rather than a corporate manifesto.

## SUSTAINABILITY IS NOT ENOUGH.

Sustainability, as currently practised in the built environment, is an exercise in efficiency, or using less. The use of environmental rating systems creates a reduction in the damage caused by excessive resource use; "doing things better", rather than "doing better things".

**But the word sustainability itself is inadequate because it does not tell us what we are actually trying to sustain.**

Sustainability alone therefore is not an adequate long term goal - we must do better, we must become regenerative by design.

*"Regenerative design works as a positive force that restores, renews, and revitalises. A concept that's*

*inherent in nature, regeneration should be the approach for how we interact with our planet, that's focused upon giving back much more than we take."* Bill Reed, Regenesys Group.

Regenerative Design also changes our approach to community development issues, given the need to plan in a way that supports disenfranchised people, promotes affordably priced housing, and brings issues of social equity to the forefront of People First design.

True regenerative design requires humans to participate as a key element of nature, society, and culture, creating a co-evolution within our entire eco-system. Instead of doing **less** damage to our environment it is necessary to learn how we can participate **with** our environment by using the health of ecological and social systems, as a basis for our design.

People First means Planet First because there is no separation between human beings, nature, and society, we co-exist, together.



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**LOFT**<sup>®</sup>



# SUSTAINABILITY AT LOFT®: PLANET FIRST PEOPLE

As a People First company above all else, a greener world is a better place for people everywhere. Our core values keep us grounded and focused on what's really important when running an ethically conscious business. A sustainable infrastructure was created during our inception and it has been continually built upon through the years to ensure sustainability is inherent in our daily practice and present in every action we take.

The UK has a target to reduce global temperature increases to less than 2 degrees celsius by 2050. This target can only be achieved by individuals, companies and organisations working collectively towards this shared goal with passion and innovation.

So, what actions are LOFT® taking as a business to create a cleaner, greener world for all?

## STRIVING TOWARDS NET ZERO

Back in 2020, we collaborated with UK tree planting company Gone West. With the help of this partnership, we pledged that for every apartment we furnish we would plant a tree to not only balance our environmental footprint but give back that bit more.

Through the help and guidance of Gone West, LOFT® have planted 5000+ trees to date and all trees have been hand-planted by LOFT® employees. It is greatly beneficial for LOFT® employees to personally plant these trees as it gives a hands-on perspective of the company's commitment to sustainability and also gives a sense of collective accomplishment.

We do not plan on slowing down in our tree-planting endeavours either as another company-wide tree-planting day alongside Gone West is planned for this Summer. Every tree planted is another step closer to our ultimate goal of Net Zero, the

ultimate achievement of mirroring our ambitious sustainability goals and company vision.

*"Giving back for us is not only planting trees, but it's also thinking about how we run our businesses, how we source our products and materials, and how we can create jobs and take care of the vulnerable members of our society."*

## LOFT® DON'T DO LANDFILLS

Our warehouses and office buildings hold themselves accountable to ensure all daily waste is being appropriately recycled. On top of this, we recycle over 5,000 mattresses every year through independent companies who strip them down and recycle, reuse or manufacture new products from the respective parts.

We only work with products of high quality, making them long-lasting and minimising the need to constantly replace items. We up-cycle as

much removed furniture as possible by donating it to one of the many charities we work with across the UK to give the furniture a second life and simultaneously help numerous people in need.

We proudly hold a 97% landfill diversion rate by either up-cycling removed products, donating used pieces to one of the many charities we work with or responsibly recycling removed furniture & furnishings. Last year alone we saved 196.3 tonnes of carbon emissions by diverting so much waste from landfills and recycled over 2.1 tonnes of paper and card.

## RESPONSIBLE PRODUCT SOURCING

We are aware of the opportunity to make positive and sustainable choices when dealing with a consistent supply chain of furniture and furnishings. That's why all our suppliers complete our PQQ, specifically designed to encourage

sustainability across all areas.

In order to be registered as a supplier on our system, we request evidence of relevant insurances, trade memberships, accreditations and product compliance certificates. And we audit all the information provided annually to ensure it is current and relevant. So you can be confident that, if they are LOFT® approved, they are one of the good guys.

On top of these measures, to ensure the strict sustainability measures we set to qualify to be a supplier for us we subcontract quality and sustainability control representatives in the Far East to manage and audit our supply chain, ensuring that every one of our supply chain partners, no matter the location, are performing to our exacting standards.

*"Every year, LOFT® give us the industry trends, provide us with accurate product development directions and*

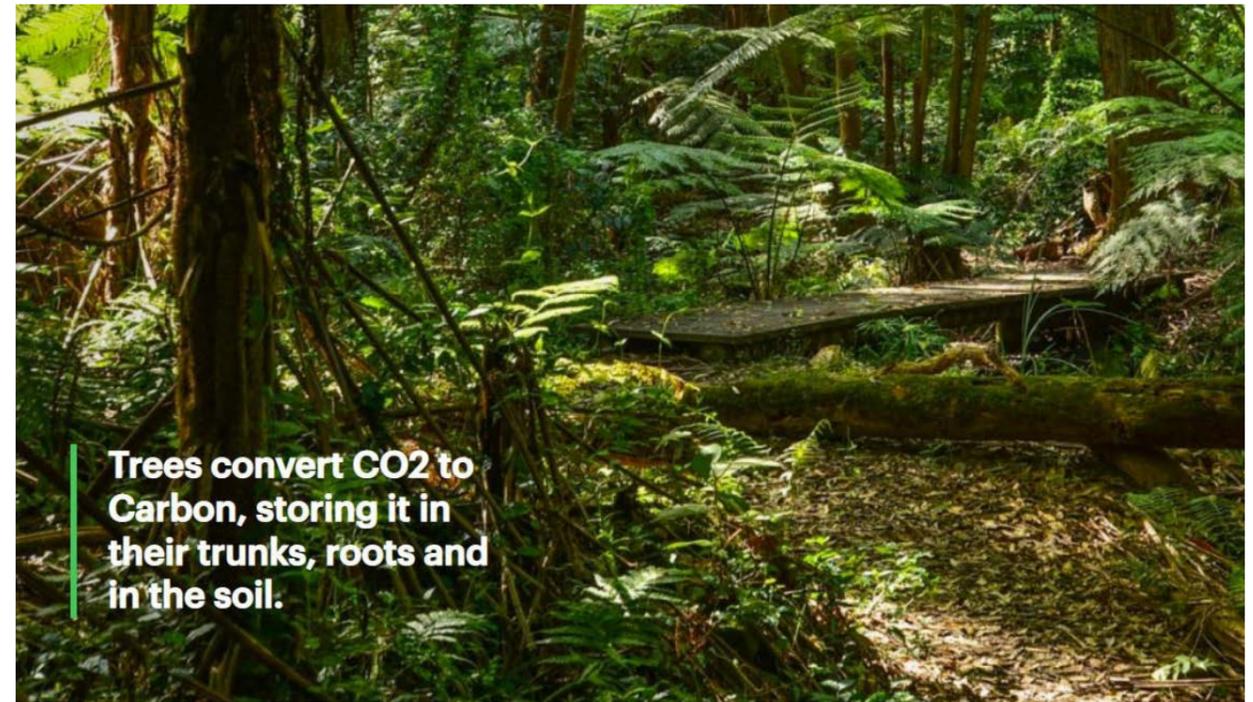
*put forward valuable suggestions on the production process. LOFT® has the boldest ideas, the fastest response times and the most sincere service."*



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# LOFT®

# TR[1]BE™



## THE PROACTIVE PRESERVERS

### WHO IS ONE TRIBE?

One Tribe is a spirited group of developers and marketers who have created a climate action platform that enables e-commerce brands to protect the environment and reach their Net Zero targets faster.

Their technology acts as a plug-in for web stores, which then aids forest protection with every purchase. Once a sale is made online, a small portion of that sale is automatically donated to conservation projects across the world. Giving customers the ability to save endangered landscapes and wildlife with just the click of a button. Helping to fund the protection and regeneration of forests is one of the greatest things we can do for our planet. By working with One Tribe, brands can save huge acres of forest, reducing a company's environmental footprint and preventing governing

bodies from deforesting indigenous land. One Tribe donations fund a variety of different projects that cover not just tree protection, but wildlife conservation, eco-restoration, rewilding, and more.

One particular thing that the funding allows One Tribe to do is to give indigenous people rights to their own land within the Amazon. More than 350 Indigenous and ethnic groups live within the Amazon, but most do not own title deeds to their own land. Their generations have lived there for hundreds of years, yet they are still under threat from large corporations and even their own governments. But now we can safely say that One Tribe is a cause that contributes to protecting these people and bettering the future of our planet.



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TR[1]BE™

### A NOD TO THE FUTURE

More recently, the team at One Tribe started advancing their technology to begin focussing more on carbon offsetting- and making sure it's done right. Their new technology will be able to estimate the carbon emissions of each individual e-commerce product and allow both brands and their consumers to reduce their carbon footprint while shopping. In addition to that, One Tribe's technology acts as a natural form of offsetting to combat

carbon emissions. Forests are one of the Earth's greatest carbon sinks. Effectively storing and sequestering harmful volumes of CO2 from the atmosphere. This means that by supporting conservation causes, your brand is actively offsetting carbon emissions via a nature-based solution. The race to net zero is on and we are so proud to be working alongside a team of experienced activists who truly care about the environment as much as we do.

- #### 1. You Purchase

When your purchase from a One Tribe partner store, they make a donation on your behalf.
- #### 2. We Protect Trees

All donations are certified by One Tribe and transferred to the conservation partners.
- #### 3. We All Reduce Co2

Funds are allocated to rainforest projects that help reduce and store Co2 from our atmosphere.

# RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY

**PEOPLE FIRST, ENVIRONMENTS, SECTORS,  
CONNECTIONS, LOFT®.**

Community is truly a 360 concept. We rely on community as much as it relies on us, without one there would not be another. Give back more than you take, cultivate positivity in your community and never underestimate the power of communal unity.





# THE IMPORTANCE OF CO-WORKING SPACE

The COVID-19 pandemic lockdown periods have opened the eyes of both workers and businesses to the potential benefits of flexible working, including working from home for part or all of the working week. BTR designers, developers and operators must now respond to this phenomenon by considering the incorporation of co-working space within their developments, so that they and the residents can reap the great potential benefits that such spaces offer.



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CHAPMAN TAYLOR

## THE PARADIGM SHIFT

Increasingly, designers and developers are recognising the benefits of learning from the trends of other, experiential-focused markets, moving away from operating within siloed sectors to transform the experience for their end-users. In recent years, residential developments have been adopting ideas which were traditionally the preserve of hotels, for example, and many office developments are borrowing heavily from the leisure and hospitality sectors and have perhaps come to emulate the trends and successes of the BTR sector.

BTR developments have been at the forefront in embracing the potential benefits of providing a mix of amenities under one roof, merging the residential format with

ideas taken from the hospitality and leisure sectors and creating what has become a very attractive alternative to simple, residential-only apartment blocks, particularly for people living alone, small families and young professionals.

However, co-working is a sector that has, up until recently, been relatively overlooked by BTR developers and operators. Co-working / working from home is something that BTR operators must now consider as part of their offer – the COVID-19 pandemic has been something of a paradigm shift in terms of how we view the world of work and the importance of work-life balance. Where once the dominant working pattern resulted in an exodus of people before 9am and an influx after 7pm, there is now more flexibility, with more people at home in the

“traditional” working hours and more activity in and around the building throughout the day as a result. This is helping to reinforce the sense of community in BTR developments.

The provision of communal workspace may be vital to the social and commercial success of a BTR development, particularly in the aftermath of a prolonged period of people being isolated from each other, causing them to appreciate the value of personal human interaction more than ever. It is being increasingly noted that developers of large city buildings in the UK are finding it more challenging to fully lease them if they do not contain at least some co-working space within them, and this phenomenon may soon extend to the BTR sector.



## WHY BTR AND CO-WORKING ARE SO COMPATIBLE

While it is true that co-working offers great revenue potential which the BTR sector has not properly tapped into, the importance of including a co-working space is not just about revenue generation; rather it should be viewed as something which will be a necessary prerequisite in an age where a significant proportion of people are choosing to work from home, either part-time or full-time.

The goal for BTR operators must be to provide a space that residents and

people from the local community can use for working where they need more than just a desk in their apartment. The benefits to residents may include the ability to hold meetings, to openly collaborate, to experience the buzz of activity around them, to avail of ancillary amenities (printing and photocopying, for example), and the ability to have chance encounters which can lead to business ideas and accelerate innovation.

It may be that some people will want to work primarily from their apartments but spend an hour

or two in what would be akin to a hospitality environment, working from their laptops while enjoying a coffee and a bite to eat, just for that important sense of social connection and wellbeing. The space could be designed for 24-hour working, catering for those whose working patterns flex well beyond the traditional 9-to-5 template. Alternatively, if the context is different, it could be a flexible, adaptable space that can easily be used for different activities in the evenings.

### SELF-MANAGEMENT AND CURATION

In Manchester, co-working desk space can cost between £250 and £450 per month; if people have the option to benefit from a similar amenity within their own building at the cost of a relatively small addition to their rent, many will jump at the chance. Non-residents will also use the facilities if they are priced competitively enough.

If BTR operators are to manage the co-working offer themselves, they will first have to expand their knowledge to include the ability to offer a professional and seamless

experience which covers at least the core elements in a standard co-working offer, and also consider the benefits of creating dedicated apps, online courses, etc. The spaces can be curated, and perhaps targeted at specific sectors, if appropriate for the location; for example, the offer could be tailored towards those who work in creative industries, media or digital technology to create bespoke assets and facilities required.

Chapman Taylor has strong expertise and experience in the residential sector, including BTR, as well as

in the office, co-working, leisure and hospitality sectors. We have the unique ability to provide a well-considered, coherent, and context-appropriate solution for BTR developers and operators in which each component is designed and delivered to an industry-leading standard and where the synergy between them creates something greater than the sum of their parts.



### DESIGNING FOR VISIBILITY AND VARIETY

As mixed-use specialists, we are familiar with designing environments which blend a number of different uses together. When designing a new BTR development, the core residential environment understandably demands a lot of attention, but it is equally important that any complementary uses are designed to work as effectively as possible. The design of the co-working space should be influenced by the appropriate market trends and designed to complement and add value to the residential amenities by providing an alternative sustainable workplace setting for use by the development's residential community.

Designing to future-proof the space is crucial – needs change, and what is necessary or popular one year

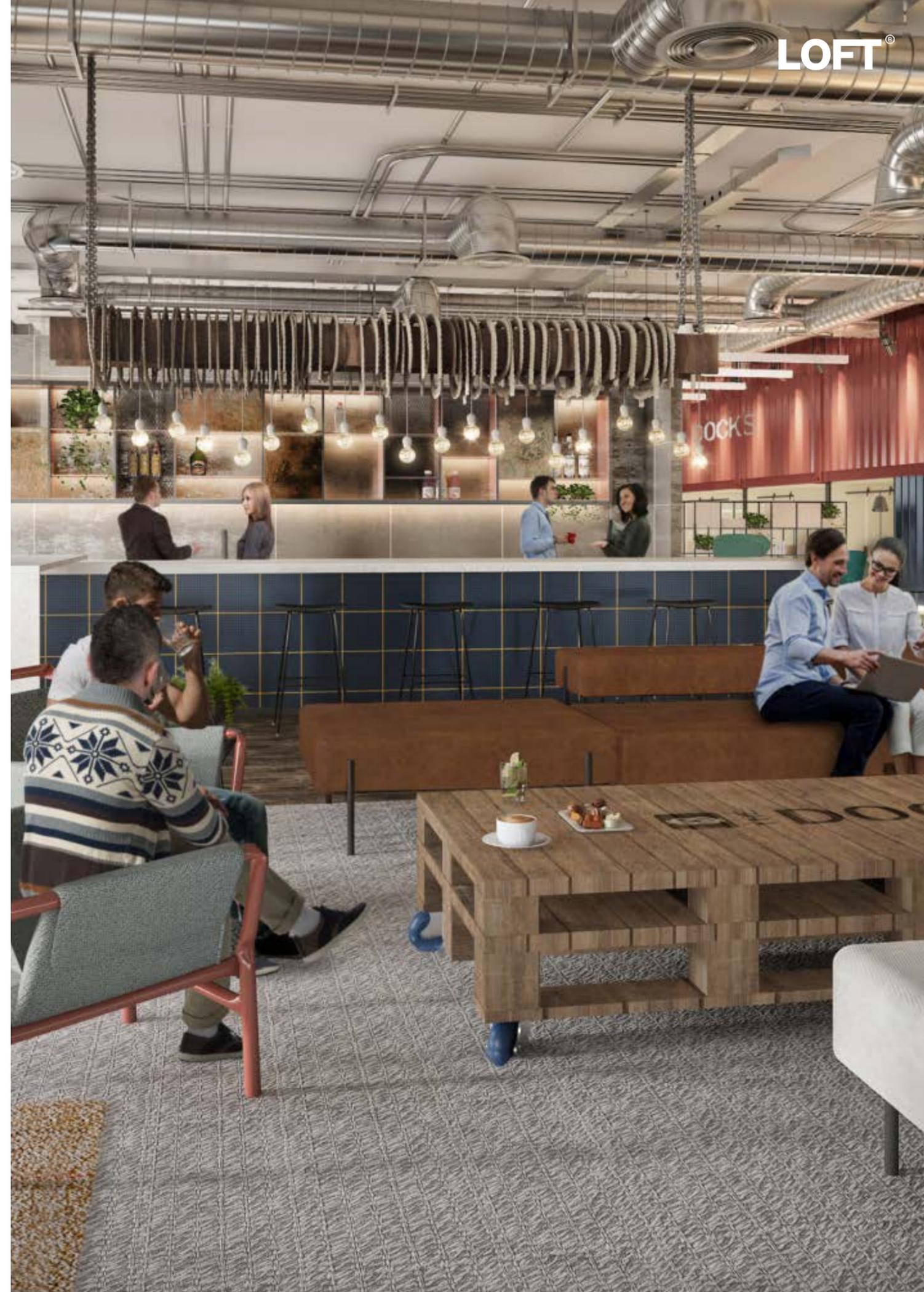
may be decreasingly so the next. We approach every project with the mindset that adaptability must be at the core of our design thinking from the outset. Then, if the context is favourable, we can install co-working space within the appropriate adaptable “box”, whether that be ground floor, basement or rooftop space.

A successful space is based on variety, which, in the case of a BTR co-working environment may include collaborative spaces, private booths, meeting rooms and spaces equipped with audio-visual technology, acoustically appropriate for media productions such as videos, podcasts and voiceovers.

A favourable outcome of the incorporation of co-working space,

from a design point of view, is that the provision of co-working space will change the way in which the BTR developments activate the ground floor and creates the opportunity to provide more dynamic interaction with the street. The more active and appealing frontage may also elicit more favourable reactions from the planning authorities.

Good external visibility will be important, as will internal sightlines. The reception and concierge will not be as prominent a feature upon entering the building as the co-working space should not be hidden from view. The design will not involve what has thus far been a relatively formulaic layout of lobby, back-of-house and, perhaps, small commercial units; it will be a more open and seamless experience, each function blending with the other.





# CULTURE IS THE SECRET TO SUCCESS

Writing a piece that encapsulates People and Planet First came naturally to us, as the subject resonates strongly with how we operate, and we believe it is now essential for future success. Although we manage property, our priority is people and creating strong and happy communities within the assets themselves. By supporting people and providing them with tools while enabling and encouraging them to be at their best, we create an environment and culture that means everyone can thrive which in turn means delivery on objectives for clients, staff, supply chain and residents.

We believe a strong part of 'people and planet' is supported through an ethos of collaboration. Through collaboration, from supply chain to clients, competitors, staff, residents, and local communities, we're able to be the best possible partner and (ideally) partner of choice. When this type of culture is embedded across all workstreams, it opens up the possibility to push boundaries, be innovative and provide excellent service to residents which in turn creates positive and progressive communities at developments who inspire us to do more, not just for them but for the planet as well.

We've been lucky enough to collaborate with partners to launch a number of initiatives to allow socially conscious renters to give back to worthy causes, from planting trees for every resident at Duet - a successful BTR development in MediaCityUK - to litter picking or donating unwanted clothes and food. We've also installed energy-efficient LED lighting, introduced electric car charging points and installed solar panels to

help make positive changes to our carbon footprint and embrace ethical living. This is driven by our onsite management teams who have strived to create a community that unites and brings about positive change to their local areas that is embraced by residents.

Of course, when residents have a positive experience and are engaged, it directly translates into higher occupancy rates, increased referrals, a better-maintained asset and a higher awareness of social and environmental initiatives at their development. Engaging with residents promotes relationships, creates a neighbourly, community-driven environment and enriches the overall resident experience. In turn, employees looking after the scheme have happy interactions, few complaints and many compliments, encouraging them to devote their efforts further.

The calibre of work our employees diligently deliver both on and off-site is a true testament to their dedication to residents, clients and the planet. By focussing on solutions and betterment we're able to introduce new suppliers to the sector, share technical expertise and operational experience through the UKAA, IRPM and BPF. We've thoroughly enjoyed being part of shaping BTR across the UK and raising standards, which ultimately benefits everyone in the BTR sector. By putting people and planet at the centre of our focus, our distinctive style has allowed ALM to remain a constant source of insight and expertise.

Simply put, putting People and Planet first defines culture, which in turn defines success.



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# CONSIDERED LIVING



The home plays a central role in our lives – it's where we relax, spend time with family and friends, work and have the freedom to simply be ourselves. Spending far more time at home over the past 18 months has brought to light many of the challenges we have always faced at home, but also what each of us truly need from our living space. All of this has culminated in a movement towards considered living: a new way of living, where high-quality, design-led furniture and furnishings are already in place for residents when they move in.

The design of our surroundings can have a profound effect on our wellbeing, both physically and mentally – **research** by Petermans in 2019 found interior architecture is a key component in enabling people to 'be well', and emphasised the need for architects and interior designers to design spaces that foster wellbeing. Our living space is integral to uplifting us and keeping us inspired, and contrary to popular

thought, the quality of that space is more important than quantity. When compared to typical city apartments, considered living spaces are more compact. However, by implementing creative uses of space, considered living has more potential to boost both the wellbeing and creativity of its residents, as spaces are designed to facilitate interaction and fostering a sense of community. Everything from the layout to the materials and finish are designed to give residents everything they need in the smartest and most sensitive way possible.

At Living by Scape, we take a design-led approach to tap into this new way of urban living. By working with some of the world's leading designers including award winning architect Ab Rogers, we have carefully designed each high-spec studio apartment to give our residents everything they need. Our intelligent design means we've created spaces with comfort and wellbeing at their core. More than just bricks and

mortar accommodation, we provide services that cater to the needs of our residents, supporting them and helping them to live well. All our services – from fortnightly cleans and grocery deliveries to secure parking and the inclusion of utilities in the rent – have been curated to tackle many of the common distractions that those working in a busy city face day-to-day and enable residents to personalise their living set-up to suit their own lifestyle.

Recent studies suggest that UK workers will want to continue to split their time between working remotely and commuting to the office in the future. For example, **BCG's UK Employee Sentiment Survey** found that 67% of employees who have worked remotely since the start of COVID-19 believe that a hybrid model of remote and in-workplace work is ideal for them and their colleagues.

With this being the case, we are likely to see a rise in living schemes that

accommodate for comfortable and productive workspaces - not only in rooms, but also in vibrant co-working zones. We are also likely to see a rise in professionals looking to live in closer reach of the city, so as to be within easy access from the office. With professionals now more likely to work flexibly, meaning more time spent at home; there is a new need for homes to provide a better, more comfortable way to work.

The global pandemic has undoubtedly changed the way we've had to live, but with so many of us feeling a sense of loneliness and isolation for so long, the need for community and togetherness has never been stronger. Living by Scape has worked hard to build a strong and vibrant sense of community. Residents can gain a sense of togetherness and easily meet new people if they choose: at Friday drinks, over a free coffee or breakfast, or in the family-style kitchens. One of the key ingredients for creating community is the team that brings

the building to life: these are the people that residents will meet and interact with on an everyday basis, so it is imperative that these staff members are carefully selected. Every team member, from reception to maintenance, should be considered as a positive part of the residential experience, and contribute positively to resident wellbeing. Not just listening to the residents needs and wants, but truly hearing them and acting on them.

Living by Scape has been expertly shaped around the people who'll call it home, giving them everything they need in the smoothest way possible. Our beautifully designed spaces have been meticulously planned and created with the resident in mind, enabling them to live well and put their personal space first. We provide homes that really work for the resident, helping to make city living more seamless.



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**LIVING**  
by **scape**

# ACHIEVING RESIDENT WELL-BEING THROUGH POSITIVE DESIGN PRINCIPLES



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At Gravity Co-Living, we believe in designing homes to keep both the mind and body happy. Creating spaces that offer a range of benefits that help form the perfect living environment.

With more of us spending an increasing amount of time at home and with the rise in the work from home culture as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, it's never been as important for our living surroundings to not only positively impact our well-being in a way that inspires and energises us but simultaneously offers an environment for relaxation, calm and rest - allowing us to disconnect and achieve balance.

Much of the way we feel within a space is heavily depicted by its design. This is why at Gravity, with **Unconventional Design** standing as one of our four brand pillars, we focus greatly on creating spaces that positively impact well-being and enhance the living experience of our members.

A great example of how this has been achieved can be seen at our latest and largest project, Gravity West Court in West London - a building that is home to 97 studios, a bright open-plan lobby, urban green entrance courtyard and a spacious co-working/communal lounge.

To achieve this, we considered the following areas:

**BIOPHILIC DESIGN & NATURAL LIGHT**  
 Design that connects us with nature has not only been proven to have a positive impact on our way of thinking, **helping us gain a more positive outlook on life**, but also evoke a sense of natural happiness.

Gravity's co-working and communal space, the central social hub of the property, benefits from a large floor to ceiling window space that directly looks out onto the front courtyard area, lushly filled with trees, a range of plants and evergreen bushes. Although this courtyard view can be seen from anywhere in the communal area, for a more connected, up, close, and personal experience, Gravity members are invited to sit and work from our natural wood countertop. This not only runs the length of the window but also features built-in power sockets and USB ports, helping to ensure members can work undisturbed by devices running out of power whilst enjoying front row seats to the lush green landscape.

As well as providing a pleasing aesthetic, this large window, along with a second large window situated adjacent, ensures that the space is filled with lots of natural sunlight throughout the day which in turn helps **benefit our alertness, mood, productivity and sleep pattern** and has been linked to both **fighting disease and reducing depression**.

**CLUTTER-FREE DESIGN**  
 When we think of clutter, we think of mess, distraction, and untidiness. It's hard to focus when we're in a cluttered environment. If we're in an untidy space, this can often lead to the thought of us feeling **overwhelmed, anxious and even helpless**, all of which can negatively impact our mental hygiene. To reduce or help prevent these feelings, we need to decrease the build-up or opportunity for clutter to appear in the spaces we inhabit.

When initially acquired, the design of the co-living studios at West Court left them feeling quite cold and sterile, with a bulky bed structure occupying much of the space. Gravity studios have been cleverly redesigned to make the very best use of their space. To combat the temptation to create clutter, each studio has its own minimalistic approach; with storage spaces built into the walls, disguising wardrobes, cupboards and doors with wall panels for a neat, clean finish whilst simultaneously maximising the available floor space.

Not only has the kitchenette in each studio been designed in the same manner, hidden by folding doors, the redesign has also introduced a comfier, ottoman bed, helping create a cosier environment and offering even more storage space under each mattress.

**COLOUR**  
 Colour can have a huge impact on our emotions. When designing Gravity spaces, it was important to have chosen a colour palette that would not only complement but enhance positive thinking in the best way possible.

We wanted to ensure that each space throughout Gravity West Court felt as bright and spacious as possible, which is why neutral colours were used throughout, introducing several darker natural hues to highlight some key areas and to add contrast.

In our co-working area, the space is dominated by a light shade of grey; known for its **neutrality and bringing balance to mind and emotions**, whereas colours such as whites and darker browns are featured in private studio spaces, helping to create a feeling of **grounding, security and warmth**, all essential assets to have for the place where you live and will help achieve overall resident well-being.



# DRIVING INNOVATION, IMPACT & CHANGE...



When developing shared living communities, one of the most vital questions you can ask yourself is: "Who are our people"? In our personal lives, 'our people' may be limited to a few close circles of family, friends, peers, and colleagues. In our professional lives and in business, we also often only think about a few primary stakeholders, and most of the time our highest priorities come from one main stakeholder: our shareholders. In the real estate world this especially runs true, as the development, reconversion and / or management of real estate assets relies on significant funds and equity from a variety of institutional, established and private investors.

Without these investments (and the shareholders behind them), it would be very difficult to develop and manage sustainable and financially viable real estate schemes. That said, there are many (many) more stakeholders involved in all aspects of real estate development, from the planning, construction and development stages through to operations and way beyond. This is why we as real estate professionals must always be thinking about all of our people, and really understand the vast ecosystems of stakeholders we are collaborating with and impacting.

So, what does this mean for shared living communities? Shared living can be considered as an umbrella for multiple specialist residential real estate classes including coliving, purpose-built shared living (PBSL), purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA), built to rent (BTR), cohousing, hybrid hospitality, senior housing and other forms of communal living. All of these sectors cater to a variety of demographics and psychographics and the needs and interests of their stakeholders must be considered from the start of the ideation and design phases.

These typologies also inherently have aspects of community and sustainability anchored into the core of their brands. But as they say, "talk is cheap"; shared living brands must not only tout about their community ethos, but also reflect deeply on how the inherent values of these typologies can be embedded throughout the investment, planning, design, development and operations phases. They must ensure that social value – or environmental, economic and social impact – is at the core of their strategies and is reflected throughout all aspects of the business. Social value must also be something that is equally distributed amongst all stakeholders; the social value your business provides must also be shared value.

Ultimately, shared living spaces have the potential to be neighbourhood hubs, places that exchange, deliver and contribute a multitude of different 'community capitals'; such as economic, social, cultural, human, natural and political capital. This impact has the potential to go beyond the walls of shared living developments and be shared through local neighbourhoods, to the city level and can even influence global sustainability and development goals.

This is what stakeholder-driven shared living is all about: creating shared living communities that extend their positive impact beyond their inner circles of shareholders and users to all of their B2B and B2C communities and stakeholders, including residents, staff, management teams, suppliers, local communities, city planners, public officials, shareholders and beyond. It is about aligning your business strategies with global ESG, social value and sustainability goals. We can not deliver value these days without thinking holistically and consciously about how our products and business activities influence and impact (both negatively and positively) the multi-stakeholder ecosystems we are all a part of.

Nowadays there is no financial value without long-term social value that is shared throughout these multi-stakeholder ecosystems. Our actions as real estate professionals are intrinsically and intricately linked with all of these stakeholders, as well as with perhaps the most important stakeholder of them all: our planet. The decisions we take today in how we invest in, develop and operate our shared living communities will have an impact on our stakeholders and most importantly on our planet for generations to come. So, in order to drive true innovation, impact and change in our industry a paradigm shift is needed; one that shifts power from the few to power to the people (and planet)!

Check out our newest Coliving Ventures publication [here](#) to see how we are endorsing multi-stakeholder ecosystems of shared living professionals and businesses through impact & sustainability, user & community experience and health & well-being.

## ...THROUGH STAKEHOLDER-DRIVEN SHARED LIVING



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# FITNESS & WELLNESS

## AT CHAPEL WHARF MANCHESTER

After many years working across the property and leisure industries, Juliet joined Build To Rent specialist, Dandara Living in July 2020 as the new director of customer experience.

With a wealth of direct experience managing large-scale health and fitness sites for various property developers, Juliet's appointment was timely, with the health and well-being of residents now even more firmly at the top of the agenda since the global pandemic.

"As both a developer and operator of built to rent property Dandara Living is quite unique within the industry, and I was excited to come on board to help the business enhance its customer experience offering."

Starting with the Company's flagship 955-unit Chapel Wharf development in Manchester, Juliet's plan was to create a comprehensive Customer Experience blueprint for leisure, well-being and fitness amenities across the whole portfolio as she explains.

### THE PLAN

"Chapel Wharf was still under construction when I joined the business and the gym had already been planned out. However, visiting the site for the first time, it became apparent that we could significantly enhance the customer experience by moving the gym to a space which had previously been earmarked for a commercial retail unit."

With the business case and new fitness concept quickly approved, Chapel Wharf's new gym opened in March 2021. Featuring two levels of state-of-the-art Technogym equipment, a multi-functional studio space and free resident fitness app, the customer experience mirrors that of a commercial gym, in all respects except the membership fee as the gym is free to all residents.



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#### GYM DESIGN

Analysing current fitness and well-being trends, Juliet worked with leading industry specialist Technogym, to identify the optimal equipment mix and design the two-storey gym experience around this. Trends in functional, live and on-demand training, were also factored in as Juliet explains:

“Whilst no resident amenity can ever be truly future proof, we wanted to offer our Chapel Wharf residents as much flexibility as possible. Both isolation and functional training needs are catered for through a wide range of free weights and equipment, which includes a Smith Machine, Cable Machine, Omia Rig, Sled Track and an extensive selection of the latest strength and cardio equipment from Technogym’s Skill Line, Excite Live and Selection 700 product ranges.

The first floor is a quieter space which features the studio. This light and airy space can accommodate up to 20 people and hosts instructor-led classes ranging from spin, Zumba and aerobics, to yoga, Pilates, meditation and more. The studio also has a Wexer system which provides residents with 24/7 access thousands of virtual on-demand classes and training experiences.”

#### TECHNOGYM

As market leaders in the fitness industry, Dandara Living felt that Technogym would offer their Chapel Wharf residents access to the highest quality and range of fitness equipment and wellness technology currently available on the market, as Juliet continues:

“In addition to the extensive range of equipment and expertise Technogym could offer, the MyWellness App gave us the opportunity to provide our residents with further value-added services.

Through the app, residents can track their workouts in the gym, or specific pieces of equipment, book classes and training sessions, access and stream virtual training and wellness sessions and monitor their fitness over time. The app can be used anywhere at any time, providing our residents with total flexibility.”

#### MOTIV8

As if a two-storey gym, state-of-the-art equipment, and a free fitness app weren’t enough, Dandara Living has also partnered with Leeds-based fitness management company Motiv8, to offer a truly comprehensive experience as Juliet explains.

“Even the most seasoned fitness enthusiast might feel a little intimidated going into a new gym for the first time, and we wanted to make the experience as enjoyable as possible.

Through our partnership with Motiv8, residents have access to gym inductions, fitness assessments, personal training and host of classes which run daily in the first-floor studio. We’ve had fantastic feedback from residents who tell us that Motiv8 really do motivate, and there’s an amazing atmosphere and sense of community in their classes – which is exactly the kind of experience we hoped for.”

#### So, what do residents think?

“Around 80% of Chapel Wharf residents have joined the gym which is an exceptional take up rate, and the feedback has been amazing; the gym has even featured in our reviews on Homeviews:

“The gym is massive and well equipped with basically everything you could ever ask for, I was surprised that they also did classes in the gym which is amazing!”

“The gym is also really big and is kitted out with some great equipment. I’m looking forward to my time here!”

“How amazing is the gym. Literally in there everyday after work.”

“The new state-of-the-art gym is amazing too, with everything you need to keep up with your fitness routine!”

“Chapel wharf has a gym which is as big as a pure gym. So handy to have next door and included.”

“For me, the most satisfying part of this project has been seeing how the gym has become a real focus and community hub for Chapel Wharf residents. It’s great to see the new connections, friendships and social bonds that have been forged since the gym opened and I think that’s the real measure of success. We now have our fitness blueprint for all future Dandara Living developments, and I’m already working on plans for our next gym.”





As a family-owned business, LOFT®'s values are spread throughout the company from the ground up. The company is literally being built off the back of a strong family community and that is a powerful theme that continues to shine through. The feeling of community within the workplace is beneficial to all aspects of our professional lives. For all LOFT® staff, having a strong community feeling within the workplace helps inspire confidence in decision making and bolsters our energy to keep moving forward. When we achieve something, we do it together and if you trip over a hurdle, the collective LOFT® community is always there to pick you straight back up. When you join LOFT®, you are not just becoming an anonymous number within the workforce – you are joining a community that has been thoughtfully built over the last 19 years and continues to grow and learn every day.

We are fortunate to be in a position where our community is not just limited to our LOFT® employees. We work closely with countless people across the residential property sector and through years of collaboration

and trust, our community has expanded. When you work with LOFT®, you are working with an extended network of people we have been lucky enough to integrate into our wider community over the years.

As we have been fortunate enough through the years in receiving the benefits of a loving and inspiring community, we have strived to pay this feeling forward to our surrounding community. Our continued work with numerous charities to fundraise, support and donate has taken steps in ensuring communities across the UK are given an equal chance to build a flourishing community of their own. This also applies to our concerted sustainability measures that strive to provide a future of improved community living for all.

We must continue to work and build towards the feeling of improved community for all. As a collective community, we can achieve what would not be possible individually. Love, Opportunity, Future, Together.

**LOFT® is for Living.**



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**LOFT®**

# THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY, INSIDE & OUT

LOVE. OPPORTUNITY. FUTURE. TOGETHER.

Community, as a term, can mean many different things to different people. It can symbolise a family unit, a group of people sharing common interests, neighbours, a team or society – the list goes on. The common thread throughout any community is the ability to shape the values and common goals through community members' voices. It is a collective network of people working collaboratively to achieve a feeling of security and collectiveness that will benefit all stakeholders.

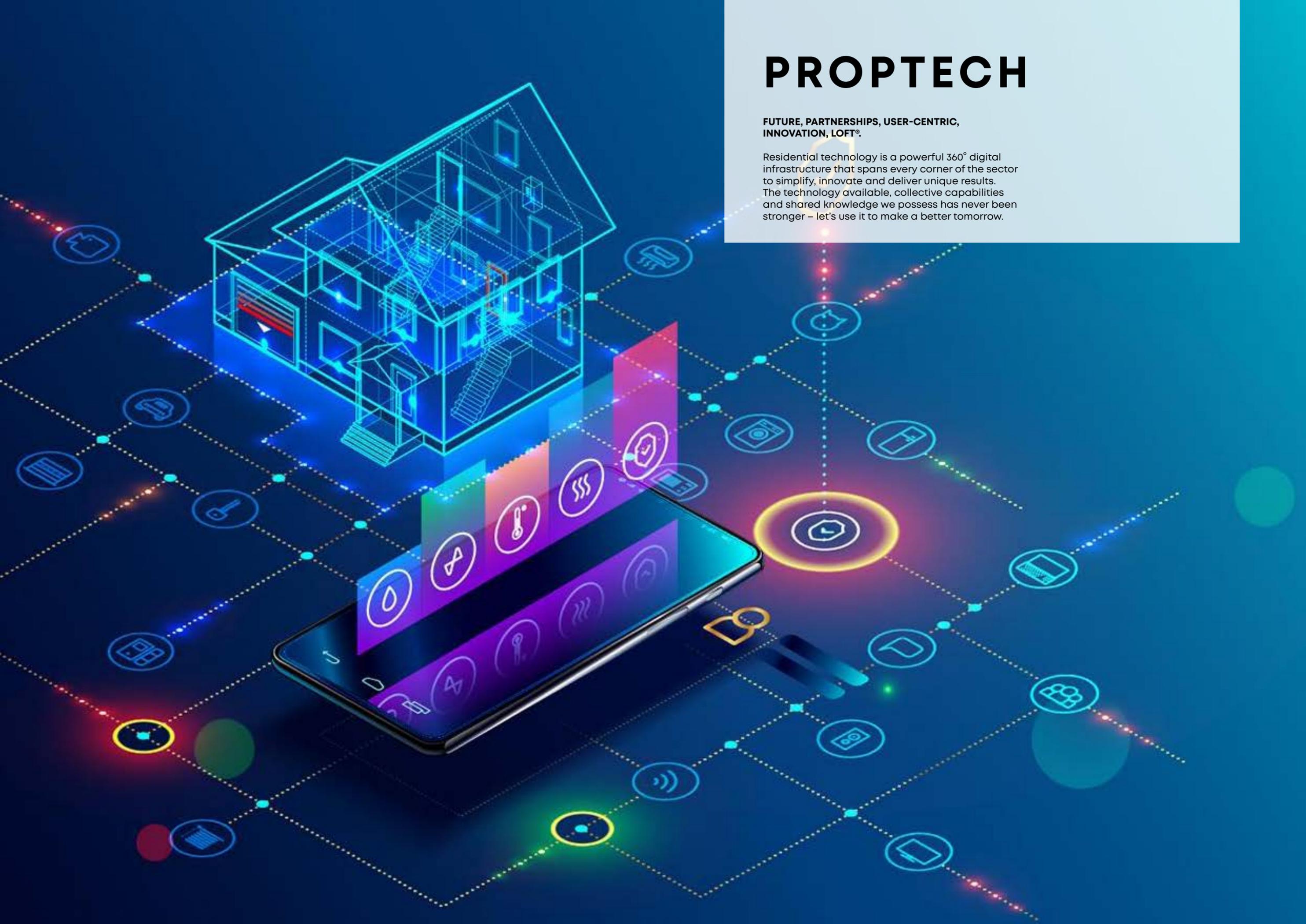
We are experts in creating interior spaces that cultivate and enhance a feeling of community. We understand the nuances created in design to achieve a collective feeling – but we could not achieve this if we were not ourselves a strong community to draw experience from. At LOFT®, we have built our company upon a foundation of a community of family and friends. Our chosen company values illustrate an aspiration to nurture and grow the feeling of community.



# PROPTECH

**FUTURE, PARTNERSHIPS, USER-CENTRIC,  
INNOVATION, LOFT®.**

Residential technology is a powerful 360° digital infrastructure that spans every corner of the sector to simplify, innovate and deliver unique results. The technology available, collective capabilities and shared knowledge we possess has never been stronger – let's use it to make a better tomorrow.



# HOW LOCKDOWNS LEAD TO SMART BUILDINGS

Two years ago, no one would have thought we were on the cusp of a pandemic or that a series of national lockdowns would fundamentally change how we all live and work. It was unthinkable. But here we are, not on the other side but certainly more prepared for whatever the ongoing pandemic might throw at us.

The lockdowns had a profound impact on the way residential properties can and need to be managed, particularly the build-the-rent sector. However, the result looks set to be a much better experience for everyone, not least in the realm of parcel management.

## LESSONS FROM LOCKDOWN

The main change we witnessed during lockdowns was the phenomenal growth of parcel deliveries. Shops were forced to close their doors for months at a time and everyone turned to e-tail – a trend that had been growing for years but accelerated in an instant. From March to June 2020 – the first UK lockdown – Royal Mail said it shipped 117 million more parcels than the same quarter in 2019.

The growing number of people having parcels delivered to their homes is having an effect on both managed and unmanaged residential properties.

In managed properties, the cost of increased parcel volumes is now significant as parcel handling takes up considerable staff time. Customer research shows it takes around four minutes to receive, store, inform and distribute just one parcel – multiply that by how many packages a residential block might receive in a day. Property managers in some cases had to hire staff just

to cope or implement a smart parcel management system.

Unmanaged properties without a secure parcel management system face similar challenges. Parcels can be left in communal areas, posing a fire hazard, and increasing the risk of theft. **Citizens Advice** recently recorded a 69% increase in traffic to its advice page 'if something you ordered hasn't arrived'. Lost or stolen parcels are clearly a growing problem that will impact the resident experience.

## THE RISE OF TECHNOLOGY

The good news is there are solutions. Looking ahead, we believe buildings are on track to become much smarter. Today, an intelligent building system can include temperature controls, lighting and locking solutions, even lifts that can monitor occupancy levels. Residents can interact directly with building facilities, including parcel management, which delivers a simpler, much more satisfying building experience.

This is what today's residents would like and what tomorrow's residents will expect. For owner-operators, the benefits of creating a smart building include much more efficient management systems and streamlined processes. Energy sensors will contribute to sustainability goals, while teams on the floor will have more information about maintenance requirements. A smart parcel delivery process reduces the need for redeliveries, which can have a real impact on carbon emissions.

All this will give residents the lifestyle they're seeking. Communal spaces can be more flexible as different uses emerge, as well as more accessible.

Post-lockdown, residents require more from their home, such as workspaces or safe places to socialise, which smart systems can help deliver.

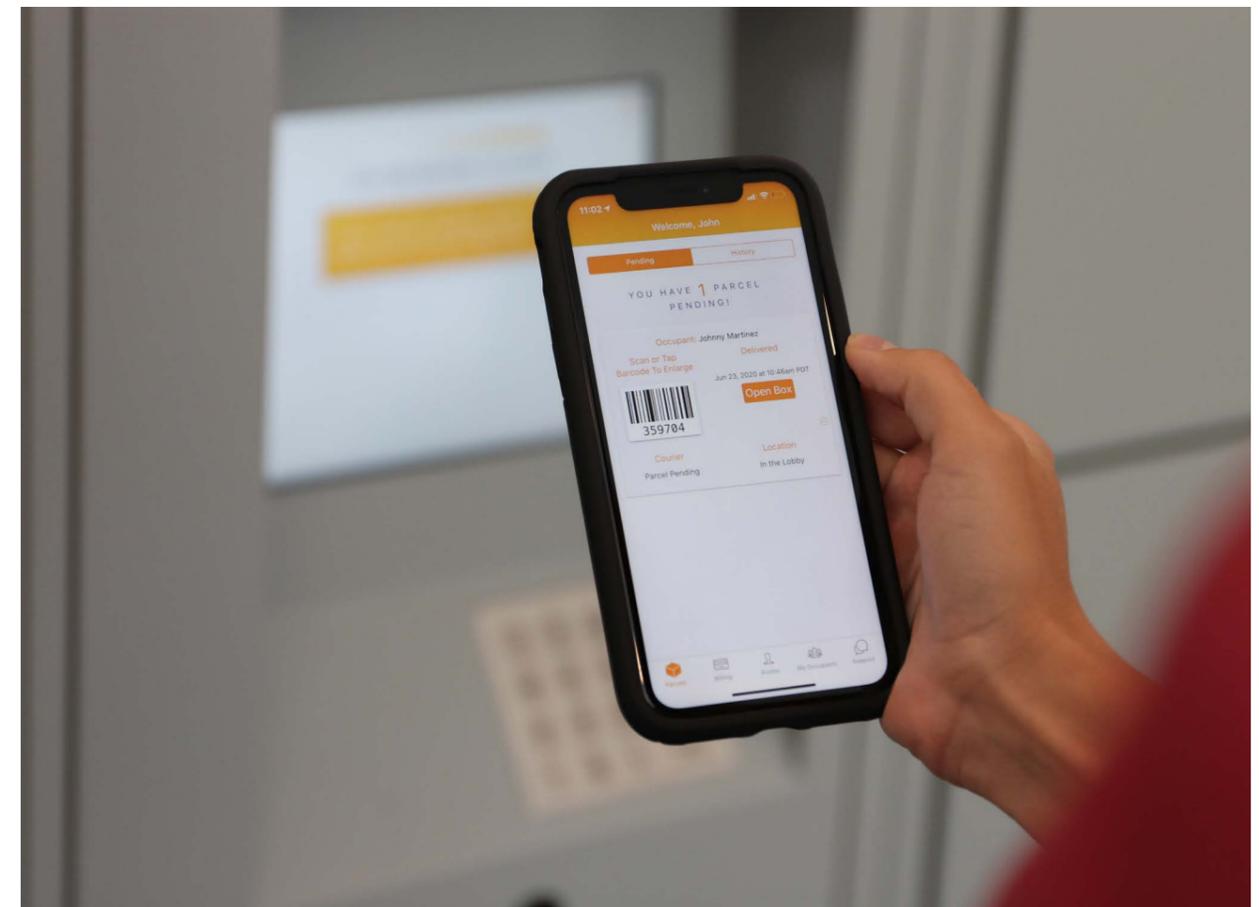
## OUR VIEW

We have been observing the impact of lockdowns on people's lifestyles across the world. In the US we have installed 12,000 lockers and the market in Europe is growing considerably. As more property managers feel the effects of lockdowns, their need to implement smart solutions continues to grow.

Our forecast for the coming years is certainly more growth. The massive increase in parcel deliveries is showing no signs of abating, neither is the desire for contactless deliveries and technological solutions. As people become more aware and more accustomed to contactless solutions, we have no doubt that smart parcel lockers will become a crucial element.



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# RESIDENT EXPERIENCE MEETS SUSTAINABILITY

Residents are increasingly familiar with Smart Technology, and this is prompting a new approach to building, equipping, and leasing properties. The ability for residents to customise their smart apartment to their lifestyle — granting visitors access via integrated video messaging services or controlling blinds, heating and lighting electronically — provide added value to the residential experience and in a recent white paper by Wise Living, a survey indicated that people living in BTR properties would be happy to pay up to £25 per calendar month more for a flat if it included smart technology. Operators are also using this technology to provide a better resident experience as well as addressing the growing demands for a more sustainable approach across the Real Estate industry.

If we think about Student Housing, smart technology is not something you would typically associate with the market, however, in a survey conducted by Bristol University, 90% of respondents stated that sustainability is important to them. Smart technology can help to understand and control energy levels, it becomes more difficult in large scale PBSA developments, where the inclusion of utilities is fairly standard, unlike BTR where the resident is responsible for utility bills, so PBSA operators adopt a fair usage policy. Remember those students who were worried about sustainability? They seem to become less concerned about energy usage when utility bills are included in their rent!

Greystar are a shining example of a provider looking to change the way in which it operates by providing their residents the insight to behave differently. In their Chapter II Highbury building they partnered with RealPage to implement the U.K.'s first holistic smart technology innovation trial in student housing.

Residents living in the units have greatly benefited from the various forms of technology installed, such

as access control, removing the use of key fobs and using phones to access their unit, or using an app to control their heating and view their usage trends. Gone are the days of timers, residents can now turn on their heating on their way home with a tap of their phone. Geofencing can also be enabled by the resident to trigger scenes automatically when they enter or leave their unit which can dramatically reduce energy consumption by heating and lighting being left on unnecessarily.

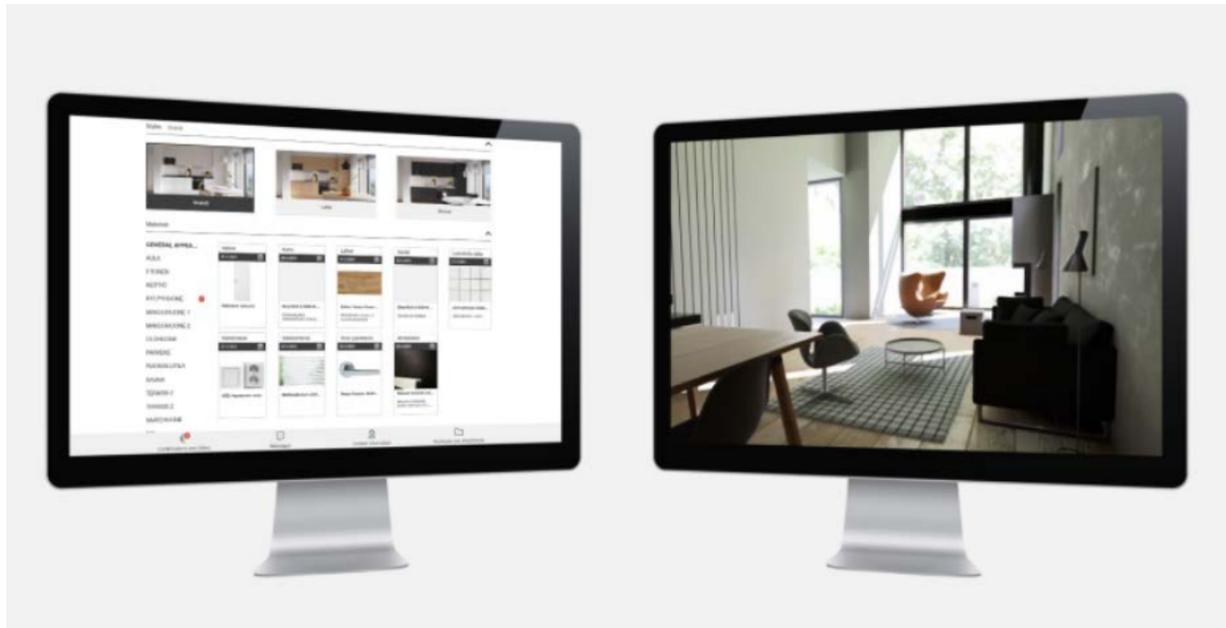
For Greystar, creating a superior resident experience as well as addressing environmental impact was important.

“For us it was important to provide our residents a more convenient way of living, smart technology enabled us to do that. By installing energy monitors we are also able to provide transparency around energy usage for our residents which has helped us to spot issues or track misuse. Residents who can see their energy consumption are more likely to use less. This level of granularity has enabled us to provide more detailed ESG reporting and suggest improvements for the future”



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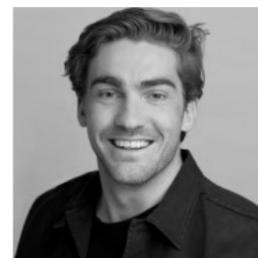




# TRANSPARENCY IN CONSTRUCTION = A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

The digital era has created a new kind of freedom of expression. Global communication and freedom to express our lifestyle via social media has made everybody much more identity-focused. No longer are consumers willing to simply blend into the crowd. At the same time, we are beginning to understand the full extent of our dependencies; the sensitivity and fragility of this whole massive earth-sized structure. The construction industry produces 11% of all CO2 emissions in the world. In many countries, new technical requirements are emerging for low-carbon and life-cycle properties of buildings. Home materials and potential CO2 emissions and chemicals are of interest to end-users who, today, are much more environmentally conscious and want to have an option to make sustainably aware purchases.

The construction industry is at a crossroads. Baby boomers, with all their wealth, are downsizing and moving into rental communities. A generation of Minecraft players soon enter the market and are expecting to build their lives and their surroundings with a touch of a finger. In the age of the "new normal", more and more people are working from home or at least implementing a hybrid working approach. The era of digital connectivity has already facilitated business processes, communication and how every single industry function at a fundamental level. The pre-pandemic world is not coming back.



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The technology is already here. Building Information Models (BIM) and the digital twin (a virtual replicant of a building) platforms provide valuable source data for all stakeholders, especially property investors with a big portfolio. Technological developments in CAD software have been advancing at a rapid rate and 3D visualization tools are more sophisticated than we could have imagined even five years ago. What's more, the opportunity to integrate this software with project management platforms and with extended reality devices such as virtual and augmented reality, mean that the benefits of 3D visualization extend far beyond the architect's office.

The role of the construction industry is expanding from construction itself to enabling a continuous development focused on the home and its inhabitants. A strong foundation is cast when marketing, project leads, and sites share the relevant information under a single umbrella. Transparency of product and info enables quicker decision time for property sales and rentals including overseas purchasers, and what's more, the whole experience is much more personal and emotional

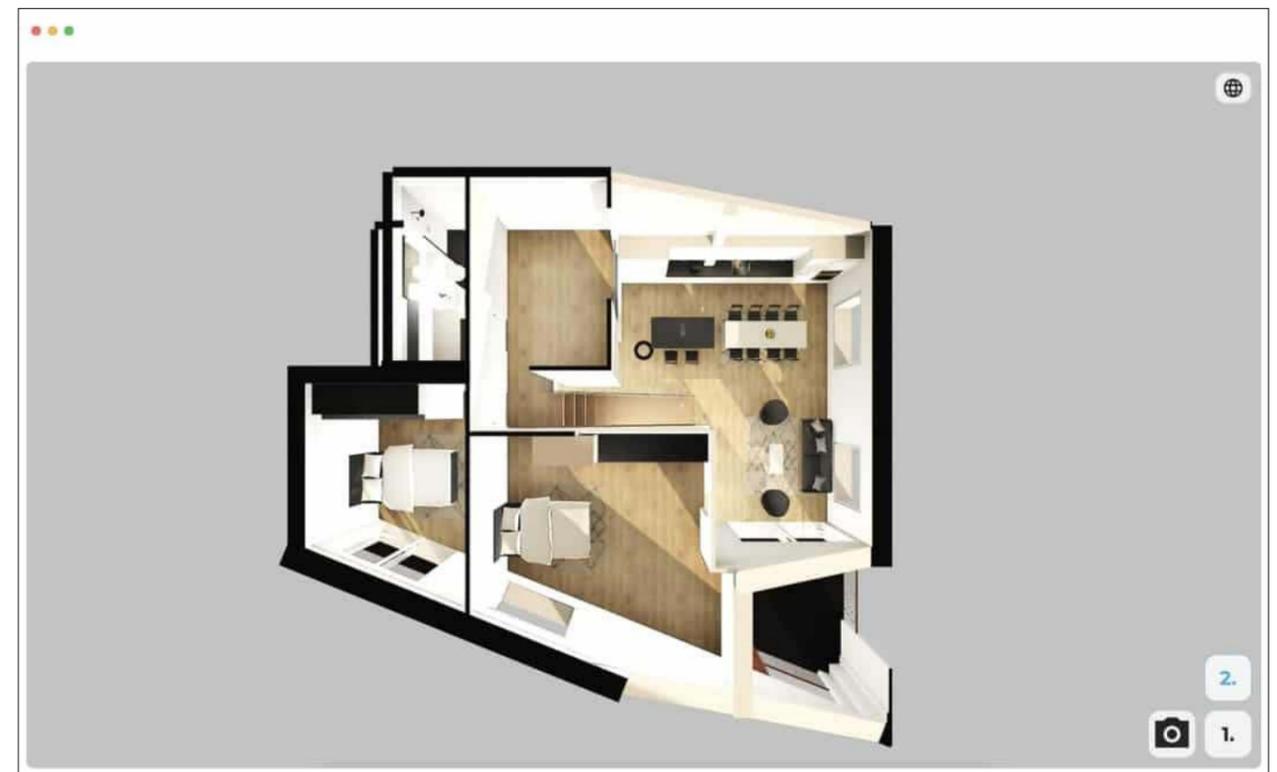
right from the start. The gathering data will no longer be fragmented or lost but becomes enriched and useful throughout the life cycle of the building. Repairs and renovations can be planned and budgeted cost-effectively; errors are significantly reduced. A shared language and a common platform made possible by BIM models will organically sprout different kinds of new digital services and business activities, such as a real-time BIM-based CO2 calculator or a platform for furniture companies to sell their product. Possibilities, we believe, are limitless, the market largely untapped.

The goal is to create sustainable, functional, and attractive cities and living environments for years to come. For the next generation of home buyers, technology is not just a tool helping them perform specific tasks, but a fundamental way of creating and maintaining relationships and forming an identity. The future of construction and property development is in the hands of companies who can provide the range of choices and control that the modern home buyer is accustomed to in the virtual realm. At its best, this new technology can help pave

the way towards a global and more sustainable culture of co-creation.

GBuilder is a Finnish born and now London based software company with over 40,000 homes built through their platform. The software is already widely used by Scandinavia's largest residential developers and construction companies, YIT, Bonava, Skanska, and Hartela. There are already ongoing projects in the UK and in other countries, Germany, Austria, Belgium, and the CEE Countries.

GBuilder offers 3D visualization of each individual home within any development enabling investors, homeowners or tenants to select their desired furniture, and to see how it suits and fits within their future home. GBuilder is excited to be launching the furniture 3D feature in the online shopping environment. Partnering up with LOFT® has allowed GBuilder to offer the world's first BIM-based digital turn-key solution to new home purchasing here in the UK and Europe.





# SHARED LIVING: TOMORROW'S “NORMAL”

The way we live has constantly been changing and evolving over the last century. For many years, professionals rushed to large cities for work, which led to increasing rents and resulted in smaller living units as developers worked to create well-designed properties to fit as many people into as small a space as they could. More recently, though, COVID has greatly accelerated a trend that many believed was gradually coming: the rise of shared living.

There are a variety of terms for shared living, including coliving, flatshare, houseshare, and HMOs, and though there are debates about how they differ, in principle, they are all forms of shared living. And their popularity has been greatly increasing year on year.

Armchair-anthropologists may have predicted a trend towards the Japanese style “pod” living, but two key factors will have been overlooked (and in fairness, the latter extremely difficult to predict):

1. A much greater understanding of mental health issues, and the effects of loneliness.
2. COVID, and the rapid, almost overnight acceleration of working from home for professionals.

## The Loneliness Epidemic

We have reached a tipping point in terms of loneliness. Where past generations would have awkwardly grunted should a friend mention their mental struggles, younger people embrace this, recognising mental health as equally important as physical health. As humans, we crave social interaction; the desire to belong takes precedence over all else. The ever-evolving desire to live in a community of like-minded people is at an all-time high. As a result, shared housing is growing in popularity.

## The Rise of Work From Home

A few short years ago, for many professionals their home was just a place to sleep after working and socialising. Those days are long gone as many companies now allow, even encourage working from home. The relationship with, and the role of the home has changed, with greater value being put on not only the design and space, but those you share it with. A small flat, alone, suddenly looks far less appealing to many people. Sharing a larger space with like-minded people is no longer just an economic response to housing needs, it is becoming the desirable way to live.



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### Modern Shared Living

Those wanting to future-proof a portfolio will be keen to understand how to develop for shared living. At its most basic level, shared living refers to a group of people sharing a space. However, as simple as it may sound, it does present some difficulties. Several of these difficulties include the following:

- What is the appropriate or optimum number of people to share a space?
- What should the ideal proportion of shared to private space be?
- How should we keep common areas clean?
- What should the ratio of human interaction to technology be when it comes to operating the space?
- Finally, how can housemates develop a sense of belonging and purpose?

It is possible to tackle all of this by applying spatial and operational design concepts and principles. Gui Perdrix's design intentions for a shared living can help us shed some light on to this (Source - Coliving Insights No 7).

### • Equilibrium and Density

Discusses physical security, design with a purpose, pushing the boundaries of sharing, cluster sizes, privacy as utilitarian, and problem solving by design.

### • Respect for and enhancement of individual needs

About providing residents with ownership, adaptability, the ability to design their own private space, and emotional well-being.

### • Improve the connection

The importance of contributing to shared memories, facilitating connections through technology, and the modelling of interaction points to foster connections.

### • Ecosystem development on a larger scale

Neighbourhood development, the establishment of a connection to the history of space and promote sustainability.

### DESIGN AS A SOLUTION

#### What's a good number?

COHO's team includes members who have experience living and operating shared living spaces. From experience, having a space with three to four people makes enforcing

rules extremely intimate, and things start to go awry with expectations all around. Meanwhile, having a space with 50 people makes it impossible to have meaningful relationships and causes people to lose interest. Thus, the sweet spot is somewhere between 8-15, where there are enough people to avoid becoming too comfortable and enough to form meaningful connections. As a result, designing spaces for this cluster size can be highly satisfying.

### Public Versus Private

Spatial design becomes critical when considering the ratio of shared to private space. There is no standard but based on our observations of multiple shared living operators and landlords at COHO, the common area should account for approximately 30% of the space for clusters of 10-15 people in shared living space, which can include a living area, kitchen, and utilities.

### Design for Operation

When humans who are not family share a space, there are numerous points of failure. The only way to resolve such conflicts is through deliberate action and design. Consider the following examples.

• The mess in living areas is the most common source of contention in any shared space. However, when accountability is shared by all, accountability eventually becomes non-existent. By design, dedicating space in living areas to each resident can help reduce clutter.

• Another point of contention is shared washrooms; once again, adopting a similar approach of providing a basket/space for each resident can help residents keep their belongings organized and the area clutter-free.

• The kitchen is another area where sinks, refrigerators, and other appliances quickly become a dumping ground, ruining the experience. Stage names based on a theme, such as avengers or presidents, can be beneficial. When someone joins, you assign them a theme, and all their activities are tagged, bringing accountability into play.

This is a simple starting point, but you can extend this logic and operationally design things to eliminate conflict and provide an excellent living experience for your tenants.

### Technology Design

From viewing to living, the customer journey is punctuated by multiple touchpoints, which can be human or technological in nature. COHO has closely looked at it and automated various processes such as viewings, onboarding, maintenance, and rent collection. This frees up time for the landlord or operator to interact with and connect with residents, thereby fostering the development of meaningful communities.

Another facet of technology design is the creation of in-living experiences. This includes sensor-driven operations within the home, as well as community apps that facilitate communication. Utilizing them is a very personal choice that is determined by the design philosophy of the space.

However, your workflow should always include at least 30% touchpoints that encourage human interaction as a general rule.

### Expanding the Ecosystem

Another aspect of the design is the establishment of a sense of purpose. This can be accomplished by

- Involving the neighbourhood in the operation of the space, listing

nearby vendors, and providing those services to the tenant, the local economy is strengthened.

• Creating sustainable spaces, having a zero-carbon footprint, and having a sense of giving back to nature can go a long way toward fostering a sense of purpose.

• Contributing to a social cause by design and incorporating it into the workflow is another way to foster a sense of purpose and grow the video ecosystem.

All of this and more is possible if technology and design-driven solutions can be scaled up and improve residents' experiences living in shared spaces. Kindly contact **COHO** if you are interested in automating portions of the resident experience.





# A YEAR ON WITH 84YOUTH

LOFT® attributes its growth over the past 20 years to the support and encouragement of community. Community is an integral part of LOFT®'s foundations, and it is something that we aspire to enhance through our work across the property sector. As a company and individuals who have benefitted from the cradle of a community, we strive to lend back to our environment as much as we can – donations to multiple charities across the UK, upcycling of furniture and re-purposing of homes. 84Youth was one of these causes that LOFT® could not be happier to support, an organisation that goes above and beyond to support and enhance the community.

84Youth is a community-integrated youth-led organisation that provides a supportive sanctuary to youths across the side Moss Side area in Manchester that have been affected by violence and trauma. Established in 2019, 84 Youth is a response to the rise in Serious Youth Violence (SYV) and Perpetual Traumatic Stress Disorder caused by criminal and harmful events within the area.

84Youth exist in response to traditional youth work methods of disrupting SYV and the resulting PTSD (Perpetual Traumatic Stress Disorder) that many experience due to high visibility of violence. The team are all from the community and have lived experience of the issues they aim to address. Alongside this, senior members of the team have over 70 years of youth work between them along with academic theory through university study.

LOFT® began collaborating with the directors of 84Youth since its inception

to conceptualise and provide a space that could serve as a sanctuary for young people within a trying area. 84Youth was much more than just a design brief for LOFT®. It was a chance to create a safe space within a fractured community that not only facilitated growth and wellbeing but propelled it forward. We donated to the cause by designing, furnishing and installing the entire facility from top to bottom to provide a base of operations for the organisation.

Activities organised within 84Youth include such things as youth development and training, family therapy sessions and job interview preparation to name a few. 84Youth do an incredible amount of work for young people and families within the community and they now have a valuable asset in the form of this bespoke space to facilitate learning, growth and security within the community.

Akemia, the Managing Director for 84Youth, had this to say about the value of having a headquarters for the organisation and its members:

*"Having a base for 84YOUTH to work from has been a real asset to us as it's given us the opportunity to grow and develop as an organisation."*

*"Our work aims to address the rise we are seeing in Serious Youth Violence, Perpetual Trauma and support families and young people affected by violence. Having the base has given us the freedom to host meetings, training, deliver sessions and meet our mentees and families without having to worry about finding funding for capital costs so we can really focus on*

*our delivery. Without it, our work would be even more difficult than it already is!*

*"The space is peaceful and provides calm surroundings to work around such traumatic issues while giving us the authenticity we were lacking prior to LOFT® providing such a perfect environment for us."*

LOFT® is and always has been a People First company and nothing fulfils us more than seeing a space we have created serving such a beneficial purpose for so many people. We are filled with pride to see the positive impact 84Youth has had across the local community and beyond – supporting and invigorating youth to fulfil their potential. Find out more about 84Youth and the amazing work they are achieving here.



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**LOFT®**

# COMMUNITY IS THE KEY

The events over the last two years have encouraged the global workforce to sample a flexible working life. Larger companies are beginning to rethink whether traditional office spaces meet their employees' needs. Enter the fresh concept of *corpworking* - the adoption of flexible working spaces by corporations. This idea has been on the rise since the end of 2021, with evidence from the Deskmag Coworking Trends Survey reporting a **50% increased demand for meeting rooms and team offices** at coworking spaces in major European cities. It's predicted to continue throughout 2022 and beyond, as corporations start to **"decentralise their real estate strategy and support staff who want to work closer to home"**, state Nexodus. With these findings firmly in mind, companies will need to rethink how they bring their teams together and establish community-oriented working cultures.

Community is a core value at the SALTO Systems Group, as we truly believe that community is the key. At SALTO, we have seen the positive effects of a flexible corpworking office first-hand. At our office in Amsterdam, we facilitate a collaborative working environment with a full communal kitchen for our teams to cook and eat together, a play area for team bonding and different spaces for brainstorming. We encourage our teams to recognise each other, not only as colleagues, but as part of a shared community. Our internal events encourage our teams to create more meaningful social connections with one another. With a trust-based approach, we've developed an empowered productive workforce who possess a great sense of wellbeing, and the company benefits from better innovations.

As a developer of access control solutions, SALTO welcomes the use of technology and its potential to facilitate communities. Collaboration is a key part of building solid

community and the evidence of this is clear from our recent partnership with community experience platform Sowebuild. They recognise how technology can build thriving communities, by designing **human centric spaces that are developed by its users to meet their needs**. This makes them feel more empowered and connected to their environments. Additionally, technology strongly enables communication and collaboration across a distributed team. This is another strong trend that's here to stay, and something we've all experienced over the last couple of years - from using video communication tools for work meetings and phone calls with family and friends, to using social media platforms to promote and highlight our businesses, as well as for personal lockdown activities. **Technology has allowed us to continue participating in our communities**. At SALTO, we value technology highly; we're already meeting the prediction that 2022 is the year of community building and we recognise how **"community and wellbeing aren't mutually exclusive concepts - they enhance the other"**.



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**SALTO**  
inspired access

# BUILD TO RENT

**EXPERIENCE, SECTORS, QUALITY, SERVICE, LOFT®.**

The propulsion of the BTR market since its UK inception speaks for itself. Residents want and deserve, a living experience that positively contributes to their lives beyond just facilitating a basic accommodation option. Let's keep making it happen.





# ALL-IN-ONE LIVING;

It is almost two years since the start of the pandemic, and we can clearly see the long-term and lasting effects of COVID on all our lives.

The emergence of new variants causes us to continue to reassess the spaces in which we live, work and socialise. Although in recent months some companies have returned to office environments, working from home is still a reality for many young professionals, and will continue to be as many employers are facilitating a hybrid working approach. This has resulted in a continuously growing demand from this demographic for an alternative, modern approach to renting. At Vonder, we see that more and more young renters are moving away from traditional landlords into all-in-one properties.

So, what exactly is all-in-one living? Well, the answer is in the name. We coined the term to convey our

collective rental approach that brings together all aspects of living. It's about providing an effortless and hassle-free living experience that goes far beyond housing; but focuses on a unique lifestyle. We offer a weekly programme of events, on-site community managers and a rewards scheme with value-added services, such as exclusive discounts and offerings for our members to enjoy. These add to the quality of the apartments and other facilities provided within their rental.

### What are the main features of all-in-one living?

High-quality, self-contained apartments that are fully furnished and stocked right to the last cutlery detail. Young renters want independent and designed living spaces, so they can just move in to with their laptop and personal essentials to experience the city to the

fullest. Why waste time and money on hassles and struggles such as hanging curtains or buying electrical appliances to your home, when they can instead enjoy a music concert, an art exhibition or a sports match?

State-of-the-art amenities such as gyms, co-working spaces, private cinemas, bars, games rooms and rooftop terraces. All-in-one living provides a variety of communal spaces for people to work, socialise and play. These spaces benefit both the individual tenant and the community, as they are designed to bring people together – either organically or by planned and organised activities. These amenities are key to keeping the resident's mind and body balanced and healthy, especially during stressed and fast-paced periods and life routines. They also make residents' lives easier as more of the things they want and need are available on their doorstep.

# THE MODERN APPROACH TO RENTING

Stellar, technology-driven service. All-in-one living places the tenant first, and provides them with a swift support system, that includes community managers, building managers and concierge services, who are always available to assist and advise throughout their stay. Technology also has an important role in maintaining our high customer satisfaction. Any enquiry or issue our tenants might have can be easily reported through our mobile app. In addition to booking amenities and cleaning services or exploring events and chatting with other members, our app allows us to merge the digital realm with the physical world. We believe in a seamless digital experience, without losing the "human touch" of in-person customer service.

Urban residents and renters are, without doubt, at the forefront of all-in-one living. Yet the concept requires

a strong commitment from landlords and property management firms to higher values and principles. It's time for all housing operators to be as invested in building local communities as the residents are. They need to provide consistent, excellent service that follows residents between cities and countries.

Millennials are demanding more for their money – and for a good reason. Their need for quality living spaces and community is as real as anyone else's. At Vonder, we see ourselves as the pioneers of all-in-one living. Our global locations are designed and operated to create and foster a vibrant and dynamic global community that prioritises connection and inclusiveness. I believe it is time for more landlords to follow and offer young renters what they want and so well deserve.



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**VONDER**



# THE UK SINGLE FAMILY HOME OPPORTUNITY

The rise of the Build to Rent (BTR) sector in the UK and the high quality of the product being produced has been well documented. At Moorfield, we first invested in this space in 2012 and have built/renovated, operated, stabilised, and now sold over 750 units across the UK. We continue to support and invest in this sector, but by far the biggest opportunity for us looking forward is the professionalisation of the individual home to let.

There are approximately five million private renters in the UK and less than 60,000 purpose-built BTR units, so the vast majority of private renters still rent through private landlords. Unfortunately, the product is often characterised by poorly marketed, poorly managed, under-capexed homes meekly offering inflexible lease terms, high deposits, poor customer service and minimal energy efficiency. And anyone looking for a furnished product is going to be significantly underwhelmed. One of our key investment themes for our current funds is investing in this sector by acquiring existing Buy to Let product in scale, applying our brand standards to all elements of the customer experience and professionalising the product offering: full refurbishments with high-quality appliances, high-quality furniture of the same variety supplied across our BTR investments and improvements to EPCs of a minimum C rating.

Private landlords often lack the capital to make the necessary

upgrades to their assets, and so we see institutional investment as the catalyst to drive material product improvement – in terms of customer experience, but also by focussing on the ESG objectives integral to institutional investors' investment strategy these days. ESG objectives for managers like Moorfield are wider than just net-zero carbon but extend to social responsibility around landlord behaviour and conduct – an area of focus that we think is critical as this sector emerges.

Furthermore, proptech is now equipping managers with the tools they need to manage a more disparate portfolio of assets. Proptech provides resident apps for effective maintenance issue reporting and solutions, portals to provide loyalty rewards and additional customer services. It also offers the opportunity to harness the 'Internet of Things' (IoT's) to give residents full control over their energy usage. We've been using all these tools across our BTR assets for several years and the opportunity to roll out our proven supply chains to the single-family homes customer is a natural evolution of our learnings to date. Delivering this requires close work with trusted and proven partners who can deliver high-quality products and services in line with our brand standards. The time is ripe for these skills and tools to combine to create a rental experience that is truly in line with the needs and wants of modern renters.



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# THE RACE IS ON FOR SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING IN THE UK

*Godwin Development's Head of Residential Capital Markets, James Mulcare, explores what the future holds for the UK's suburban BTR market*

Growing population, declining homeownership, and a swell in the number of households renting across the age spectrum.

There are several reasons – structural, social and even political – that have shaped the increasing propensity to rent in the UK. Of those, declining mortgage affordability – especially in part of the country most in demand – have triggered a shift in attitudes and uptake – of renting. This has led to the rapid acceleration of interest and activity in the suburban Build to Rent (BTR) market, also now known as Single Family Housing (SFH).

To date, BTR in the UK has been known mostly for the high-rise multifamily apartment developments that are

now a familiar sight in many major cities. However, with approximately 60% of the country's privately rented stock consisting of houses, and **1.8 million households with children renting**, it is clear to see why institutional investors seeking long-term, secure income see SFH as a huge opportunity. And operators are keen to deliver.

With demand for high-quality rental properties in suburban areas continuing its upward trend, the supply of new purpose-built rental homes will only go one way. In the coming years experts predict that rental homes will account for a considerable proportion – up to 20% – of the government's target of 300,000 new homes per year. And while the SFH market is in its infancy domestically, conditions as well as the number of operators and investors declaring their intent to build portfolios is on the rise – signalling that the race is on for the suburbs.



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## THE NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

The suburban rental sector is new territory for UK operators and institutional investors. Utilising their expertise from multifamily schemes and knowledge generated from more advanced overseas markets, operators backed by domestic and international funds, are now bringing a new proposition to urban fringe locations.

Homes are designed and fitted out specifically for the rental market – with schemes typically targeting from 50 to 150 units. They benefit from quality interiors, private and shared outdoor space – and are particularly suited to a different demographic profile, dominated by families. Some also feature extensive landscaping and may increasingly be built using modern methods of construction, substantially boosting their sustainability credentials and

reducing running costs in the future. Being able to showcase high levels of sustainability measures to residents is extremely beneficial in today's market as big precedence is put on this by current renters. Proximity to social infrastructure is also key – being positioned for good connectivity, access to local amenities and strong employment hubs are must-haves for all SFH schemes.

Most importantly and in contrast to the private rented sector, suburban BTR developments offer professional management. They provide superior customer services, with quick repairs, availability of longer-term tenancies and ability for building a strong sense of community. All of these encourage residents to stay longer – which in turn delivers more predictable and stable income for investors.

## MORE QUALITY HOMES FOR THE CITY OF ELY

As an experienced residential business, Godwin Developments are already actively developing SFH schemes across the country. Its Cathedral Green development in **Ely, Cambridgeshire** demonstrates the company's ability to identify, design and deliver single family housing for rent in some of the most sought-after locations.

The scheme provides for the optimum mix of two and three-bedroom homes – most of which with private gardens – required by investors. It has ample parking for residents and will feature extensively landscaped open spaces intended to host community activities and become places for residents to meet and socialise. It will include a woodland walk as well as natural play

areas for children, a teens' retreat and an exercise space. At the heart of the development will be a reimagined 'village green' which will be car-free, creating a safe zone for pedestrians and children. The Cathedral Green development will be located within a 10-minute walk from Ely city centre and a range of local amenities such as food stores, schools, and a doctor's surgery.

We are excited to be a driving force behind SFH schemes across the UK. Laying foundations within a sector that is on the cusp of such accelerated up-take is a rousing prospect and instils confidence and desire to keep producing such inspiring developments within the single family housing sector.



# CAN BTR OVERTAKE PRS?



Build to Rent (BTR) properties are currently a small fraction of the UK property market, but the sector has the tools at its disposal to take over the rental market.

It's a shift that's already taken place in the US. Many Americans arriving in the UK are shocked by the rental market, where single-property private investors and letting agents are still the norm. As a result, properties are too often undermaintained, expensive and managed in an inconsistent and haphazard way. Now it's time for the shift to happen in the UK.

Here's why...

The UK's Build to Rent (BTR) sector is growing, but it still accounts for less than 1% of the homes in the UK. This is because the BTR sector is competing with traditional Build to Let (BTL) developers for the same land – these developers being the ones that build large residential blocks with a view to selling each individual unit as soon as they are built, for an instant

profit, then repeat. BTR can win these land opportunities but will have to be smart. Success as a developer and an accommodation provider will depend on the ability to maximise net operating income (NOI) and, over time, out-bid the "individual" investors for the opportunity.

In this article, we'll explain a few of the methods that are being utilised in the US multifamily housing sector to beat the BTL developers and in turn, offer a more appealing residential experience on a wider scale.

#### SERVICE GUARANTEES

BTR maintenance turnaround time is a lot quicker due to less administration, and this can fast become valued by all renters, therefore devaluing BTL properties. I, like most, would pay less rent for a property that cannot guarantee hot water and/or consistently fast Wi-Fi. Most BTR management companies should promise to fix problems within 48 hours and then if they're not remedied, the property in question

becomes rent-free until the problem is fixed. This is completely achievable thanks to onsite maintenance staff, supported by contracted specialized maintenance providers with hard Service Level Agreements. Compare this to BTL where each apartment is serviced by differing managers, owners, and approval processes; consequently, there can often be a long delay combined with extra costs. Additionally, individual owners don't have bulk-buying power on their side, another opportunity given to BTR owners/managers.

Once BTR property owners recognize the extreme advantages of bulk ownership, they will be able to market and price accordingly.

#### ANCILLARY INCOME

"Ancillary" Income can be described as additional revenue that supports your main source of revenue (i.e.: rent). If you identify enough opportunities and capitalise on them, BTR ancillary income can end up constituting up to 10% of your overall revenue.

The US market tapped into the ancillary revenue streams years ago to much success, but it can only be achieved with large blocks of apartments and some layer of sophistication. There is not one single solution that makes up this income; 10% of total revenue can only be achieved by layering on many programs and then managing them to maximize value.

A quick (and by no means complete) list of potential programs are: Internet marketing, TV Marketing, Utility Marketing, Supplier & Manufacturer Rebate Programs, Daily Parking Rental Programs, Amenity Rentals, Storage Rentals, Car Sharing, Vending Machines, Pet Rent.

These income opportunities soon add up, if managed properly.

Additionally, why not go that extra bit further? Most properties have 'concierge services', but why not add premium services such as room cleaning, dry cleaning, dog walking,

moving and storage? Modern renters are aware of how competitive the market is, and a premium style service offering could make all the difference in their choice.

#### CENTRALISED PROCUREMENT

BTR operators should use their large portfolio to centralise their procurement. Large residential properties & management companies can leverage their size and buying power, achieving much more favourable rates than smaller, traditional property owners.

If you can get this right, you will save a great deal of money – both initially and ongoing.

Most manufacturers and distributors offer rebates and/or bulk pricing. BTL developers are maximising their buying power, so you should too. A professional purchasing team should expect to save 15-25% on all the spend managed through their processes. There are even further gains when property managers begin collecting

and harnessing internal and supplier-driven procurement data.

In order for BTR to "take over" the PRS market, it must play to its strengths; utilising scale, service and smart marketing to become the ideal place to live.



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# HOW CRITICAL IS THE CUSTOMER TO THE BTR BUSINESS THESIS?

"The customer is critical to the Build To Rent business thesis - it starts with the customer and not the land". A few years ago, many people in residential property would have disagreed profoundly with this statement. Nowadays most people in BTR would agree with the sentiment, though maybe not with the detail. The quote was the central idea for a session at the recent UKAA BTR Fayre and understanding what this really means and more importantly how to deliver it is one of the fundamental challenges facing all of us in BTR and one that the UKAA is looking to address.

Of course a BTR scheme can't happen without a site, but without customers a BTR scheme has no income and without income it has no value. Identifying the potential customers for any scheme must be the first step in any decision-making process. Understanding who those customers are in detail, their aspirations, what they value and what they dislike are increasingly important as more BTR schemes come to market and having a new building with lots of 2 bed flats and professional management aren't enough to deliver a long-term, sustainable competitive advantage.

In the traditional development process, most design decisions are made well before the involvement of anyone responsible for the operation of the scheme, but all the evidence and feedback from actual BTR residents is that they are buying an experience not just a building. An experience that is intimately bound up with they way they are treated, the behaviours of the on-site and back-office team and their relationships with other residents and the environment in which they live.

All of these factors can be designed into a scheme but doing so and ensuring that the experience that a BTR scheme is able to deliver matches the target customers' requirements is a sophisticated process, but one that if executed correctly will maximise the available income generated by the scheme.

However income isn't the only variable to be considered - the cost of ownership and operation are the other part of the equation that determines Net Operating Income. Here to a more sophisticated approach is needed for BTR assets with an investment life of 20 years or more.

There is an old adage that of the total cost of ownership of a building over a 20-year life span, design costs £1, development and construction costs £13 and operation costs £86. Whilst the figures are approximate, they highlight the important truth that decisions taken during the design and development phase should be considered with knowledge of the impact that they have on the cost of long-term operation. Again the involvement of the eventual owner/operator in early design decisions and full information about Whole of Life costs down to a detailed component level is vital to informed decision making. It should also be remembered that "Value Engineering" aimed at reducing the cost of construction must also take account of its impact on the customer experience and long-term operability of the BTR scheme. These all have a financial impact on Net Operating Income, the ultimate measure of the financial success of the scheme.

How do we turn these aspirations - a detailed understanding of our customers, the knowledge of how to design an experience to maximise long-term rental income and clarity on the Whole of Life costs of owning and operating BTR schemes - into practical reality?

Three factors need to be present for this to happen:

1) The expertise and data to inform decision making - which I am confident is happening. There are an increasing number of organisations, many of them members of the UKAA, providing these services and ever-increasing amounts of data being gathered (and hopefully shared).

2) Rising awareness of the benefits of the whole of life approach in all parts of the BTR sector. There is more to do and the development of the UKAA BTR Best Practice Guide is aimed at taking this further.

3) Recognition that ESG is absolutely central to success. A broader ESG focussed approach will mandate Whole of Life costing, identify the widest impact of decision making and ensure their robustness through good governance processes.

Further there is a shared interest in sustainability between investors and BTR residents. There is already evidence that students in PBSA schemes are making choices about where to live based on the values and ESG performance of buildings and their owners/operators. We can be certain that this will translate into the BTR sector in the near future and this alignment of interests is likely to form a hugely powerful force for good in the sector.

*With thanks to Iain Murray of Liv Consulting and Breandan Geraghty of Centred Architecture / Optim for their thoughts about whole of life costing which provided the basis for this article.*



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# AN EXPLOSION OF *BTR* LIVING IN MCR



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The city of Manchester has been a focal point for the recent residential boom, with cranes cluttered across the city and a vibrancy in the residential real estate eco-system that's unrivalled. There is often talk amongst University alumni who return to Manchester after periods of time away, of how much the city has changed since they were here as students in the 90's and 00's.

Just before the pandemic hit, there was a nervousness about the supply of properties within the city centre and concerns that Manchester couldn't handle the 13,000 homes

completing with a 2 month period. Then, from Quarter One of 2020, the world changed and still hasn't fully recovered, albeit edging closer to pre-pandemic normality. We're here to tell you, that the COVID-19 pandemic was a blip, and that Manchester's trajectory is still very much upward.

It's not just Build to Rent that's booming; Build to Rent remains a small part of city centre developments across the big seven regional cities (not taking London into account, which holds its own dynamic) which are all on a strong course of economic growth.

You may have heard the statement that 'people will run from major cities and settle in the suburbs', however if you ask our youth, they will tell you that they don't want to live a suburban life - their picture of life is not quiet suburbia. 18 to 25 year olds have networks to build, lives to live and alumni to create, and that won't be done in the suburbs. This isn't an opinion of mine for you to disagree with, this is a fact.

Manchester has held a Data Room, led by the local council, which invites developers and investors to show

their prospects for the city centre. They told us in 2017 that Manchester needed to build 5000 homes each year to keep up with the demographic growth. When there is twelve new developments opening within the city, with an average of 300 units per development, you'll see that we're still significantly short of accommodation to provide within the city. We must get used to the fact that Manchester is one of many cities facing this housing crisis however, post pandemic, we are now on the run rate we need to satisfy the requirements of people wanting city centre living.

If you visit any modern European city, you will see that their volumes of city centre residential properties dwarf what Manchester will deliver in the next ten years, as residents have lived in European city centres for decades. UK cities are starting to catch up and become more European in nature, mixing culture and society. Our European counterparts have six figure numbers of residents living in city centre apartments, and we're playing catch up.

Statistics from the OECD tell us that western world growth will come from

its cities, and there is a huge volume of migration into these cities. This is a fact that our census data, released early 2022, will hopefully cement, showing the progression of most Northern cities, especially Manchester, resulting in them being more densely populated. Our data proves that city centres will grow, and that the effects of COVID-19 was merely a blip.

At Urbanbubble, our research department is constantly tracking Manchester's population growth as a way of assessing demand. Since 2001, the population of central Manchester has increased by over 90,000 (+78%) from 42,500 to 107,327 – or about 5,000 people per year. The number of homes being built in this area over the last five years has led to some concern about oversupply. However, by using these population stats, we have always known that this is a fallacy – the city still is not delivering enough

new homes to address population expansion. Meanwhile, the population of the wider Greater Manchester area has increased by nearly 400,000 people since 2001, with the pace of growth quickening in recent years. The central areas of Manchester, Salford, and Trafford have witnessed the fastest population growth over this period.

So, what differences are there between BTR and Residential? Not as many as you'd think. PBSA has, over two decades, given our young people high quality living and amenities that they now expect as standard. The youth want and expect the same level of service and luxuries that they experienced in University, when they leave and the new wave of Residential properties are providing just that.

Is a large, beige lobby and a sticky floored communal room the way forwards, and acceptable to city centre dwellers? The short answer, no. We should have high spec amenities, waste shoots, spaces for communities to be created and nurtured, work from home space, social value and green living initiatives, spaces to socialise and spaces to exercise. Manchester's new age of Residential properties are stepping up to provide these requirements, matching what PBSA already offer.

High tech and high spec amenities and offerings cost money, so can renters afford this way of city centre living? Urbanbubble, based in Manchester city centre, has an affordability pre-qualification requirement. Therefore, if a renter's wages don't support 30 times the monthly rental amount (as set by the local council), renters will not

pass affordability checks. As a city operator, Urbanbubble won't rent to those who can't afford where they live, and we certainly have no issue with affordability's. The market has welcomed this new wave of Build to Rent and Leasehold sites, and people can and will pay for it.

Post pandemic, we have proven that Manchester has the supply, and throughout 2020 demand ebbed and flowed. Every major northern city has seen demand for rental accommodation increase to unprecedented levels. When we launch a building, we underwrite circa. Five new leases each week in low season, and between ten and fifteen each week in peak season (between May and September). It was like Black Friday from June to October 2021, for all operators, not just urbanbubble, resulting in low stock

availability post October 2021 across the city. There were weeks whereby 22 to 28 deals were agreed at some communities, which sounds great, but impacted on staffing and the wellbeing of our people. Increase has demanded so much so, that rent on some stock has climbed by between 10% and 15% in some cases. That isn't greedy investors or landlords creeping their rents up, they are purely going back to post pandemic levels, and the supply satisfies that need to keep prices in check.

Increased demand has come from the variety of sources; migration from the South East, less of a requirement to be in London for jobs that people can now commute into, allowing them to live a better quality of life at a lower price point, moving because of family and/or social networks; people can live in the North, whilst retaining

London weighted pay jobs and young people have been living in the suburbs during the pandemic with their parents and now yearn for a return to their city centre lives. Additionally, students are back, and demand is high. Some students were locked in student accommodation during the pandemic, which has pushed demand for private rented properties, which would be more beneficial and comfortable for students in the event of another lockdown, and price points are now very similar.

There has been no explosion, we simply must meet a trajectory to supply high density housing in Manchester. Build to Rent continues to create supply at all quality levels, at a mid-market or high-end price point, and this looks set to continue to grow over the next five to ten years.



# HIGH DENSITY URBAN LIVING, IN A POST-COVID WORLD

Creative capital cities around the world have experienced an unprecedented wave of urbanisation and population growth in recent times – the shift from a 40% to 70% urban planet is going to be one of the defining trends of our lifetimes. The pandemic initially called this trend into question, as well as some of the alternative housing solutions that were trying to address the need for a cost-effective urban living offering. Some of these concepts included microliving or coliving communities; a way of using the sharing economy to minimise the total amount of space required by a resident yet provide an amenity and lifestyle offering that was fit for a new generation of renters who wanted an “Instagram ready” apartment and an all-inclusive lifestyle solution on demand.

Cities are thriving again, and 20-30 somethings were the first to return to city living. Urban environments foster social interaction, creativity, and personal and professional growth by bringing people together in a way that Zoom simply cannot. So as the world begins to return to normal, the question is what becomes the right concept for high density urban living, and concepts like coliving going forward.

The growing urban world is likely to settle at a point where working from home two days a week will be the norm, and cutting down on commute times to live more centrally becomes a key way to reduce one’s carbon footprint. Concepts like the ‘15-minute city’ embrace this ethos. That means a cost-effective solution for young urban renters is once again a key issue cities need to tackle in order to attract a talented global workforce of mobile young professionals and entrepreneurs.

Many innovative coliving concepts have failed during the pandemic, primarily due to their tiny rooms and dorm-like feeling, making them more of an extended stay hospitality offering than a home. And hospitality suffered the greatest casualties during COVID. Add to that young entrepreneurs that lacked management, operational and real estate expertise and the problems for some got even worse, giving the fledgling industry a perceived negative reputation almost out of the gate. However, the reality is that even these early concepts are back to full occupancy around the world today given the acute shortage of centrally located, cost effective housing in our cities.

So, the overall concept is not dead and should not be written off just like the way the first dot.coms rose and failed but the internet remained and thrived. The question is; what’s the next evolution of these concepts and what can we learn from the pandemic?

A coliving or microliving model that embraces a curated living philosophy is more sustainable - an offering that combines inspiring interior design, the right balance of public amenities, private spaces, and a diverse yet curated community similar to members club offerings such as Soho House. Larger sized units, with creatively interior designed spaces that inspire, and amenities such as coworking and wellness spaces, eco-thermostats and an app that connects all residents, should be the aim for all coliving and microliving. Communal areas for residents to socialise in are important, but the private units need to be large enough to allow for self-isolation or simply privacy.

Allowing residents to reside in their own spaces but not feel lonely due to the communal living spaces and community programming is key for tackling the issues of isolation, yet striking this delicate balance is critical. A vibrant daytime community in which to work from home; a central, walkable neighbourhood; a “plug and play” interior designed apartment with excellent Wi-Fi; and a safe, sanitary, and professionally managed environment are winning combinations for long term success at scale.

So, while the first generation of urban living concepts may have failed due to a flawed execution, it is clear that there is now a more evolved path to move towards where dense urban living will thrive at a much bigger scale in the future.



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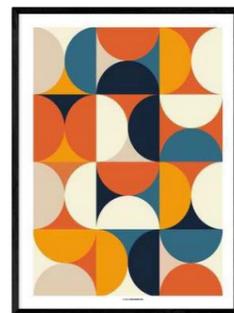
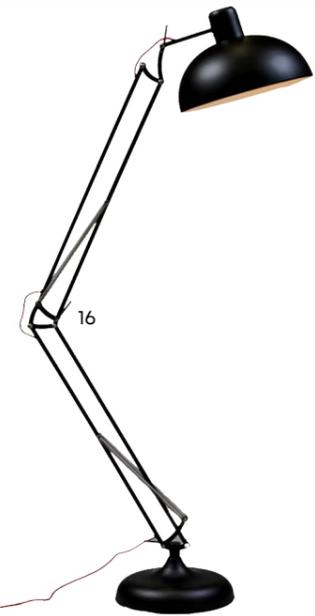
# RESIDENTIAL TRENDS

**SUSTAINABLE, RELIABLE, UPLIFTING, LEADING, LOFT®.**

Our ethos has been built upon the ability to inherently understand residents. What draws them to interiors and what makes them want to stay. Our end-to-end service embodies a circular, 360 approach. From start to finish, LOFT® will take care of it all.



# GEO RETRO COLLECTION



## GET THE LOFT LOOK

**Be bold. Be vibrant. Be Geo Retro.** A collection that possesses a unique spirit of its own, the playful use of colour and pattern throughout creates a vibrant canvas that exudes the rebellious nature of the 70's while maintaining a chic aesthetic.



## GEO RETRO COLLECTION:

1. Bugle Corner Sofa
2. Coastal Two Tone Rug
3. Mustard Manny Throw
4. Blue Linen Cushion
5. Mustard Linen Cushion
6. Wesper Cushion
7. Black Octagon Mirror
8. White Deana Side Table
9. Tilly Dining Table
10. Pink Canarby Pouffe
11. Greta Side Table
12. Kensal Sideboard
13. Disco Print
14. Orange Retro Geometric Print
15. Speckled Angular Vase
16. Classic Floor Lamp
17. Dixie Occasional Chair
18. Aldred Dining Chair
19. Mayfair Coffee Table
20. Faux Eucalyptus Plant
21. Eucalyptus with White Plant Pot



# LUXE REFINED COLLECTION



## GET THE LOFT LOOK

**Defined, assured, and indulgently luxurious** - introducing Luxe Refined. Drawing inspiration from the Art Deco movement, this collection unwaveringly employs bold colours and a sophisticated, muted texture palette. A multi-layered design that emphasises accessories and epitomises timeless opulence.



## LUXE REFINED COLLECTION:

1. Small Winslow Side Table
2. Large Winslow Side Table
3. Coastal Two Tone Rug
4. Jackson Triangular Coffee Table
5. Jackson Square Coffee Table
6. Matt Floor Lamp
7. Shelly Armchair
8. Terracotta Head Sculpture
9. Brass Candle Holder
10. Harlem Sideboard
11. String Lantern Lamp
12. Toby Dining Table
13. Aiden Dining Chair
14. Salt and Pepper Pot
15. Oil and Vinegar Bottle
16. Slate Serving Board
17. Sandringham 2 Seater Sofa
18. Handmade Stoneware Dinner Plate
19. Michael Linen Napkin
20. Avery 16 Piece Cutlery Set
21. Nova Tumbler
22. Lyza Cocktail Glass
23. Cherry Black Round Mirror



# ARTFUL COLLECTION



## GET THE LOFT LOOK

Embodying an energy of enjoyment and exuding a feeling of fun, Artful proudly boasts bold, block colours and alluring materials that demand appreciation. Playfully offset with captivating patterns to create a multi-layered collaborative design that ebbs and flows within itself beautifully.



## ARTFUL COLLECTION:

1. Rhea Bed Frame
2. Shard Rug
3. Pink Canarby Pouffe
4. Kamp Throw
5. Didi Lounge Chair
6. Wespa Cushion
7. Fringed Cushion
8. Abstract Smudge I Print
9. Mood Framed Print
10. Elliot Armchair
11. Morton Desk
12. Terrazo Table Lamp
13. Black Candle Holder
14. Marble Tray
15. Glass Vase with Handles
16. Rattan Serving Tray
17. Mongolian Fur Cushion
18. Oakley Sofa



# SOULFUL CEREMONY COLLECTION



## SOULFUL CEREMONY COLLECTION:

1. Light Wood Curved Mirror
2. Wilson Wall Mirror
3. Globe Floor Lamp
4. Balboa Side Table
5. Aspen Side Board
6. Black Candle Holder
7. Mongolian Sheepskin Rug
8. Bexley Wall Mirror
9. Ceramic Ravello Flower Jug
10. Marble Tray
11. Abstract Framed Canvas III
12. I Do Framed Print
13. Heart Plant Framed Print
14. Verona Chair
15. Toby Dining Table
16. Hand Woven Natural Rug
17. Sedley 3 Seater Sofa
18. Sadie Cushion Cover
19. Astroid Orb Table Lamp
20. Alden Cushion
21. Deana Coffee Table



## GET THE LOFT LOOK

Creating a serene interior that **incites tranquillity** is achieved through a soft, comforting colour palette proposed by our Soulful Ceremony Collection. Warm oaks and natural textures serve to provide a gently rejuvenating quality that breathes peaceful vitality into a home.



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