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WWW.COLLECTIVECUSTOMBUILD.ORG

MOTIVATING COLLECTIVE CUSTOM BUILD

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Collective Custom Build is a web-based advocacy tool that makes the case for developing Collective Custom Build as part of a more diverse housing market in the UK. It uses an animated narrative to curate key research findings, revealing them as peelbacks at key points in its argument.

Collective Custom Build is part of the *Motivating Collective Custom Build* practice-based research project within the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded *Home Improvements Knowledge Exchange* based at the University of Sheffield. *Motivating Collective Custom Build* is led jointly by the University of Sheffield School of Architecture, Ash Sakula Architects and Design for Homes.



Main Image: LILAC Collective Custom Build, Leeds.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Collective Custom Build is a pioneering approach to increasing diversity in the UK housing market based fundamentally on partnership. It represents an opportunity for stakeholders across the house-building industry to share the risk of development and work mutually to help people build homes that are more affordable and better designed to effectively meet the challenges of the future.

The UK housing crisis is both long term and wide reaching, rather than merely a short-term crisis of supply (around 100,000 new homes are built every year against a demand of official projections expect more than 232,000). Much of the housing we build in the UK is unaffordable, unsustainable, undesirable, unsociable or simply unavailable and much of the crisis is attributable to the way that most housing is built by a few large companies, who build products speculatively for sale, rather than individual households or groups of people building homes for themselves. This demonstrates the predilection of short-term asset-value over long-term use-value in the majority of housing procurement.

Self-provision in the UK remains fairly niche and accessible only to relatively few people when compared to other countries. Collective Custom Build represents an opportunity to 'scale it up' for the mainstream and there are established and successful schemes that have been completed across the country. Although each initiative is a product of its particular partnership of stakeholders and local context, Collective Custom Build schemes broadly fall into three categories: Independent Group Custom Build, Developer Enabled Custom Build and Supported Community Custom Build.

There are a number of promising schemes in the pipeline led by all sectors, including Local Authorities, private developers and other enabling organisations, and there is evidence of a growing interest in alternative development models in popular culture. There is also growing acceptance of the idea that the end users should have a greater say in the procurement of housing, fuelled by the propagation of new media for communication, collaborative consumption and co-investment that make it easier to facilitate, conceive of, develop and procure customised products.

In housing, there is evidence of an aspiration for self-provision amongst the general population, which looks likely to translate into actual demand in the market as the UK house-building industry responds by developing new business models and supply-chains. Whilst resonating clearly with the Localism agenda of the current government, the added value of supporting self-provision as part of a diverse housing market appeals across political parties and offers a clear route to supporting local economies and generating social value.

This report is based on an embedded knowledge exchange research project as part of the larger AHRC 'Home Improvements' project which ran from October 2013-14. The embedded project partners were University of Sheffield School of Architecture, Ash Sakula Architects and Design for Homes. It is linked to other outcomes from the embedded project which including an information-rich advocacy website and short film (www.collectivecustombuild.org).

The research explores the position and role of Collective Custom Build within the UK house-building industry and concludes that whilst it should be considered as an emerging phenomenon, it has significant potential to provide opportunities for people to build their own homes. New models of cross-sector development and financial procurement are of fundamental importance, and in advocating for the Collective Custom Build sector this research concludes by sign-posting key stakeholders towards the next steps they can take towards supporting groups of people to build their own homes.