

Mr Brendan Geraghty comments

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Minimum areas are a blunt and blind instrument and do not guarantee good design. They are myopic and limiting to designers - this is a political tool not a design tool. One of the problems in the housing sector is the lack of diversity of product. How are we to segment and diversify choice in the housing market if every product is fundamentally the same? The current housing standards support long term occupation models - sales sales market. A one size suits all approach is killing innovation. There is a need for transitional housing or 'stepping stone' housing that may be smaller or differently configured to the traditional sales market e.g. BTR that has a whole building occupation culture, co-living with its focus on community spaces or micro flats who's are very lifestyle focused. We need more sophisticated and flexible methods to ensure design quality and to deliver the diverse range of housing products needed in London.

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BTR is a new product with significant design parameters to for sale housing. Part of this difference is that the level and type of serving e.g. quantity of bathrooms or method of heat delivery, there may amenities provided on site and scope for social interactions that point to the use of the whole building (rather than just my apartment) and creating a new culture of occupation. One of the results of this may be that individual units may be slightly smaller than the current standards but this is compensated for by offering a whole building occupation with shared amenity and private apartments. This dynamic needs to be recognised and accommodated in design solutions. Good BTR design is currently being thwarted by rigid adherence to inflexible and often inappropriate design standards. I suggest if design standards are to be used in BTR that the difference between Sales and BTR developments is recognised and appropriate flexibility is included in BTR design standards.