

Tomorrow's home Changing dynamics of population, lifestyle and work present new opportunities for architects, says *Robert Adam*

We build for the future and better homes will better serve the future user. But we can be sure of only one thing about the future – we don't know what it is. So how do we plan for the lives of the future resident?

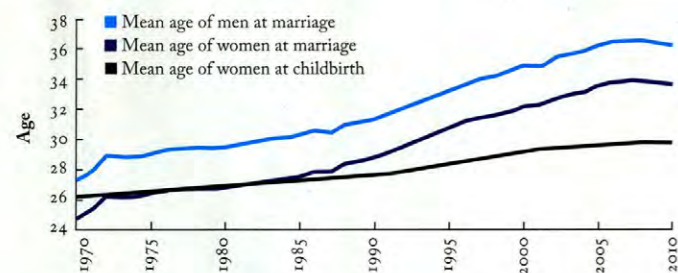
One way is to look at the lifestyles of the youngest adult generation. The social trends of this group are likely to be a reasonably accurate pointer to the way that the next generation will live. This is the 'millennial' generation, those born towards the end of the last millennium and aged between 18 and 34.

ADAM Urbanism, as part of our continuing

**MORE HOMES
BETTER HOMES**

a significant increase in rental accommodation. This pre-dates the recession and seems to be a lifestyle choice rather than just a necessity. Equally, sharing rented accommodation is often a preference rather than just a means of spreading the cost. This rental accommodation and the location of an increasing number of Millennials are in city centres, leading to an overall growth in population in towns and cities. City life is less car-dependant and there is a noticeable decrease in the number of driving licences and a commensurate increase in the use of public transport. Digital networking has both extended personal

Average age at marriage and childbirth
Source: Office for National Statistics

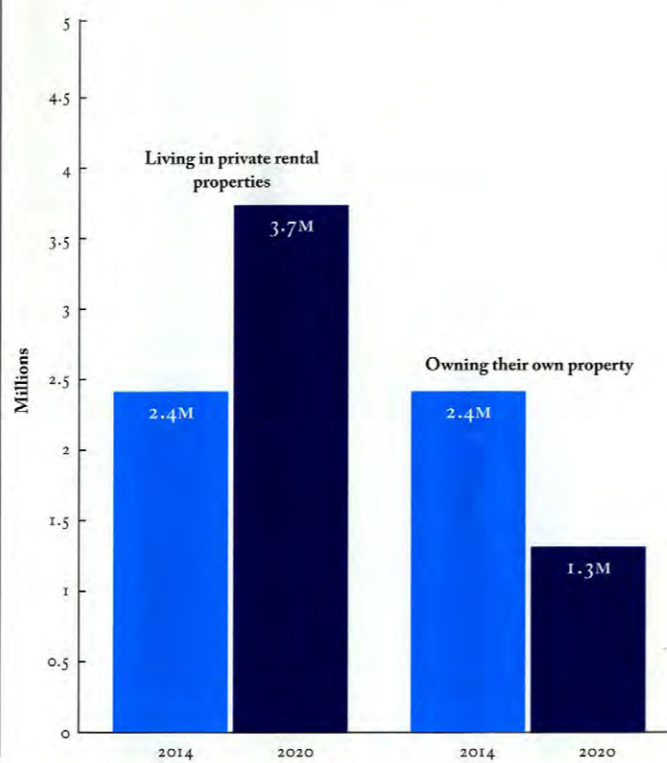


research programme, teamed up with Grainger, the UK's largest listed residential property company, to look into the social trends of these 'Millennials' to offer guidance to architects, planners, politicians and developers. We called this research 'Tomorrow's Home'.

Millennials are the digital natives that marry a decade later than previous generations, put off childbirth until it is nearly too late and chop and change jobs more easily. This is called 'commitment resistance'. This has an impact on the way that this generation work and are housed.

Employment flexibility, the lack of a family life and a decreased proportion of national wealth have led to

Projected number of 18-30 year olds in private rentals and owner occupation
Source: Clapham et al 2012



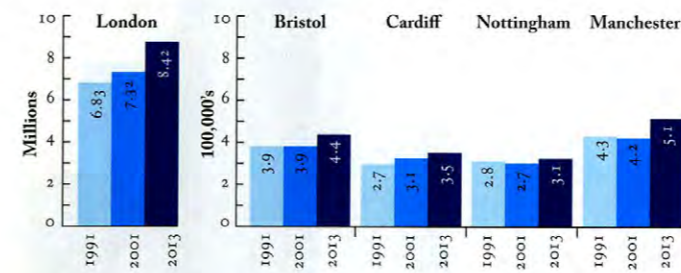
social activity geographically and also facilitated local connections. But 'commitment resistance' and a mobile lifestyle have led to less engagement with formal civic activity and a culture of individualism. On the other hand, this is the sharing generation. New forms of digital sharing such as Airbnb, Kickstarter, eBay and car clubs have transformed access to goods and services. City-dwelling Millennials will put new demands on city facilities.

City dwellers will live closer to their place of work but the ability to work in diverse locations on the internet together with the increase in self-employment, small-scale entrepreneurship and

as a regular feature of otherwise more conventional working life. It has also stretched the residential hinterland of major cities as fewer days at a central place of work has given employees and the self-employed opportunities for greater geographic distribution.

While we don't know how Millennials will respond to their decade-later family formation, we can speculate on options for the built environment based on current lifestyles. Will the traditional conveyor belt of renting in the city centre when uncommitted to buying in the suburbs when committed continue? Possibly not. We could be seeing a major structural

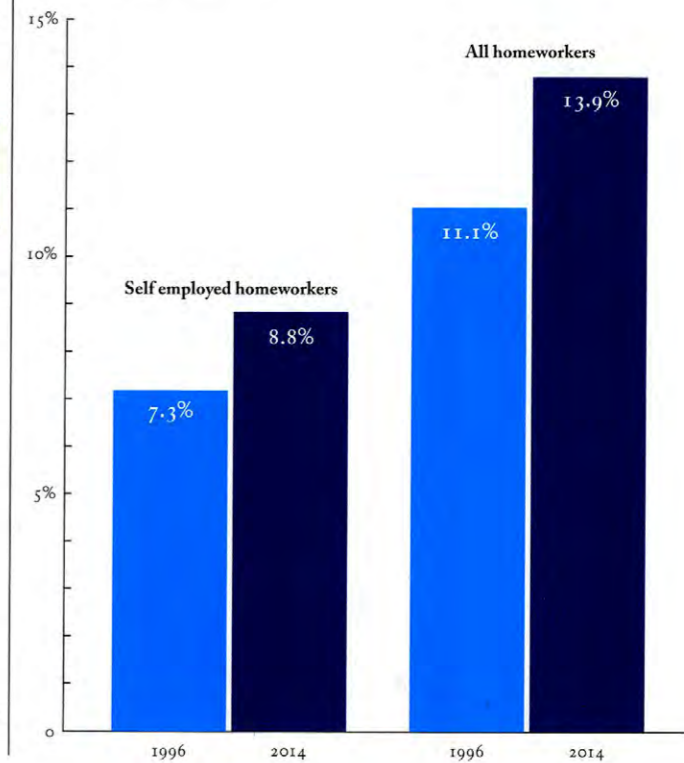
City population growth 1993-2013
Source: Adapted from data from the Office for National Statistics



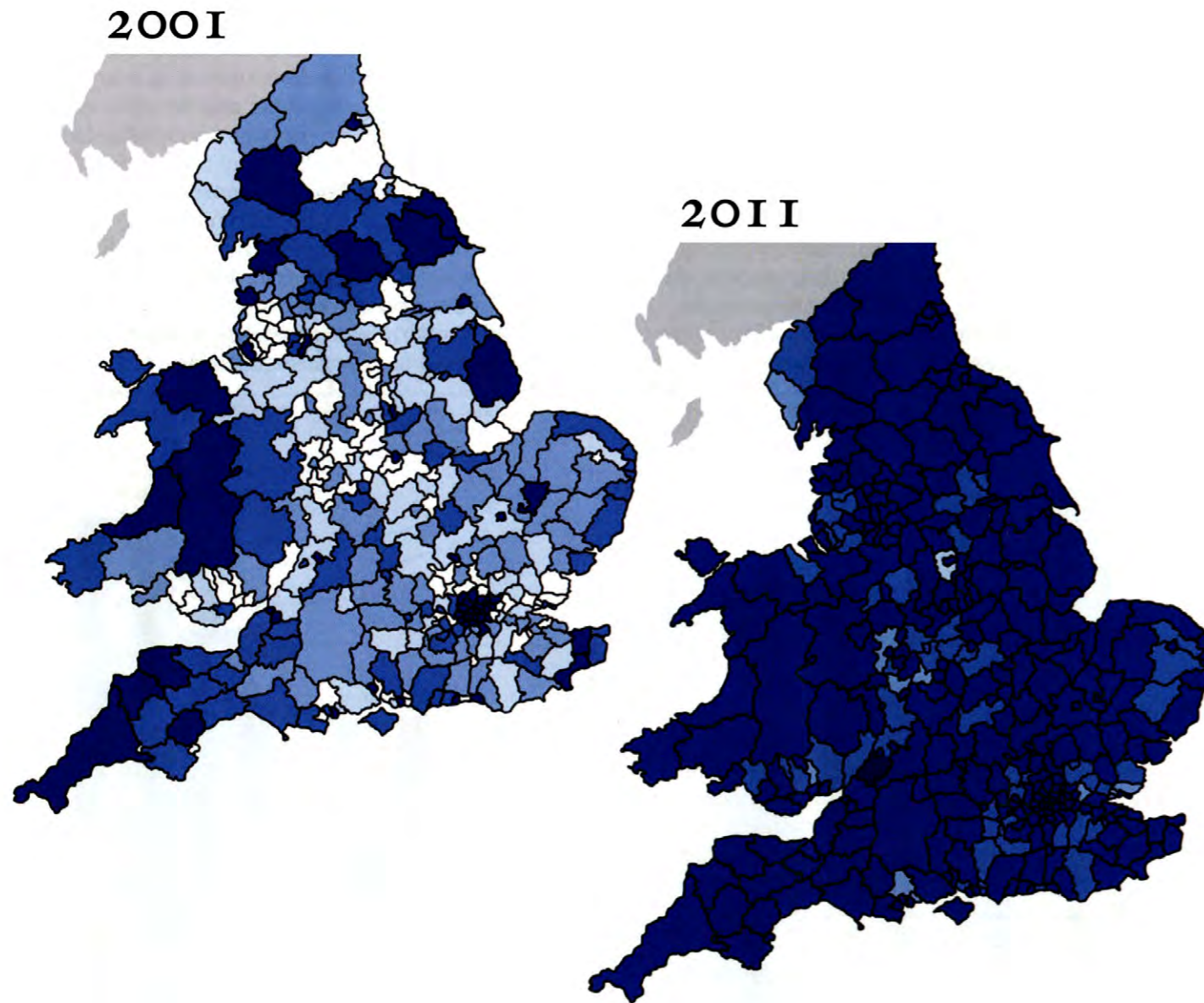
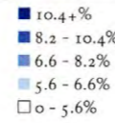
multiple occupations will transform working patterns. Hot-desking and work hubs together with an increase in home working will have an impact on conventional single-location working communities. This leads to greater personal isolation and is likely to stimulate demand for more entertainment outlets or communal residential facilities as substitutes for the social life of the workplace.

The impact of flexible working has gone beyond the new generation of city dwellers. Commuting distances have gone down as a total but up on an individual basis – people commute less but the ones that do are travelling further. This reflects the increase in home working, not just as a full-time activity, but

Homeworkers as a percentage of all workers
Source: Office for National Statistics



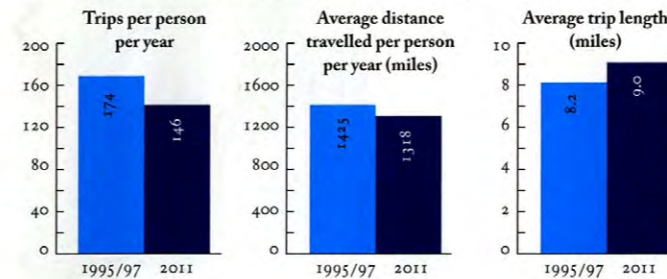
Percentage living in private rented sector
Source: Adapted from data from the Office for National Statistics



shift in the relationship between home ownership and renting. As gender employment equalises, more new families may choose to continue to rent in city centres, creating more demand for family-friendly facilities. This could change the knee-jerk political belief that all younger people are frustrated potential house-buyers. At the same time, the opportunities for greater geographic dispersal combined with the drop in car use, an increased acceptance of public transport as well as a demand for communal services, give hope of revitalisation for many small, potentially attractive but hitherto neglected towns.

The suburb itself and the swathes of new housing

Commuter trips per person per year by number of trips, distance per person + trip length
Source: Department for Transport Statistics National Travel Survey



that must be built around our towns and cities in the coming years are the last refuge of single-use zoning. The assumption that a house is only a home for family life is changing. Not only is the home now a digital centre in its own right, both for entertainment and services, but also increasingly a workplace. We are seeing the end of the suburb as a dormitory for workers. Recognition of this new role – in reality a return to a centuries-old melding of life and work – needs to be reflected in planning and fiscal regulation. It holds out hope for the regeneration of city centres – not with Canute-like Mary Portas High Street rescues but as new mixed residential areas. It could mean the enlivenment of tired and lifeless suburbs

with more daytime activity and small-scale trading. These are already happening but they need to be recognised and facilitated by regulatory regimes that, as always, are a response to past conditions. For architects these can be new opportunities. As city centres become more active with a younger population, apartments, communal facilities and entertainment will need to be attractive places for increasingly demanding users. As the distinction between work and home life becomes more blurred, people will spend more time in residential areas and the quality of the place will become of increasing significance. ■

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Housing trends for 18-34 year olds
Source: Institute for mobility research

