# Cardiff’s build-to-rent boom raises questions over affordability amid rising rents



In Cardiff, a significant surge in the construction of high-rise, build-to-rent apartments is underway, with around 1,000 such flats completed in recent years and nearly 3,000 more planned. This boom in rental developments, spearheaded by the finance company Legal & General, aims to address the city's rising rental costs, which have increased by more than 9% in the last year according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS). However, questions remain about affordability as rents for one-bedroom apartments in these new buildings are averaging around £1,300 per month.

Legal & General, which manages 30 residential projects across the UK, owns a 300-flat block called Wood Street House in Cardiff and plans to open another with over 700 apartments on the former Brains brewery site next year. Dan Batterton, head of residential at Legal & General, told BBC Wales Today: "With huge amounts of supply all coming in at one time, we are controlling and limiting rents going up in the city." He emphasised that building on brownfield land in city centres helps to revitalise urban areas and supports local businesses, noting, "People are using the high street, the restaurants and bars because that is where they live."

Despite these assertions, there is scepticism about whether these developments will make renting more affordable. Jon Hooper-Nash, lettings director at Jeffrey Ross estate agents, expressed doubt to BBC Wales Today: "It is classic GCSE economics: supply and demand, but the rents they are asking for are already much more expensive than what they are up against... I don't quite understand the narrative that they are going to bring rents down, when they have put them up." He stressed that for the new apartments to be accessible to the average renter in Cardiff, their prices would need to come down considerably.

Renters in Cardiff are experiencing firsthand the challenges of finding affordable housing. Eden Cronin, 27, described the rental hunt as competitive: "It took us ages to find a place. We found when we were looking or going to places, it had already been taken or there had been three viewings before us. It was almost like a race." Regarding the cost of £1,300 per month for a one-bedroom flat, she commented: "It's expensive, especially as it's not London. I would expect something quite big, spacious with a garden, a driveway or somewhere to have a car."

Others are considering leaving Cardiff due to rental prices. Alejandra Escamilla, 26, who currently pays £900 a month for a one-bedroom apartment with a shared garden, said: "I am expecting rents to go up actually but I am planning on moving out of the city. That will be cheaper." Meanwhile, Fergus Thomas from Abergavenny shared his doubts about the rent control claims: "I have rented for quite a few years and every time I feel it gets harder to find something, and every time it feels more expensive. There is too much money to be made and too many people looking to rent a place so I don't think they'll come down."

Some tenants, however, feel that the higher rents may be justified by the quality of the living spaces. Pratibha and Ben, who pay £1,100 per month for a build-to-rent flat, say they find the cost "worth it." The growth of build-to-rent developments in Cardiff mirrors similar trends in cities like Manchester and Liverpool, featuring amenities such as onsite gyms, communal living areas, and concierge services aimed at appealing to a range of renters.

The ongoing discussion in Cardiff highlights tensions between the desire to increase housing supply in urban areas and the affordability of new, purpose-built rental accommodations. While investors argue that increasing the number of available flats can stabilise rents, estate agents and renters alike remain cautious about whether these developments will meet the needs of the broader population.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <http://www.cardiffwalesmap.com/CardiffDevelopments.htm> - This URL provides information about ongoing developments in Cardiff, including build-to-rent apartments, which supports the claim of a surge in such constructions. It highlights specific projects in the city.
* <https://urbanliving.news/build-to-rent/lloyds-living-buys-cardiff-btr-scheme/> - This article supports the trend of build-to-rent developments in Cardiff by detailing specific projects like The Rise, which offers modern amenities and is part of the broader surge in rental constructions.
* <https://www.chapmantaylor.com/news/first-look-cardiffs-john-street-build-to-rent-development-designed-by-chapman-taylor> - This URL provides details on another build-to-rent development in Cardiff, emphasizing the creation of a new urban community and the reactivation of historical spaces, supporting the notion of urban revitalization.
* <https://constructingexcellence.org.uk/the-interchange-central-square-cardiff/> - This site supports the claim of significant build-to-rent developments in Cardiff by highlighting specific projects like The Interchange, which includes both residential and commercial spaces.
* <https://unitedliving.co.uk/case-studies/anchor-works-cardiff/> - This URL details the Anchor Works development, offering insights into how build-to-rent schemes are expanding in Cardiff, including mixed-use projects that support local development strategies.