Creating Homes Without Ownership How might Build to Rent providers be nurturing senses of home in their rental developments

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Creating Homes Without Ownership:

How might Build to Rent providers be nurturing senses of home in their rental developments?

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Being a dissertation submitted to the faculty of The Built Environment as part of the requirements for the award of the MSc Urban Design & City Planning at University College London: I declare that this dissertation is entirely my own work and that ideas, data and images, as well as direct quotations, drawn from elsewhere are identified and referenced.

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ABSTRACT

In the UK, Housing and affordability are firmly at the top of the political agenda; a decline in property ownership and the growth of 'generation rent' are problematic in a society built around a culture of homeownership. The immature, rapidly expanding Built to Rent (BTR) sector has been championed as a solution to these challenges, and beyond. Its retained model of management and development potentially aligns profitability and resident satisfaction, encouraging tenants to feel at home in rental properties. The research examines how 'home' is conceived, breaking the concept down in four component parts: personal, social, constant and secure. Drawing on qualitative analysis, conducted through the case study of East Village, London, the research examines how BTR providers might be nurturing a sense of home in their developments. Findings suggest that BTR providers are employing personal, social and management tools to build self-expression and community identity, encourage choice and interaction, and offer greater security and services to residents. However, as evidenced through the research, the residents' views on the success of these tools is considerably varied.

1 INTRODUCTION

The commoditisation and financialisation of the UK housing market (Agnew, 1984; Ruonavaara, 2012) has turned shelter – a basic human need – into an asset, relentlessly traded and usually in the interests of maximising short-term profits (Davis, 2018). This has seen growing unaffordability (Hulse et al, 2019), wider gentrification (Weller and Van Hulten, 2012) and declining rates of homeownership; spawning 'generation rent' (Hoolachan et al, 2016) in which people face the prospect of making their long-term home in rented accommodation (Kemp, 2015).

Housing and affordability are firmly at the top of the political agenda (Handy, 2015); England requires 300,000 new homes a year (Savills, 2018) to satisfy demand and limit the widening gap between private and social housing (Beswick et al, 2016). It is within this ownership vacuum that the UK Private Rental Sector (PRS) has seen sustained growth; now home to 20.3% of all UK households, up from 10.1% in 2001 (Savills, 2018). This is specifically problematic within the UK as the 'home' is inherently tied to ownership (Gurney, 1999); ownership affords rights of security, control and protection, as well as personal and social expression all of which are not intrinsically associated with leasehold rentals. As rental is the only UK housing tenure currently growing (Savills, 2018), the importance of ensuring that residents are able, and encouraged, to create a sense of home without ownership is paramount.

The research seeks to explore how people conceive and experience home in the context of Build to Rent (BTR), purpose-built rental properties. Analysing the role of ownership in the manifestation of home and looking at the tools and techniques that BTR providers are utilising to achieve sensations of 'home'. The BTR sector is rapidly expanding, posing itself to have a dominant role in housing delivery well into the future; warranting the significance of research on the subject (Hulse et al, 2019). BTR long-term investment and estate management model holds parallels to that of the 'Great Estates of London' (Canelas, 2018); as the provider retains the homes they create, profitability is tied to the continued success, vibrancy and desirability of the place with high occupancy, low churn and happy tenants the goal of providers (Taylor, 2016). Given the current inaccessibility of homeownership, the BTR model of delivering accommodation has the potential to offer residents' greater sensations of ownership in rental properties.

This paper is structured into five sections. First, the literature review collates a four-part theoretical framework for the concept of 'home' as an entity constructed of personal, social, constancy and security understandings. The second section frames 'home' in the UK rental context, introducing BTR, its expansion and market actors. The third section describes the methodology the research followed. Fourth, the paper critically analyses the data gathered in regards to the literature to discuss: (1) whether BTR providers are nurturing notions of 'home' in their developments; (2) the tools and strategies they might be using to capitalise on creating a sense of home; and (3) strength of the home attachment residents felt to the case study of East Village. The culmination of the paper concludes that the BTR providers are using tools to nurture a sense of home in their developments, however the degree to which this is successful varies greatly between tools and residents experience.

2 HOME LITERATURE REVIEW

For several decades, different theorists from a wide spectrum of the social sciences have sought to analyse people-place relations; each discipline offering a slightly nuanced view (Arefi, 1999). This has resulted in an extensive tapestry of academic literature on the concept of 'home' spanning many academic disciplines (Easthope, 2014).

In order to begin to unravel the concept of 'home' the academic discussion must first be sited within the broader literature on 'sense of place' from which it derives. The humanist geographer Tuan (1980; 2001) is one of the most significant theorists on sense of place. Tuan's work introduces the widest definition of 'sense of place': an unconscious emotional attachment or 'rootedness' (Tuan, 1980) to a location, otherwise known as topophilia (Easthope, 2014; Tuan, 2001). 'Rootedness', as a concept, cuts across many of the definitions of home explored in the literature (Cross, 2001) and is inherently subjective and interpersonal (Dovey et al, 2009), open to and sculpted by interpretation and the influence of other factors (Soaita, 2015). For Taun (1980; 2001) it relates to innate feelings of attachment to locations that establishes itself with time and stability, with financial or emotional investment (Lynch, 1972; Brah, 1996), or emersion within the social network (Hollander, 1991). An individual's emotional and financial investment in their social and physical surroundings creates a closer bond between them and the spatial environment (Cox, 1968; Low and Altman, 1992). Tuan's work has highlighted the significance of a conscious appreciation of place (Tuan, 1980), acting as an umbrella concept to a diverse range of place relations at all scales (Dias et al, 2015): from 'place identity' (Proshansky et al, 1983), to 'place dependence' (Williams et al, 1992) and 'homeness' (Seamon, 1979). For the purpose of this research 'sense of home', the smallest scale place attachment will be analysed "as a particularly significant type of place" (Easthope, 2014:581). From reviewing the literature, the debates present four predominant meanings of 'home' which are personal, social, constancy and security.

2.1 The Personal Home

2.1.1 Physical

The home as a personal construct can be understood in a number of ways. The first views it as a duality – the house or dwelling – a physical object (Mallett, 2004). The home is given its meaning by those who live in it (Chapman and Hockey, 1999; Wright, 1991; Clapham, 2011). Ruonavaara's (2012 p 186) work categorised dwellings in three ways: a property with monetary value, a consumption good and homes where people feel an attachment. Governments and housing policy makers have traditionally failed to understand the holistic nature of home reductionistically, viewing it as a unit of accommodation rather than a home (Clapham, 2010). This is a problem as policy makers are not recognising the independently personal role of the home to individuals.

2.1.2 Personal Expression

In the academic literature, one prevalent understanding sees the home as a place for personal or self-expression (Kearns et al, 2000; Cooper, 1974). Ruonavaara's (2012) research found that residents actively make dwellings homes by redesigning, decorating and changing them according to their values and wishes (186). Through this notion of home, the occupant needs to feel free and secure to express themselves (Tucker, 1994). The design and decor of the homes come to reect the occupant's sense of self (Després, 1991), their subjectivity towards the world (Tucker, 1994) and individual style and aesthetic (Neumark, 2013). Numerous papers in the field of environmental psychology have highlighted the contribution that personalisation of physical space and home improvements have towards mental health, physical wellbeing (Brunia and Hartjes-Gosselink, 2009; Hiscock et al, 2001) and the feeling of being settled (Van Gelder, 2007). Thomsen's (2007) work considered the student experience of creating a sense of home in purpose built student accommodation. The findings stressed the importance of design features, such as colour schemes, in creating individuality between rooms. Allowing residents to personalise with these small additions works towards reducing the sense of institutionalisation within rented blocks (Thomsen, 2007).

Although this research has relevancy to the private rental experience, the direct generalisability of the findings is limited due to a narrow sample demographic and the students' knowledge of their homes impermanence.

2.1.3 Self-Identity

A key theme within the literature is the relationship between home and the abstraction of an individual's identity (Havel and Wilson, 1992). This builds on the concept of home as a place for individual expression (Despres, 1991); where the home, through the expression of personal style and subjectivity (Neumark, 2013; Tucker, 1994), becomes a symbol of self-identity (Casey, 2001). Home is a place where identities are constructed (Dupuis and Thorns, 1998), the ability to make a home is vital to human existence (Heidegger, 1971). For philosophers, such as Wu (1993), "home is fundamental to being as it is the intersubjective relationships that brings a self, person or I into being or existence" (193). A person's identity and understanding of self requires an intrinsic awareness of one's place in the world, typically centred around the home they have created (Casey, 2001:406). Ginsburg's (1998) work supports the understanding that human beings are inherently homemakers; "We make our homes... We build the intimate shell of our lives by the organization and furnishing of the space in which we live. How we function as persons is linked to how we make ourselves at home. We need time to make our dwelling into a home....Our residence is where we live, but our home is how we live." (31). This extract cites several fundamental themes to understanding home: the role of personalisation (Thomsen, 2007), physical furnishing (Van Gelder, 2007), freedom of activity (Darke, 2002) and time investment (Lynch, 1972; Brah, 1996). These studies and many more have shown that the home holds considerable importance as a source of positive identity, contributing to personal self-esteem (Clapham, 2010) and individual wellbeing (Easthope, 2004, 2014; Hiscock et al, 2001).

2.1.4 Memory & Emotional Attachment

Home is a personal, emotional connection (Easthope, 2014; Soaita, 2015) that comes through the interpretation of the physical environment (Gieryn, 2000; Massey and Jess, 1995), open to individualistic subjectivity (Clapham, 2010). For these scholars, home is a dynamic concept constantly being defined and re-defined by people's histories, personal preferences, tenure and experiences (Csikszentmihályi and Rochberg-Halton, 1981). Home is experienced and lived through feelings and memories (Soaita, 2015), which can lead to nostalgic or romantic notions of home (Jones, 2000) linked with a previous time and emotional state (Massey, 1992, 1994; Rapport and Dawson, 1998). This shows that understanding its emotional context is crucial to understanding home (Perkins and Thorns, 2000; Giulani, 1991); the complex and uid relationship between home and memories leaves its understanding in flux, somewhere between lived reality and the ideal home (Jackson, 1995; Somerville, 1992).

2.1.5 Experience

According to Gurney (1997), home is an ideological construct that emerges through and is created from people's lived experience. In this definition, a physical dwelling is transformed into a home in the context of everyday life and activity (Dovey, 1985; Korosec-Serfaty, 1985). Interaction, control, personalisation, and socialisation are required to produce a sense of home; these are also factors that shape the experience of how people 'do' and 'feel' home (Jackson, 1995; Ingold, 1995). The work of Bourdieu and Nice (1977) on the 'habitus' viewed places as a 'feeling' (Dovey et al, 2009), putting the personalised experience of place central to its definition and comprehension (Hillier and Rooksby, 2005).

2.2 The Social Home

The second analysis of home prevalent throughout the literature is the social and cultural meanings that the home represents (Wardaugh, 1999; Dovey, 1985). In this understanding, the house is the physical "setting through which basic forms of social relations and social institutions are constituted and reproduced" (Saunders and Williams (1988:82). The home is the site of many social and gender performances (Duncan, 1996), as well as cultural practices (Clapham, 2010) that frame identities and lifestyle (Perkins and Thorns, 2000). The social and cultural relationships that construct understandings of home are in flux, constantly evolving (Chapman and Hockey, 1999) as the home and its inhabitants transform one another. Rybczynski's 1986 book, Home: A Short History of an Idea, explored the evolving nature of home from seventeenth century ideas about privacy, domesticity, intimacy and comfort towards modern expectations of design and use of domestic spaces. For Saunders and Williams (1988) "home is the fusion of the physical house and social household, the crucible of the social system, the interface between society and the individual" (85). The home, therefore, acts as the interface between society and the individual; is the principle means by which individuals socially and culturally express themselves to the outside world (Pahl, 1984).

2.2.1 Social Status

The socially constructed understanding of home means that cultural and economic factors can produce, market and brand desirable visions of an 'ideal' home consumed by users (Chapman and Hockey, 1999). Capital, property developers and manufacturers have much to gain from community and societal valorisation of home ownership (Chapman and Hockey, 1999); this has seen the home turning from a physical shelter for human need (Saunders and Williams, 1988) to a commodity traded for profit or fashion (Agnew, 1984; Ruonavaara, 2012). In this social conception, the home represents a status symbol (Rowlands and Gurney, 2000; Easthope, 2004) or a reflection of one's self and success (Gurney, 1999a). Consequently, the home can simultaneously be a concrete object, use object and symbolic object (Rapoport, 1990, 2000) with societal and psychological factors informing the relationship between individuals and their physical dwellings. Harre (2002) classes the home as a 'social object', where material items are defined in relation to their place in the social world. Developers have long been utilising branding and marketing to sell lifestyles rather than physical properties (Chapman and Hockey, 1999). Playing on the constructed identity of place and home, they cultivate a desirable status or luxury sense of home for their developments (Madigan et al, 1990). This conceptualisation of home leaves its meaning dynamic, evolving with cultural trends and changes in ways of life, employment and social acceptability (Mallett, 2004).

The social understanding of home is complex and multidimensional (Bowlby et al, 1997; Somerville, 1992), requiring contextual knowledge on place and social relationships (Saunders and Williams, 1988). The home as a 'social object' (Harre, 2002), or expression of status (Madigan et al, 1990), can have negative manifestations that produce undesirable social capital (Clapham, 2010), stigmatisation (Rowlands and Gurney, 2000) or prejudice that impact residents' wellbeing (Gurney, 1999a). A study in 1988 on council tenants in North London by Miller found that residents combated feelings of inadequacy and stigmatisation that were engrained in the institutional physical fabric of their home's design and commodities. Rowlands and Gurney's study (2000) on children's perception of different tenures showed that this stigma is intergenerational and deeply embedded early on in a child's development. This research on sense of place is concerned with inclusivity (Huang and Franck, 2018), 'publicness' (Langstraat and Van Melik, 2013) and the experience of those vulnerable or marginalised in social housing (Levin et al, 2014; Mee, 2007).

2.2.2 Community Identity

Psychological explorations of home examine the bonds between people and their home, studies such as these have produced concepts such as place attachment (Low and Altman, 1992) and place identity (Moore, 2000; Cuba and Hummon, 1993). These see home performing a wider social role across the community (Hummon, 1992). Dovey's (1985) work argues that home is beyond a particular physical location, rather it is an "expression of social meanings and identities" (95). Through this, home is understood as a wider relationship between people and places territorially bonding

(Porteous, 1976) the identities of individuals and groups (Casey, 2001; Massey, 1995). Under this reasoning, Tuan's (1980, 2001) concept of rootedness is to the social identity associated with a physical location (Cross, 2001).

The word 'home' derives from the Anglo-Saxon word ham, meaning village, estate or town (Hollander, 1991), implying connection to social or community networks (Massey, 1993; Hummon, 1992). The works of Massey (1992, 1994, 2010) have been critical to challenging the conception of the home, as bounded and settled. For Massey, place is an identity that must be constructed and negotiated, its boundaries permeable and unstable. Homes, therefore, are nodal points (Massey, 1991; Cresswell, 2014), open to, and created by, the social relations which extend beyond making home a spatial flexible concept (Easthope, 2014). Further definitions offer increasing abstraction as diverse as understanding the home as an "emotional environment, a culture, geographical location, a political system, a historical time and place, a house or any and all of the above and more" (Tucker, 1994:184). Attachments to these identities are inseparable to our human identity (Havel and Wilson, 1992). These identities are performed through everyday activities and social practices (Butler, 1993) and offer a wider sense of home across scale and culture (Hollander, 1991).

2.3 The Constant Home

A concurrent theme throughout these debates is the relationship between sense of home and time (Cox, 1968; Low and Altman, 1992). Rootedness, underpinned by stability and continuity, is important for long term relationships to the physical and social landscape to be established (Cross, 2001; Hummon, 1992). These conditions create a nurturing home environments that foster interdependence, social interaction and independence (Mallett, 2004). Research by Kemp (2015) on the experience of rental tenants highlighted the challenges that the transient demographic (Amett, 2014, Hoolachan et al, 2016) and lack of control over a landlord's actions (Easthope, 2014) have, thus creating an unstable environment where sense of place and home can struggle to develop.

2.3.1 Home, Journeying & Globalisation

The modernist movement has challenged and transformed many of the debates surrounding the home (Arefi, 1999; Cox, 1968). Modern technology and globalisation has facilitated a time-space compression (Massey, 1991) that has seen literature focused on the convergent effects of 'standardisation' and 'inauthenticity' challenge 'place' (Relph, 1976; Jacobs and Appleyard, 1987; Entrikin, 1991; Zukin, 1991). As a reaction to this contemporary literature, which emphasises the importance of 'placelessness' (Auge, 1995; Webber, 1964) and the loss of meaning of places (Houston, 1978; Hayden, 1997). In this climate, post-modernist literature has called for a need to redefine place-space relations that develop a progressive, networked sense of place (Dovey et al, 2009). Massey's (1991, 1994) outward sense of place, removes geographic boundaries without the loss of individual identity and rootedness, presenting a progressive understanding that demonstrates the importance of a 'global sense of the local' (Massey, 1991) This view understands place and home as globally interconnected – operating between scales, spatial locations and social settings – combining 'rootedness' and 'placelessness' (Arefi, 1999). Home can be both a destination and an origin (Mallett, 2004); its boundaries and thresholds only established through the journeying of individuals (Dovey, 1985). Journeying involves both the physical exploration of other locations (Jones, 1995) and the performance of societal expectations that come with age (Molgat, 2007). This societal expectation results in individuals journeying from the birth, or family, home to establishing an independent home of their own (Hoolachan et al, 2016).

2.3.2 Routines & Rituals

Dupuis and Thorns (1998) wrote of the home as a site of social and material constancy where the routines of human existence are performed. In this understanding, a stable home is fundamental for the continuation of life's routines and rituals (Saile, 1985) which form an important aspect of an individual's identity and self-esteem (Tanner et al, 2008). Through this interpretation, 'being at home' is created through investing time and energy into immersing yourself into the immediate surroundings socially and physically (Brah, 1996).

2.3.3 Confidence & Investment

Time is a vital element in creating a sense of ownership (Kearns et al, 2000; Saunders, 1989; Giddens, 1991); it strengthens the home as a place of security, safety and comfort (Walshaw, 2011), a site of constancy, continuity and familiarity to which people can return (Easthope, 2004; 2014). Stability and continuity provide a confidence (Mallett, 2004) to the individual, enabling them to invest in their location both emotionally and financially. This is done through home modifications which positively affect the meaning of home (Easthope, 2014) and improve the physical quality of their surroundings (Van Gelder, 2007). The positive link between home condition and identity has been demonstrated by a number of empirical studies (Walshaw, 2011; Tanner et al, 2008) which prove the beneficial social and wellbeing effects (Hiscock et al, 2001; Rowles and Chaudhury, 2005).

2.4 The Secure Home

2.4.1 Safety & Autonomy

A significant element of the home across the literature reviewed was as a secure haven (Dovey, 1985; Walshaw, 2011). In one of its most simplistic understandings, the sense the home is the boundary of public and private, the line between the inside and outside world (Wardaugh, 1999; Altman and Werner, 1985). Home should represent a comfortable, secure and safe space, (Dovey, 1985) offering: freedom from surveillance (Saunders, 1990) and external performative expectations (Dupuis and Thorns, 1998); privatism, a place to withdraw from communal life to focus activities around the individual's home (Saunders and Williams, 1988); and privatization, the shift from public/state owned housing towards owner occupied housing and privatised consumption (Mallett, 2004). Homeownership, as a source of pride and autonomy (Parsell, 2012) contributing to an enhanced view of one's self (Saunders, 1989), has evolved post-industrial revolution with increasing privatisation and ownership (Saunder, 1990). The phrase "the Englishmen's house is his castle" (Rykwert, 1991:53) was an early allusion to this important distinction of home as a "place of safety, comfort and relaxation" (Walshaw, 2011:273; Moore, 1984).

2.4.2 Control

Freedom and control (Darke, 2002) have a central role in defining the concept of home and are heavily supported across the literature (Kearns et al, 2000). Control can be real or a sensational experience (Dupuis and Thorns, 1998), contested between the idealised and lived reality (Jones, 2000; Wardaugh, 1999). Numerous studies on home have shown that control is a significant motivation for homeownership (Saunders, 1990; Hiscock et al, 2001), the key to self-esteem (Clapham, 2010) and has health and well-being consequences for tenants (Hulse et al, 2011). Hulse's et al, 2011 study found residents experienced a stronger sense of place attachment in rental dwellings where their occupancy was secure. Security of occupancy gave tenants control over their surroundings, creating a stable environment that facilitates setting down roots (Hulse and Milligan, 2014).

2.4.3 Ontological Security

From the exploration of the literature, the topic of 'ontological security' (Giddens, 1991, 1984; Saunders, 1989, 1990) emerged as a central element behind understanding home. Ontological security is defined by Giddens (1991) as "the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and the constancy of their social and material environments. Basic to a feeling of ontological security is a sense of the reliability of persons and things" (92). The term encompasses many factors that contribute to creating a home: reliability, consistency, security, belonging, continuity and stability (Saunders, 1989, 1990). Saunders' (1989) findings suggest that the desire for owning a home is primarily an expression of the need for ontological security, and is thus responsible for the growth of home ownership (Kemp, 1987). Ontological security has been the subject of much research; studies such as Dupuis and Thorns' 1998 paper which seeks to operationalise the concept to strengthen its positive effects for health and well-being (Bridge et al, 2003; Hulse and Saugeres, 2008).

2.4.4 Tenure & Legal Security

Housing tenure features heavily in the debates around the definition of home (Kemp, 1987; Giulani, 1991). Homeownership is the cultural convention in the UK (Gurney, 1999a), overwhelmingly desired and the centre of most people's aspirations (Saunders, 1989). Research done by several academics (Saunders, 1990; Giddens, 1991) has demonstrated that one of the largest drivers for homeownership is the desire for a stronger sense of ontological security (Hiscock et al, 2001); ownership actualises the control, security, status that people seek (Rakoff, 1977).

Tenure is an important part of homemaking as different tenures invest residents with different degrees of power over their living space (Ruonavaara, 2012) as well as being significant for cultural status (Easthope, 2014). Legally, there are core rights associated with the varying tenures, e.g. right to disposition, management and maintenance (Ruonavaara, 2012; Ming and Forrest, 2010). For example, the landlord's right to control the property is not intrinsic to property ownership per se, rather it reflects the laws and customs, influencing the policies and legislation that shape the right of tenant (Easthope, 2014). These legal rights are socially and culturally constructed (Ming and Forest, 2010), linked to societal norms (Murie, 1991; Hulse et al, 2011) and differ across national contexts (Easthope, 2014).

Sense of place in the context of private homeownership and the experience of the private rental tenants has largely been overlooked by researchers (Easthope, 2014; Gurney, 1999b). The literature that has been undertaken has centred on studies in the market context of Australia (Hulse and Milligan, 2014; Hulse et al, 2011), New Zealand (Dupuis and Thorns, 1998) and Germany (Hulse et al, 2011; Easthope, 2014). This has limited the generalisability of their findings for the UK and highlights a discontinuity that this paper seeks to address. Easthope's (2014) study, undertaken in Australia found there to be a "disjuncture between the societal assumptions [of homeownership] influencing government policy, politics and legislation regarding rental and the lived reality of many [renting]" (592). UK legislation prioritises the needs of the landlord to mobilise their asset value over the needs of tenant for secure occupancy, leaving tenants renting in insecure position (Hulse et al, 2011; Easthope, 2014) and is in direct contradiction of the foundational elements within the definition of home. In Germany, renting is accepted as a long-term living solution and therefore receives adequate policy protection to aid security (Easthope, 2014). This is an area that requires a broader societal shift in the nature and purpose of rental housing backed by housing policy and legislation (Clapham, 2010).

3 BUILD TO RENT & MARKET CONTEXT

Research covering land and property ownership has shown there to be a strong link between ownership and socio-economic power (Massey and Catalano, 1978; Adams, 2001; Dixon, 2009). In London, the large estate landowners have been instrumental in its development and urbanisation since the 1600's (Adams and Tiesdell 2013), granting leasehold interests to residents or developers whilst retaining the freehold control of the land (Olsen, 1964; Jenkins, 2012). This created a multi-layered system of land ownership (Summerson, 2003) that made property and home ownership accessible to a wider population (Meen, 2013; Ronald and Kadi, 2018). Over time the UK has seen the financialisation of homeownership; a commodity to be invested in, rented out or traded to enhance the wealth of landlords and individuals (Hulse et al, 2019).

The UK rental market and tenant experience is characterised by short-term, 1 year AST (Assured Shorthold Tenancy) leases offered by buy-to-let (BTL) landlords (Kemp, 1987; Hulse et al, 2019); this structure not only results in fragmented ownership, inconsistent control, management and maintenance (FoL and LSE, 2017; Kemp, 2015) but also affords few rights and little protection to the tenant (Hulse et al, 2011; Easthope, 2014). UK Government rental legislation prioritises the power and privilege of landlords and investors (Kemp, 2015, 1987), with vacant possession rights creating a greater focus on capital gains of rental investments for landlords over management and income (Savills, 2018; Kemp, 2015). Although ASTs offer flexibility for tenants in the long term, paradoxically they can create insecurity and instability for residents fearing renewals, evictions and rent rises with little regulation (Hulse et al, 2011). In such an uncertain climate, a tenant's sense of home can be difficult to establish (Kemp, 2015). It is against this backdrop that many scholars and policy makers have called for reform across the rental sector (Clapham, 2010; Easthope, 2014). BTR offers the potential to institutionally reform the UK rental market by transforming the tenant experience from fragmented BTL landlordism (Ronald and Kadi, 2018) to a unified and professionally managed asset and service (Bryan and Rafferty, 2014); advocates of BTR have even portrayed it as the solution to London's housing crisis (Alakeson, 2011).

Following the global financial crash, institutional investors and pension funds began significantly investing into the UK's Private Rented Sector (PRS), looking for secure long-dated incomes (Hulse et al, 2019). Savills (2018) value the PRS sector at £1.5 trillion, up 111% from 10 years ago; the BTR element of the PRS market up 478% since 2013 (Savills, 2018). As of Q1 2018, 50,000 BTR units were complete or under construction with a further 32,000 at the point of detailed planning consent, a 30% increase on the previous year (Savills, 2018). Recent years have seen unprecedented investment into purpose built residential housing; in 2013 institutional investors such as, M&G, APG and Legal & General, investing just under £1 billion into the sector (Savills, 2018).

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4 METHODOLOGY

This paper first seeks to establish whether BTR providers are nurturing notions of home in their developments. Second, the paper aims to understand the tools and strategies that providers might be using in order to capitalise on the monetary value of creating a sense of home. And third, the research here strives to establish the level of home attachment that residents feel in their lived reality of East Village and identify where there are design and management features that might aid greater attachment. To answer this question, the research first reviewed the academic debates surrounding the concept of home. The comprehensive literature review created an overarching framework for understanding the multiplicity of home (Wardaugh, 1999; Somerville, 1992), this established four definitions of home; personal, social, constancy and security. All together these facets of 'sense of home' were used as a guiding framework from which the interview questions were developed and the collected data coded.

The paper followed an in-depth case study design choosing Get Living's East Village in Stratford, London after an information-oriented selection approach (Flyvbjerg, 2006). East Village was identified as the most suitable case study due to the following factors. Foremost, it is a landmark scheme for the industry as one of the first and most mature BTR developments in London launching May 2013. Second, East Village and their management company, Get Living, are pioneers in the BTR sector, offering greater tenancy security and comprehensive professional management that has seen them win Landlord of the Year, 2015 & 2016 and Development of the Decade, 2016 at the RESI awards. Third, Get Living are projected to become the largest BTR provider with 6,092 units as they are expanding nationally to Manchester, Leeds and Glasgow, an increase from 2,091 properties currently under management (Figure 7.2). Therefore, the lessons learned from East Village, both in speaking with the managers and residents, will have some relevancy to all future endeavours of Get Living. During the research period five site visits of East Village were conducted to observe the atmosphere, activity and place experience.

Participants were recruited through social networks and advertising on the East Village Residents Facebook page. This provided a sample of four participants, two from each recruitment method. Following the initial interviews, recruitment of a further six residents achieved by referral 'snowballing' (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981). The sample size totalled ten residents, three of which no longer lived in East Village; the length of tenancy ranged from 6 months to 2 years 4 months, all participants identified themselves as young professionals. The recruitment of managers was challenging; cold call approaches were initially unsuccessful. The researcher used their industry client network to obtain an introduction to a relevant manager. Once secured, contacts for a further two managers were provided and subsequently confirmed. Due to the limited number of managers involved with East Village the findings were enriched by interview managers involved on other BTR schemes in London. These included two managers from Essential Living's Vantage Point and the Canary Wharf Group's Newfoundland Tower, in total five managers were interviewed. The research was conducted to the highest standard of ethics; written, informed consent was obtained in advance of the interviews for all personal data and an information sheet provided to each participant. All participants have been anonymized, personal data kept secure and private.

Analysis was undertaken on the qualitative interviews with residents and managers to code the data using the defined literature framework (Figure 4.1). This process was found to be a useful tool with much of the data reflecting understandings defined in the framework. The only deviation was that data on constancy and security intertwined the two with a focus on Get Living's management of East Village, which ultimately operationalises and controls the constant and security understandings of home in the development.

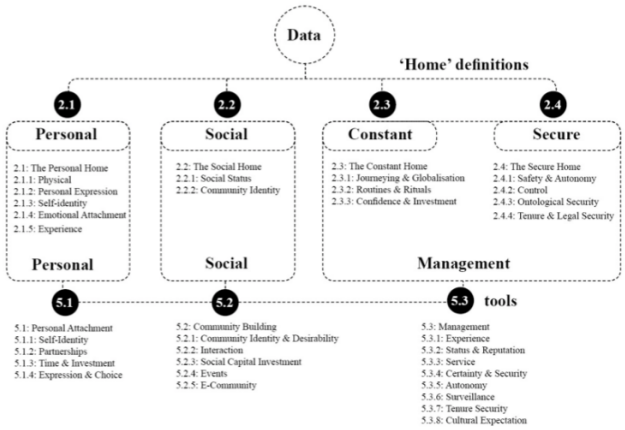

Fig. 4.1: Conceptualisation of the 'home' framework established from the literature review personal, social, constant and secure and the subcategory understandings. The four part framework was used to code the qualitative data and analyse the type of tools employed. This highlighted a need to adapt the framework in practice to combine constant and secure definitions of home into management tools.

5 RESEARCH & FINDINGS

5.1 Personal Attachment

The research first analysed the personal construct of home which through interviews with the residents, it became evident that no particular sentiment of attachment was felt with the physical design of the BTR homes. This was evidenced in the research conducted as multiple residents commented on the institutional feel of the area, describing the atmosphere as "artificial", "clinical" and "sterile". Despite Get Living marketing East Village as bespoke, residents made multiple comparisons to other institutional developments including out of season university halls and a summer camp. One resident expounded on this by giving their view on East Village:

> "[. . .] a halfway house between university and reality, as there is always someone checking up on you and cleaning up after you, which is good for some but you can't live like that forever [. . .]"

The quote's suggests residents have a distanced sense of ownership (Rakoff, 1977) and lack emotional attachment (Soaita, 2015) to their homes; both of which have major implications on self-identity (Casey, 2001) and emotional wellbeing (Easthope, 2004, 2014).

The research conducted found that one design tool used by managers to overcome the subjectivity of design and visual aesthetic (Tucker, 1994; Neumark, 2013) was for the design; "[. . .] to remain neutral in order to facilitate the organic ownership and personalisation by the resident". However, in keeping the design neutral, providers risk their developments feeling placeless (Arefi, 1999), institutionalised (Thomsen, 2007) or mass-produced (Relph, 1976).

5.1.1 Self-Identity

The research found that all managers sought to provide a tailored product, designed, branded and fitted to attract a desirable social status and self-identity for product and user (Cross, 2001; Carmona, 2001). Through the interviews, it was made evident that managers used extensive demographic research tools to achieve 'product market fit' (Andreesen, 2007), this sentiment between managers was summarised by one saying; "[. . .] both the physical product and tenancies you offer must match your resident's needs, now and into the future." Understanding the identity of the target consumer is critical for development managers; in the case of East Village, the desired identity is young professionals and first-time renters (Get Living, 2019). Managers interviewed stated that their market research identified that technological specification was an important driver of desirability for young professionals, the target market; the design of news blocks has catered to this demand by offering a tiered selection of technological specification and WIFI speeds. This demonstrates the symbolic (Rapoport, 1990, 2000) and culturally constructed nature of the home (Wardaugh, 1999; Dovey, 1985), where social status is attached to lifestyle (Chapman and Hockey, 1999), specification, user experience (Gurney, 1997) and luxury (Madigan et al, 1990).

5.1.2 Partnerships

interesting tool found was that BTR providers and key businesses had established synergistic partnerships as a tool to creating purpose-built homes for a desired user identity. Almost half of the residents interviewed elected to live in East Village based on a partnership their employer, Deloitte, had with Get Living; this meant they were preapproved tenants – without a need for a deposit, reference or administration fee. In addition, these residents were given the highest level of technological specification at no extra cost. Partnerships such as these offer many home benefits to both parties including, but not limited to: creating a community of shared interests and identities (Hummon, 1992; Massey, 1991), ontological security for the move-in period (Giddens, 1991), a rooted location (Cross, 2001) for future employees, and a product designed to their specific needs (Andreesen, 2007). One manager interviewed from the Canary Wharf Group stated that they engaged with keystone tenants to ensure that the BTR product they provided was designed specifically to suit, attract and retain key workers and anchor businesses in the estate. This is an interesting finding, evidencing BTR facilitating senses of home at the company scale; rooting companies to locations in the same way individual residents are rooted.

5.1.3 Time & Investment

Residents highlighted that their anticipated length of residency played a key role in the level of emotional, physical and social investment they put into their dwellings. One resident stated that "we never planned to live there for a long time so there was no point in investing in personalisation". This establishes the importance of investing time and energies in immersing yourself into the locality (Brah, 1996) to creating a home. As highlighted by the literature framework, a continuous and stable home can encourage greater rootedness (Tuan, 1980, 2001), personal expression (Després, 1991) and financial and emotional investment for individuals (Cox, 1968).

A particular point of interest gleamed during the research was how the long-term commitment of BTR providers to their schemes results in the providers themselves exhibiting characteristics of being at home. Personally, they express their individualistic brand aesthetic and personality (Tucker, 1994); socially, designing a product that appeals to a desirable status within society (Rowlands and Gurney, 2000; Chapman and Hockey, 1999). The retention of the blocks means that providers invest in a quality product (Carmona, 2001) and continually undertake improvements (Van Gelder, 2007). The Chairman of Get Living, explained this as:

> "[. . .] a long-term business where the best returns are derived from patience, operational skill, and long-term commitment ... we could cut costs in the short term - landscaping, the retail side – but, all these things form part of our wider proposition and brand. If we weaken that, it weakens our ability to attract and retain residents."

BTR schemes, therefore, can be a tool for ensuring the long-term stewardship, vibrancy, quality and sustainability of the area; fostering the conditions within which the company itself becomes rooted (Tuan, 1980) making the area home. BTR developments this way hold close management

and design parallels to the 'Great Estates of London' (Canelas, 2018). For residents, the greater investment in place quality has been shown to have strong positive relationships to socio-economic and welfare benefits for users (Carmona, 2019; Baum, 1993; Ulrich, 1981).

5.1.4 Expression & Choice

A key finding from the interviews, is the importance residents placed on personalisation and identity expression in their feeling at home. East Village policy is that residents on 3-year tenancies are allowed to repaint walls and decorate their apartments. All tenants are able to put up posters, yet most were not aware of their ability to personalise, leaving them "nervous" to make minor or impermanent alterations. Operators need to improve communication tools to ensure tenant rights are fully conveyed, as personalisation is vital to creating home attachment (Thomsen, 2007; Tucker, 1994).

One of the most interesting findings of the research was the importance the residents placed on choosing furniture and soft furnishings to their realisation of home. Residents were highly critical of the "bland", "clinical" and "uncomfortable" furnishing of the apartments. One resident, who left East Village in favour of expressing their own aesthetic in a BTL, AST property, stated:

> "All we want is a nice sofa, the sofa in East Village was clinical, like a dentist chair - so uncomfortable... in our new place we are going to invest much more into our furniture, not just the bog standard stuff... you can put your own touch on it, making it ours and feel like a home."

Across the interview sample, residents stated a desire for "cozy and comfortable" home furnishings "something that [we] have chosen". Choice and the role of furniture was overlooked entirely by the managers interviewed, yet, for residents, home attachment is forged through an expression of one's self by way of personalised items (Després, 1991; Cooper, 1974). Therefore, it is apparent that residents should be provided with greater autonomy (Parsell, 2012) and control (Hiscock et al, 2001) over the expression of their visual identity and aesthetic (Neumark, 2013; Van Gelder, 2007), able to project their social status (Gurney, 1999a; Rowlands and Gurney, 2000) and subjectivities to the world (Tucker, 1994). Through embracing this understanding, BTR providers could create instantaneous ownership and attachment to their rental homes by encouraging residents to furnish the properties themselves, or allowing residents to choose their furniture.

Fig. 5.1: The advertising for Essential Living's Vantage Point specifically stresses the importance of personalisation in actively making 'yourself a home' (Gurney, 1997). In order to achieve this personalisation, the rental properties offered the ability to customise designs and colour options.

5.2 Social - Community Building

The second prominent theme from the literature was the socially constructed definition of home (Casey, 2001; Massey, 1995; Tuan, 1980). In the interviews conducted, supported by strong evidence from both managers and residents, the importance of the social and community understanding for home was distinctly evident. This section will go on to explore the key findings and tools which underpin this theme, it will then draw on the comparisons and distinctions between the views of the residents and the managers.

5.2.1 Community Identity & Desirability

Interviews with managers found that placemaking was being used as a tool to nurture wider social and neighbourhood senses of home and identity. Get Living's company moto of 'home doesn't stop at the front door' underlines their understanding of home as a wider social and community identity (Massey, 1995; Tuan, 1980). In a typical statement, one manager stated,

> "[with] BTR there is a greater emphasis and investment in the long-term success of the place. Placemaking, as a tool, is then vital to building an identity of home for the location".

In addition, Get Living continually monitor East Villages use and undertake monthly questionnaires; the feedback from which has seen storage space increased for new blocks and the re-landscaping of Belvedere Park, which was identified as underutilised. This suggests a strong commitment to upholding brand status in association with tenant's experience of 'home'.

Providers actively use placemaking tools to curate desirable identities (Perkins and Thorns, 2000), emphasising uniqueness (Hammond 2013) and social vibrancy (Carmona, 2001; CBRE and Gehl Architects, 2017; Savills, 2016; RICS, 2016). Get Living strive to cultivate a desirable community identity (Madigan et al, 1990) for East Village which, as the name suggests, positions itself as a local 'village' community. Get Living use the socially constructed nature of home (Chapman and Hockey, 1999) to brand East Village and present an aesthetic and experiential expectation of a small, close-knit community, playing on residents emotional and remembered definitions of home (Rapport and Dawson, 1998). The curation of local, independent amenities (Figure 5.2), a village newspaper and E20 postcode marketing (Figure 5.3) are all integral to establishing a desirable or idyllic identity for the neighbourhood. Once cultivated, this transforms the physical development into a socially recognisable community identity (Casey, 2001), designed to attract a specific identity and demographic. The managers interviewed understood that the long-term financial success of the BTR asset relied on the longevity of desirability; "people want to live in places that are desirable to other people". Managers sought to use the social status construct of home (Gurney, 1999a) to breed desirability for their brand and developments, in this way home attachment becomes spatially flexible, loyal only to the brand identity.

5.2.2 Interaction

One concurrency between managers and residents was the role of interaction in creating vibrant homes. From East Village's inception, mangers sought to maximise its interactions and shared experiences, as one stated that "successful places are a rich mix of people and spaces with lots of interaction". Managers interviewed referred to using masterplans to coordinate their estate model of management (Canelas, 2018; Farrell 2012; Allen 2016) and to maximise space between buildings (NLA 2013; McWilliam 2015; Parsley 2015). The majority of managers interviewed emphasised the importance of the public realm in prompting interaction, including creating shopping promenades (Adams and Tiesdell, 2013) and enhancing sightlines (Ameli et al, 2015) around the development, this sought to build intrigue and desirability (Chapman and Hockey, 1999). The importance of creating active places is emphasized by placemaking academics (Canelas, 2018); advocating mixed use (Adams and Tiesdell, 2013), active frontages (Mehta, 2009), and walkable neighbourhoods (Cervero and Duncan, 2003; Kent et al, 2017) to increase footfall and activity (Peca 2009). These approaches build on 'the habitus' (Bourdieu and Nice, 1977), the frequency and feel of the place around which life resonates (Dovey et al, 2009). These tools facilitate social mixing, interaction and generating emotional attachment to the spatial location of 'home'(Giulani, 1991).

Fig. 5.2: Get Living carefully select and subsidise boutique eateries, farm shops, local butchers and artisan cafes to reinforce the local village identity.

Fig. 5.3: The socially constructed identity of home within East Village is exposed through contradictions between social media marketing of the Get Living brand (left) and reality (right).

Despite the tools and efforts of the managers to create interaction around East Village, 70% of residents maintained that the development felt "empty" and "quiet". This was observed during the four site visits where the atmosphere felt flat and dispersed, one resident summed up their experience in the development as:

> "[East Village] serves a purpose, people use it as a base because it is so conveniently close to public transport and shopping but it feels like everyone is just passing through."

This feedback demonstrated a lack of emotional attachment (Tuan, 1980; Easthope, 2014) and suggests an unsettled social environment within which rootedness struggles to manifest (Cox, 1968; Cross, 2001). The transitional and unsettled atmosphere in East Village was an important finding of the research, typified as 40% of the sample had lived with four or more flat mates during their time in East Village. One resident described their apartment as "a conveyor belt of people". This constant circulation of residents makes it difficult for deep rooted community bonds to evolve (Hummon, 1992), whilst also damaging understandings of home as a constant (Kemp, 2015).

Fig. 5.4: Residents raised concerns over the physical surroundings being influx with large parts of East Village still under construction and views constantly changing it undermined stable notions of home.

5.2.3 Social Capital Investment

From speaking with managers, it was found that there was an important focus on creating and directly investing in social and community senses of home. It was clear that managers are beginning to recognise the socioeconomic value that producing communities rather than properties can create for the neighbourhood. One manager summarised this view:

> "BTR providers are more invested in the community and in fostering social and cultural value to ensure successive and enduring successful places."

This response typified the emphasis BTR managers place on the social and community aspects of home (Hummon, 1992). An example of Get Living's investment towards encouraging community is their 'Inspiring Communities Fund' which offers grants up to £3,000 for projects working in Communities and People, Health and Wellbeing and Arts and Culture. This financially stimulates community bonding, social interaction and embeds individuals within the wider East Village community identity (Low and Altman, 1992). One of the managers interviewed eluded to possible changes in the governance processes that would see: "[BTR] potentially offers much greater social value, flexibility and security for residents." This could create greater democratisation of private developments by offering residents a voice in the governance of BTR estates. This would root residents in the wider community sense of home (Massey, 1993; 1994), providing a degree of control (Kearns et al, 2000), expression and security (Dovey, 1985) over the community identity (Moore, 2000).

Despite finding a focus from managers on the community and social aspect of home, resident found there to be a disconnect between their lived experience of the level of social and community cohesion in East Village. Multiple residents commented that:

> "[. . .] you could tell [Get Living] had really tried to build a sense of community but it never felt like there was that many people in the area." "Only a small amount of people [did] get stuck into the community and it mostly seems to be the families that I see chatting."

The point regarding families as the most socially invested in the area was raised by a number in the sample, due to limitations the research was unable to interview a family resident. The question of whether families are more mature and settled (Saile, 1985) fixed in routines (Dupuis and Thorns, 1998), therefore creating a stronger sense of home, would be an interesting subject for further research.

Two residents described their experience as "isolating" highlighted by one, saying:

> "[I] didn't know my neighbours and I feel like I didn't make any new friends."

Although, it should be considered that 80% of the resident sample had a degree of existing social rootedness and interaction (Jackson, 1995), living in shared flats with friends. The overall feedback from residents certainly questions the degree of success of Get Living's community building and interaction initiatives.

5.2.4 Events

The research found Get Living use many tools to nurture community notions of home. The first of these is the use of centrally managed events and programmed 'festival spaces' (Sorkin 1992) in creating identity (Cuba and Hummon, 1993). Although from the resident interviews, engagement was limited; half of the sample having attended one or more of these events, residents acknowledged that:

> "It is really easy to plug into the development and community if you wanted to."

All interviewee's made comment that the 2018 World Cup screening was by far the most popular, memorable and successful event that they had seen at the Village with a resident stating:

> The World Cup screening] brought everyone together and was an amazing atmosphere."

This event, that evoked the strongest emotional memory (Soaita, 2015), demonstrates the important role of shared identities, such as a nation's sporting event, have in stimulating social interaction, bonding (Cross, 2001) and place marketing (Dimanche, 2003).

Fig. 5.5: Managers at East Village employ an array of techniques, tools and activities to manipulate and program use and behaviour (Schmidt et al, 2011). Events utilise shared interests as an identity to pull together the community, creating closer ties that root people in the social sphere of the development.

5.2.5 E-Community

A further device used by Get Living to nurture community notions of home is electronic platforms media. The research found, through interviews and observations, that Get Living maintains a high degree of presence on social media; with websites, news pages, forums for engagement and portals for discovering friends. All subjects had joined the Facebook page and commented on its usefulness for keeping up to date with the community, yet none had engaged directly with the content. From observation of the Facebook group, the level of interaction was high, suggesting an active and healthy e-community. One manager believed that in the future BTR providers will need to invest heavily in digital platforms to host their rental communities online, allowing new residents to embed themselves in the e-community faster as well as building corporate brand identity (McWilliam, 2000). The increasing virtualisation of our daily lives might, in the future, create a need for a digitised or virtual understanding of home, beyond even Massey's (1991) networked definition.

5.3 Management

Through analysing the interview data, management emerged as the third way that home is both experienced and constructed within East Village. Encompassing both the constancy and security definitions, management is the distinction between BTR schemes and private ownership. This management interpretation, therefore, presents new understandings, problems and tools for creating senses of home in rentals.

5.3.1 Experience

One of the most interesting findings through the research was feedback, from both residents and managers, on the shift of home from a product to an experience. All of the managers interviewed made reference to this experiential reframing of home, driven by research into "demographic shifts that found the younger generation of consumers are much more experience driven". This finding was corroborated by the residents interviewed who stated that "as long as I have good internet connection and water pressure, I'd be happy anywhere". This focus on the specification and experiential features of home highlights that contemporary consumers are not buying a physical home but a desirable way of living (Shove, 1999), an experience (Korosec-Serfaty, 1985), a social identity (Cuba and Hummon, 1993) and an emotional state (Rapport and Dawson, 1998). This shift may alter understandings of home with time and technological evolution.

5.3.2 Status & Reputation

Similarly, the research found lifestyle to be an important factor in homemaking and a tool by which developers sought to create homes linked to a desirable social status (Chapman and Hockey, 1999). The importance of lifestyle driven homes was noted by all of the managers interviewed; commenting that "rental real estate is a lifestyle driven sector now, with less sale and more selling the experience and brand". This was observed during a site visit to the East Village Marketing Suite, where the Relationship Manager repeatedly stressed their focus on "experience", "selling the Get Living lifestyle" and "the customer journey". This sales language represents a shift in the consumption of housing from the home as a onetime purchase (Saunders and Williams, 1988) to that of an ongoing subscription service or commodity (Agnew, 1984; Ruonavaara, 2012). Underpinning much of this is the mobility of modern residents (Kemp, 2015). One former resident summed this notion of mobility up, saying "I didn't like [East Village], so I left". This unattached and flexible view of the home places an emphasis on the providers to offer a holistic approach beyond design, rather as a service, lifestyle experience and identity (Perkins and Thorns, 2000). BTR's emphasis on continued service, experience and reputation has seen a development of:

> "[. . .] parallels with the hospitality sector, with a focus on customer experience and amenity." (CEO, Get Living)

Homeownership is evolving into an entirely managed service with specialist teams to provide customer care demonstrating the value of the brand, while ensuring resident retention. The research found that brand identity is a tool of vital importance to institutional providers protective over

their reputation (Handy, 2015). New Proptech companies, such as HomeViews, allow residents to independently and anonymously review their first-hand experience with developments, this will increase transparency between marketed desirability and residents' reality (Crane, 2019). Many of HomeViews' first partners were BTR providers as they see this as a useful tool for feedback, marketing the development experience and expressing the brand quality and identify for future projects (Chapman and Hockey, 1999).

5.3.3 Service

The research found that BTR developers used management and service tools to minimise the time it takes for residents to feel settled, rooted and emotionally attached to their homes. One of East Village's managers summed up this approach as:

> "[. . .] like living in a hotel, we make it easy for you to get set up and begin living. You can just plug in and you're off".

Most of the residents interviewed highly regarded the efficiency of service, one resident recalling it taking only 2 hours from viewing the apartment to moving in. Minimising the set-up time allows residents to - as the company's name suggests - 'Get Living' immediately; to begin setting down social roots (Hulse and Milligan, 2014) and forging emotional attachments (Perkins and Thorns, 2000) with their new homes.

5.3.4 Certainty & Security

Another point of resident satisfaction with Get Living's management was the ontological security (Giddens, 1984; Saunders, 1990) that came from directly dealing with the landlord. Get Living, operating as landlord and agent shortened trust relationships, eliminated agency fees, deposits and competition between tenants for properties. Many residents claimed they felt more secure (Dovey, 1985), in control (Rakoff, 1977) and comfortable (Walshaw, 2011) making alteration requests to a professional company compared to previous experiences with BTL landlords where they sometimes feared retaliatory rental increases or even eviction (Easthope, 2014). One resident stated:

> "[. . .] operating with a company instead of a landlord makes a massive difference, you are treated with more respect and feel more comfortable as it is a larger and professional body that must abide by regulations."

There was an appreciation for "safety in numbers" from a number of residents in the sample believing that word of any mistreatment would travel amongst the East Village community. This service provided residents with a greater sense of ontological security (Dupuis and Thorns, 1998) and removed distractions, allowing residents to concentrate on feeling settled and rooted within their home.

In addition to this, the research also found that Get Livings' maintenance provided residents with a strong sense of security in their homes. All but one of the residents interviewed commented on the speed and high quality of maintenance and cleaning, which implored them to take greater pride in their home (Parsell, 2012). Tenants remarked that they were astonished when damages or breakages, especially when caused by the tenants, were rectified immediately and without charge. As the provider retains the long-term ownership of the flats, they possess a vested interest in ensuring that all issues are remedied and the quality of the accommodation remains peak (Baum, 1993; Carmona, 2001), justifying rental premiums (Fuerst et al, 2011).

5.3.5 Autonomy

Residents' experiences of freedom and autonomy over their homes was split, research found. 60% of the interview sample viewed the management to be flexible and lenient; for example, allowing tenants' social gatherings without intervention or complaint. However, the remaining 40% of residents felt Get Living "regulated" and "controlled" their actions even restricting the use of private balconies, preventing residents from drying clothes or storing specific items on them. One resident summarised the subjective view over management intervention saying:

> "The tight management could be a positive, but for us it felt invasive... they regularly came by unannounced checking that light bulbs were working and taking readings from the flat."

For these residents, Get Livings' management service demonstrated the lack of autonomy (Parsell, 2012) they held over their home. Residents also felt that the tight management and regulation limited their ability to express themselves freely which, as Tucker's 1994 research demonstrated, is key to creating a home (Despres, 1991; Neumark, 2013).

5.3.6 Surveillance

Despite all residents commenting on the fact that they felt very safe in the village, some felt that they were under surveillance which limited their freedom of expression (Saunders, 1990) and encroached on their autonomy (Parsell, 2012). 30% of the residents remarked that East Village had "felt a little big brother" as you were under surveillance, having to hide pets or objects that did not conform to village rules. Residents also commented that shared space in the development felt privatised (Huang and Franck, 2018; Langstraat and Van Melik, 2013), leaving residents feeling as though they have to regulate their activities in the undefined ownership space (Dupuis and Thorns, 1998). From site visit observations, the visual presence of private security personnel patrolling the area gave the impression that activities were being monitored; some residents saw this as an impingement on their home as an autonomous sanctuary (Walshaw, 2011), whereas for others it positively contributed to their feeling of safety (Dovey, 1985) and wellbeing in their home (Bridge et al, 2003).

5.3.7 Tenure Secutity

Get Living utilises the control of single ownership to offer residents greater tenure security. They are setting a new standard in the rental industry by offering 3 year fixed rent tenancies as standard, with a 6-month minimum initial period and a tenant only break clause (Get Living 2019). This is a new precedent for the UK rental market, dominated by 1-year AST contracts with BTL landlords (Alakeson, 2011; FoL, 2017). All residents interviewed expressed security in their tenancies, safe from eviction as long as they paid rent. Explored in the literature framework, enhanced tenure security is vital to ontological security (Hiscock et al, 2001), providing greater control over their surroundings (Saunders, 1990; Darke, 2002), offering continuity for residents to become settled and establish emotional and social roots (Hulse and Milligan, 2014). These factors impact stress, mental health and physical wellbeing of residents (Hulse and Saugeres, 2008; Dockery et al, 2010). Government and policy makers have recently recognised the benefits of landlords offering greater security to tenants, letting fees abolished and growing pressure on governments to encourage longer tenancies (Savills, 2018). Further research, such as this paper, into the emotional, social and personal importance of home (Easthope, 2014; Mallett, 2004) will inform the government of the need to lead policy standards and lay the foundation for this sectors' expansion (Savills, 2018).

5.3.8 Cultural Expectation

An unexpected finding from the interviews, overlooked by the literature, is the importance of the home as a performing financial asset (Alakeson, 2011; Hulse et al, 2019). This was expressed differently by the residents interviewed, some saw rental housing as the only possibility for living in London and therefore East Village's value was assessed in comparison with BTL rental rates. The sample's opinion was split over the Get Livings premium, some residents believed the service and maintenance were a good value, while others commented that they "didn't need to pay a premium for someone to check up on [them]". Many residents raised concerns over the financial strain of long-term renting, viewing homeownership as a seminal financial investment. In the UK, rental accommodation has always been seen as a temporary solution to home (Hoolachan et al, 2016). This is part of a deep-rooted, intergenerational culture of homeownership within society (Gurney, 1999; Flint, 2003; McKee, 2011; McIntyre and McKee, 2012). UK homeownership is inherently tied to age, renting is seen as an impermanent steppingstone to ownership as you mature in your life cycle (Molgat, 2007). However, as 'generation rent' (Cole et al, 2016) becomes the lived reality for longer time periods and more people (Andres and Adamuti-Trache 2008; Hoolachan et al, 2016), we are beginning to see a shift in acceptability of rental housing as a long-term home (Easthope, 2014).

6 CONCLUSIONS

Through the research, the conclusion could be drawn that East Village failed in its goal of home building. Although, the findings must be considered in relative terms to other forms of housing across London. Only time will tell the success of BTR schemes as the physical and social environments stabilise and mature; knitting together the social fabric, rooting residents and fostering the conditions for a greater sense of home. Research sought to identify the need for further work into the concept of home in rentals, a topic that lacks academic literature (Easthope, 2014; Gurney, 1999b). A particular focus on BTR is required given the sector's current rate of expansion which could see it become home to a significant number of the population.

It is imperative, while the sector is in its infancy, that research provides a greater understanding of how home is constructed by individuals and the tools through which it can be nurtured. The research has established that BTR developers employ tools, such as branding, partnerships, placemaking, management and investment, to nurture senses of home. However, the degree to which this successfully manifests a sense of home with residents varies greatly. Some elements of home are difficult to construct in BTR developments as the transient social environment causes instability, which effects rootedness, cultural expectations of homeownership and the stigma of renting presents a barrier to BTR being seen as a long-term home in the UK. Interestingly, evidence from both managers and residents suggests a shift in homeownership to the experiential, opening home to service management or manipulation. The importance of choice and expression, governance structures and communication are clear. Home is more organic than developers realise, their attempts to manipulate or nurture home and community growth can result in feelings of inauthenticity, institutionalisation, mass-production and surveillance.

As a concept, BTR potential is significant which, if executed correctly, could create environments purposely designed and suited for resident satisfaction, managed responsibly by professional landlords who have a vested interest in the stewardship and vibrancy of the property. For planning, this could potentially deliver affordable homes and better designed places. For residents, it could provide long term personal, social and secure homes without the need for ownership. BTR has the potential to reinvent the residential rental sector, its proliferation as a mode of delivering homes is well underway and thus it is time that research and policy establish firm foundations for the sector to ensure it reaches its maximum potential.

7 APPENDIX

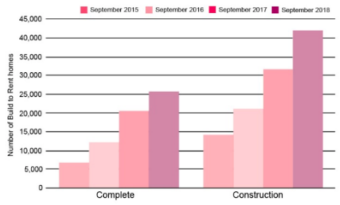

Fig. 7.1: Graph of the Growth in the Built to Rent Pipeline (Authors graphic based on Savills, 2018 data)

Fig. 7.2: Table of Completed and Forecast BTR Home Delivery by Providers(Authors graphic based on Savills, 2018 data

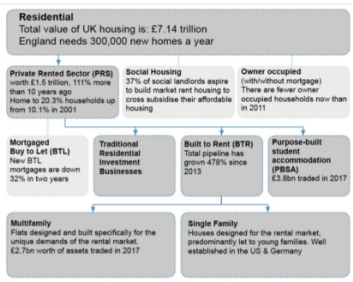

Fig. 7.3: Breakdown and contextualisation of the BTR sector within the UK residential maket (Authors graphic based on Savills, 2018 data)

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