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YEARS OF HOME

THE HISTORY AND FUTURE OF THE BRITISH HOUSE As Seen Through ITV

CAMBRIDGECULTURA is an interdisciplinary strategy consultancy founded at Cambridge University. Our clients include WeTransfer; the UK Department of Science; Sir Keir Starmer and Borkowski.

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Introduction

Why does this matter?

For 70 years, you've been part of our life...

Our footage tells a national story – not just of news events or royal weddings, but of kitchens refitted, sofas rearranged, walls repainted. The dramas we air, the adverts we show, the homes we film: together, they chart a quiet revolution of domestic life.

...And we've been part of yours.

ITV is a guest in the British home. We've occupied a moving picture-frame in pride of place, jostling for position amongst your family photos, coffee-cups and car keys. We've been in the background of every major family occasion going. We know that any image that we broadcast has the privilege of becoming part, however briefly, of your home.

What's this about?

ITV and modern Britain are the same age. We'll trace this shared history over five shifts:

Shift 1: Out of the Ashes (1955–1973)

From Tin Baths to Indoor Plumbing

We'll be reminded of what it took to rebuild Britain after the War, and how far we've come in terms of standard of living.

Shift 2: The Age of Aspiration (1973–1997)

Homes as Assets, Kitchens as Stages

We'll see the emergence of the kitchen as a social hub, the start of 'Right to Buy', and the coinage of the term 'Property Ladder'.

Shift 3: Cool Britannia (1997–2008)

Bridget Jones, Buy-to-Let, and the Open Plan Dream

We'll see mounting property values change our attitude towards housing, and alongside the first usage of the term 'Buy to Let'.

Shift 4: Crunch and Compensation (2008–2020)

From Property Boom to Price Comparison

Price comparison sites become the order of the day, and the nation turns to Downton Abbey for escape.

Shift 5: Recent Past and Near Future (2020-)

The post-COVID years have seen a new settlement on working conditions. Hybrid working means that the domestic interior is as important as it's ever been.

In the next 5-10 years, we can expect: changes to the housing supply, as Labour commit to building 1.5m houses this parliament; the ongoing risk of housing 'shrinkflation', as developers cut standard sizes to maximise profitability; and most significantly, the Great Wealth Transfer, as £7.5tn worth of UK assets change hands.

Shift 1: Out of the Ashes

From Tin Baths to Indoor Plumbing (1955–1973)

Key Statistics¹

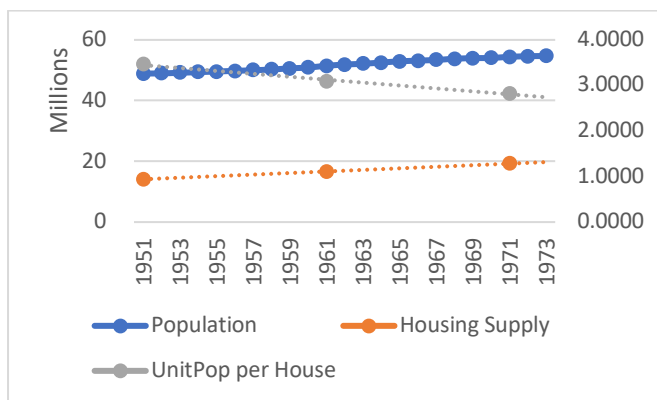
	1955	1973
UK POPULATION	49.6m	54.7m
UK HOUSING SUPPLY	14.1m (3.5 people per house)	19.3m (2.8 people per house)
AVERAGE SALARY	£429	£1,690
AVERAGE HOUSE PRICE	£1,937 (4.5 x salary)	£9,767 (5.8 x salary)
KEY WORDS	National Reconstruction	
KEY ACHIEVEMENTS	1m new houses; Installation of Indoor Bathrooms	

The Background

When ITV launched in September 1955, the legacy of World War 2 loomed large: rationing had only finished the year before, and cities across the UK still showed damage from the Blitz.

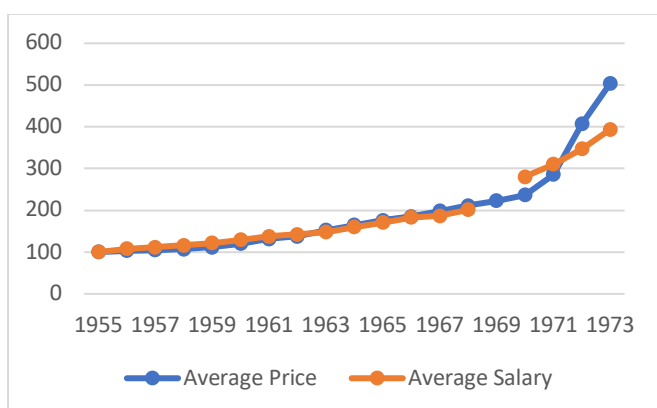
Hovering over the wreckage around today's London Wall, ITV presenter Cecil Lewis paid oblique tribute to 'the gaping scars, [that] so many of us well remember in the making'.²

ITV was born in an age of mass-reconstruction. A rebuilding on this scale required unprecedented access to state resources. The post-war Labour government (1945-51) built around one million homes, of which 85% were social housing.³ All told, the state built 5m houses between 1946 and 1981. The kicker? Only 250,000 social houses have been built since.⁴



Graph 1. Population versus Housing Supply (1951-1973)

Grey= number of people per house



Graph 2. Wages versus Salaries (Index Points, 1955-1973)



Still from ITV's Inaugural Broadcast [1m30s], showing London Wall as it stood in 1955. [TV Ark]

Renovation vs Reconstruction

This was also an era of improvement. Even the housing stock that had survived the war fell short of the standards that we now take for granted.

When ITV first screened, over 10 million Brits were making do with an outside toilet,

or without proper washing facilities. As late as 1967, a quarter of British houses lacked a bath or shower, an indoor WC, a sink, or hot and cold-water taps.⁵ The inhabitants of *Coronation Street* were no exception.



Still from Coronation Street, an Outside Toilet on Richmond Street, 1978. [ITV]

This period saw a step-change in the British standard of living, and it all happened rapidly. The 1949 Home Improvement Act empowered local authorities to offer grants for indoor bathrooms, and in 1959, it became mandatory for them to do so. Harold Macmillan's government had determined that all UK houses would have bathrooms within 15 years, and within a year 80,000 households had applied for a grant.⁶

Change on that scale reshaped the consumer landscape. It's no coincidence that the first TV advert in British history was a toothpaste commercial. Or, that one of the best loved advertising animals dates from this period: the Andrex Puppy.

The Andrex commercial (one of our top seventy) showed the public a better world. Yes, the toilet paper was strong – but the real message is implicit. The toilet was now in a warm room, within a (luxuriously pile-carpeted) home.



The Andrex Puppy in Action, 1972. [TV Ark]

In some ways, this policy has been a victim of his own success. The average UK 3-bed now has 1.8 bathrooms, so it's hard to believe that a policy of this kind could ever have been necessary.⁷ But it was both necessary, and transformative.

Speaking in the House of Commons in 1960, the Minister for Housing and Local Government noted that: *One can appreciate what those numbers mean in terms of human happiness when one has seen a mother who, at last, has got a proper bath with hot water from the tap in which to bath the children instead of a tin bath on the floor with water from a kettle.*⁸

Key Takeaway:

Investment in post-war rebuilding saw our homes transformed from reminders of post-war trauma to sources of modern comfort. With the dawn of commercial TV, new products such as Andrex and Gibbs toothpaste heralded a new era of personal care.

TV played its part in this era of national recovery. It normalised new changes in living standards and reflected everyday realities. Indoor bathrooms made their first appearance on the cobbles in 1968, becoming normalised later in the 1970s.⁹

Shift 2: The Age of Aspiration

Homes as Assets, Kitchens as Stages (1973–1997)

Key Statistics

	1973	1997
UK POPULATION	54.7m	56.6m
UK HOUSING SUPPLY	19.3m	24.7m
	(2.8 people per house)	(2.3 people per house)
AVERAGE SALARY	£1,690	£19,442
AVERAGE HOUSE PRICE	£9,767 (5.8 x salary)	£61,830 (3.2 x salary)
KEY WORDS	'Thatcher'; 'Executive Homes'; 'The Property Ladder'	
KEY ACHIEVEMENTS	Invention of the Modern Kitchen; Right to Buy; Country House Mania	

The Background

The 1970s were a period of social and economic volatility. Inflation peaked at a staggering 24% in 1975 and averaged around 13% across the decade. Prices ballooned: a three-bedroom Midlands house listed at £14,000 in 1973 sold for £100,000 by 1981.¹⁰

Wages rose just as sharply, and homeownership continued to accelerate. Margaret Thatcher's Housing Act 1980 enshrined the 'Right to Buy', bringing roughly two million Britons into homeownership.

The legacy of Thatcher's economic reforms is more complicated. But it's safe to say that these conditions, of rising values, and rising ownership, gave us two major things:

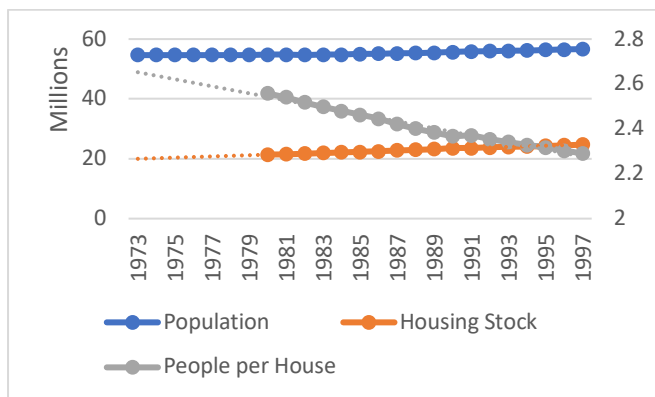
The first, is that we turned the house from a dwelling, into a representation of class.¹¹ It was the eighties that popularised the concept of the 'property ladder'.

The second, is that the new 'owning class' were more inclined than ever to invest in their rapidly inflating homes. The single greatest area of change was, in this respect, was the kitchen.

The Rise of the Kitchen

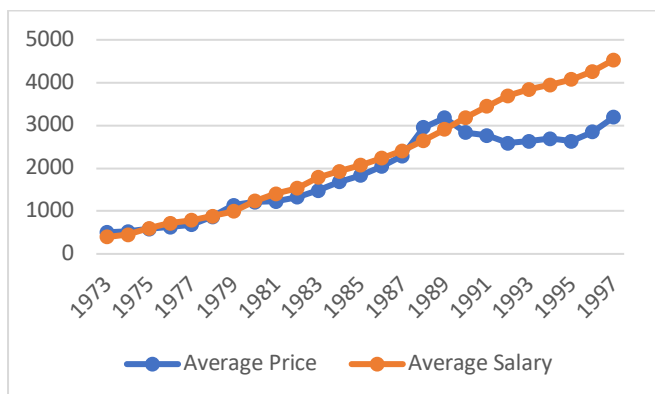
The kitchen is now the heart of the UK home, but until the 1960s it was a utilitarian space. It was a non-priority, practical room – a bit like today's garage. It wasn't fancy, and it certainly wasn't big (ever wondered why so many Victorian houses now have kitchen extensions?).

It's not surprising that rising home ownership in the 1970s and 80s encouraged this kind of investment. When you add in the increasing rarity of daily help, and increasing affordability of labour-



Graph 3. Population versus Housing Supply (1973-1997)

Grey= number of people per house



Graph 4. Wages versus Salaries (Index Points, 1973-1997)

saving gadgets, it's easy to see why the kitchen became such a big deal.

The trend had begun in the 1950s. Here, the kitchens were minimal and elegant – and associated with a traditional view of femininity. It says a lot that 'English Rose' was a popular early kitchen brand. At least some part of the advertising is to persuade post-war housewives that working in the kitchen *could* be a desirable, even sexy, middle-class pursuit.



An 'English Rose' advert of c. 1950. [Country Life]



An early glimpse of the kitchen as a fashionable family space. 'Hands that Do Dishes', Fairy Liquid, 1961. [TV Ark]

Social changes of this kind come out powerfully in some of our own best-loved adverts. The Fairy Liquid advert of 1961 plays on similar themes – and sells a similar kind of femininity. There are no men or boys in sight, and we get maybe our first televised view of a fashionable, family kitchen. You can just spot the trendy garden tub chair through the French doors!

Spending time, and eating in, the kitchen inevitably created new viewing habits. Breakfast TV depends, to state on the obvious, on having TV in your kitchen. The BBC launched *BBC Breakfast Time* (17 January, 1983) and ITV followed suit, with *TV-am* appearing only a fortnight later (1 February, 1983).



The presenters of TV-am, Robert Kee, Angela Rippon, David Frost, Anna Ford and Michael Parkinson, 1983. [Trinity Mirror/Mirrorpix/Alamy]

The New Traditionalism

This might feel like a high point in the modernisation of the British home; the nation now ate breakfast in their executive kitchens, and watched the young Michael Parkinson on *TV-am*.

It's remarkable, then, that Granada was simultaneously seducing the public with a period drama about 1930s aristocratic life. *Brideshead Revisited* (1981), described in 2015 as 'television's greatest literary adaptation, bar none', exposed a surprising nostalgia in an increasingly bourgeois society.¹²

The *Brideshead* years also saw a rising trend for 'rustic', or countryfied living. By the late 1970s, the clean lines were giving way to dark wood graining, and faux-stone finishes.



Homes in 1980s Britain: The stars of Granada's Brideshead Revisited pose outside Castle Howard, Yorkshire. [Granada]

It's Hyacinth's World: We're Just Living in It

As ever, British cultural *schadenfreude* meant that we preferred to focus on those who never quite made it.

BBC's Hyacinth Bucket (*Keeping up Appearances*) was endlessly on the trail of a half-understood 'executive' lifestyle, whether through her 'white slimline telephone with automatic redial' or her 'executive style' candlelit suppers.



Homes in 1980s Britain: A typical 'Executive' Kitchen (English Rose, 1979) [Country Life].



Still from Keeping Up Appearances, 1990. Hyacinth Bucket (pr. 'Bouquet') is tirelessly on the trail of the 1980s 'Executive' lifestyle. [BBC Worldwide]

Key Takeaway

The 1970s and 80s turned the British house from a place of shelter into a vehicle for aspiration. As ownership rose and kitchens became open-plan showpieces, Britain embraced the “executive lifestyle” with all

the gusto (and insecurity) of Hyacinth Bucket. Beneath it all, a deeper shift was underway: the home had become an asset class.

Shift 3: Cool Britannia

Bridget Jones, Buy-to-Let, and the Open Plan Dream (1997–2008)

Key Statistics

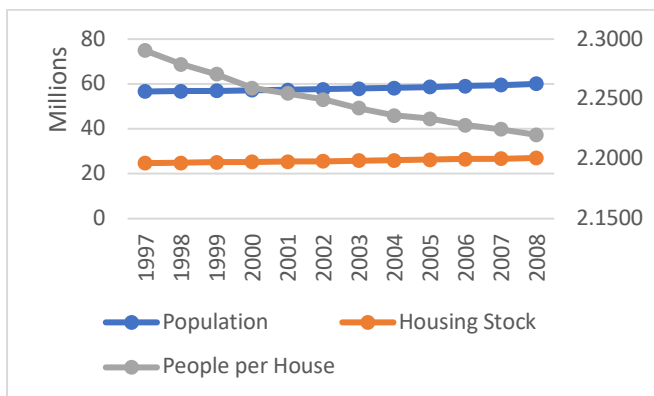
	1997	2008
UK POPULATION	56.6m	60m
UK HOUSING SUPPLY	24.7m (2.3 people per house)	27m (2.2 people per house)
AVERAGE SALARY	£19,442	£30,066
AVERAGE HOUSE PRICE	£61,830 (3.2 x salary)	£156,828 (5.2 x salary)
KEY WORDS	'Buy to Let'; 'Open Plan'	
KEY ACHIEVEMENTS	Residential property as an investment, rather than a dwelling.	

The Background

The New Labour years were a period of continuity. A booming financial services industry, with the deregulated City of London at its head, continued to drive property prices ever higher.

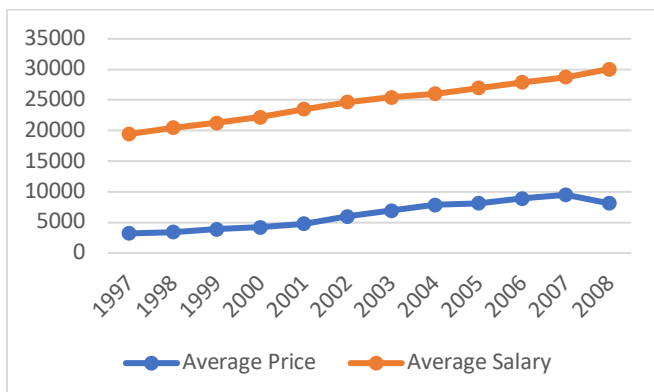
There was a second major period of explosive growth, with London prices continuing to outpace the country at large. A one-bedroom flat in Holloway, North London, bought for £71,500 in 1996 could be sold for £280,000 in 2007 (and £420,000 in 2021).¹³ Growth of that kind made residential property an attractive investment proposition. It's to the mid-nineties – and to a later scandal involving Cherie Blair – that we owe one of the most infamous phrases in the English language: 'Buy to Let' (*The Times*, 1994).¹⁴

The result? It was a golden age if you were in the right place, at the right time!



Graph 5. Population versus Housing Supply (1997-2008)

Grey= number of people per house



Graph 6. Wages versus Salaries (Index Points, 1997-2008)

BBC NEWS

You are in: Politics
Thursday, 5 December, 2002, 18:49 GMT

Inside Cherie's Bristol flats

The flats are described as 'penthouses'

The Prime Minister's wife, Cherie Blair, is under fire after admitting she bought two flats with the help of convicted fraudster Peter Foster.

Downing Street had previously denied any involvement with Mr Foster.

Mrs Blair insists she has done nothing wrong and had not been aware of Mr Foster's past.

The flats are situated in a new development in the Clifton area of Bristol.

The Panoramic development is close to the University

WATCH/LISTEN ON THIS STORY

The BBC's Gail Hume
"She and she alone is responsible for any misunderstanding"

Peter Foster, Businessman
"I have never hidden my past from anybody"

CHERIE controversy

Latest news

- Foster denies Blair plot
- Foster calls revealed
- Solicitor backs Cherie
- Blair's 'pride' for wife
- Cherie says 'sorry'

Background & analysis

- Foster's statement
- Cherie's statement
- Solicitors' statement
- Murky waters
- Foster tape transcripts
- Row at-a-glance

Profiles

- Cherie Blair
- Peter Foster
- The Bristol flats

AUDIO VIDEO

- TV and Radio reports

HAVE YOUR SAY

- Foster statement: The end of Cherie-nata?

Cherie Blair and the Growth of 'Buy to Let'. [BBC]

The Bridget Jones Years

Films from this period make for divisive viewing. As any millennial will tell you, the fantasy of Richard Curtis' *Notting Hill* (1999) is not that a middle-class Brit dates a global megastar, but that he lives in a Notting Hill townhouse on the proceeds of a (failing) travel bookshop.

Likewise, *Bridget Jones*. Sure, finding love with Colin Firth sounds great – but living alone in a three-bed above Borough Market on the proceeds of a mid-level publishing job? Now *that's* a fantasy.

When Bridget Jones sings Jamie O'Neal's 'All By Myself' in a flat now worth £1m (8 Bedale Street – look it up!) millennials weep, and it's not for the right reasons. 2025 Bridget would be lucky to afford to rent a flat share in zone 4.



Bridget Jones's Flat at 8 Bedale Street, London in 2020. It is now valued at around £945,000. [Hello]

What Bridget's flat does show, though, is the growing desirability of open plan living in the 90s and 00s. The second great phrase of the period, the open-plan moment was just one part of a TV-stoked appetite for home improvements.

Underscored by continuing dependability of UK property as an investment, production companies pumped out a steady stream of property shows. This was the golden age of Kevin Macleod, Sarah Beeny, and Kirsty and Phil. On ITV, *60 Minute Makeover*, brought the trend to its widest possible audience – and Ronseal ('It does what it says on the tin') became one of our best-loved adverts.



'Does Exactly What It Says on the Tin', Ronseal, 1994. [TV Ark]

Key Takeaway

New Labour's Britain saw an intensification of the trends we saw in the 1970s and 80s. The nineties gave us the Buy to Let, and the noughties gave us *60 Minute Makeover* (2004). Our homes became a recognition of our status, and a part of the growing self-improvement culture. For brands it was about enabling and empowering consumers to bring their visions (no matter how gaudy) to life!

Shift 4: Crunch & Compensation

From Property Boom to Price Comparison (2008–2020)

Key Statistics

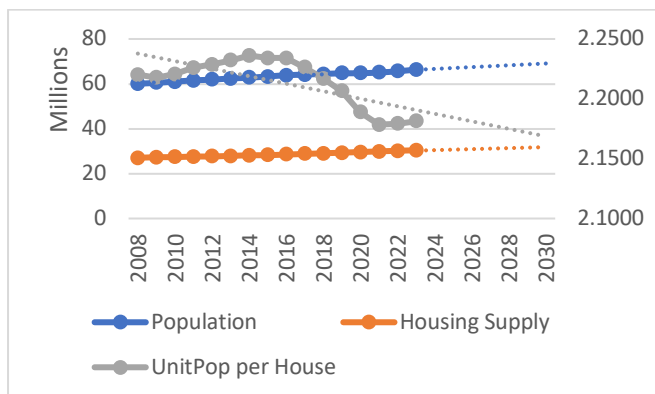
	2008	2020
UK POPULATION	60m	64.8m
UK HOUSING SUPPLY	27m (2.2 people per house)	29.6m (2.2 people per house)
AVERAGE SALARY	£30,066	£37,024
AVERAGE HOUSE PRICE	£156,828 (5.2 x salary)	£229,819 (6.2 x salary)
KEY WORDS	Negative Equity; Price Comparison; Austerity; Bedroom Tax	
KEY ACHIEVEMENTS	High prices, relatively static wages.	

The Background

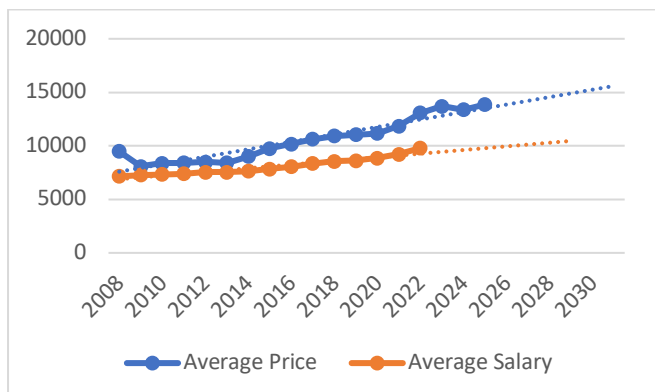
If the nineties gave us ‘open plan’ and ‘buy to let’, the phrase of the 2010s was ‘negative equity.’ The credit crunch hit mortgage-availability hard, and this slashed demand. House prices dropped sharply (See: Graph 7). This was a big problem if you’d borrowed at a high valuation, and now owed more than the house was worth.¹⁵

In fact, some 4.8% of British mortgage holders found themselves in negative equity by Spring 2009.¹⁶ In the USA, this figure had reached 18% by December 2008.¹⁷

Inevitably, the shockwaves of the recession impacted everyday Brits. In 2008, around 40,000 homes were repossessed, jumping from 27,900 the previous year. Repossessions peaked in 2009 at 46,000 – the highest number since 1995.¹⁸



Graph 7. Population versus Housing Supply (2008-2030) Grey= number of people per house



Graph 8. Wages versus Salaries (Index Points, 2007-2030)

Price Comparison Wars

Production companies now welcomed us into the nation’s homes, not with home improving celebrities, but with bailiffs (*Can’t Pay? We’ll Take it Away*). Adverts stopped offering new domestic appliances, and started focussing on ways to make a quick buck. This was the era of *‘Have You Had an Accident and It Wasn’t Your Fault?’*

There’s nothing glamorous about financial hardship, but there were some national consolations. This period saw the emergence of price comparison websites as Britons sought to economise. A tough retail environment also put beneficial pressure on advertisers. The 2010s saw the first appearance of some of our best loved adverts: the Meerkats (CompareTheMarket.com) first screened on ITV in January 2009, and Gio Compario, the GoCompare opera singer, appeared soon after in August 2009.

The British people had less money to spare and, in many ways, this hasn't changed. Wages have only broadly kept pace with inflation since 2008, and so nobody is much richer in real terms.¹⁹ When you factor in surges in fuel costs, the picture looks much more vulnerable.



Recession, and the Golden Age of Price Comparison. Aleksandr and Sergei appear for CompareTheMarket.com, 2012. [ITV/Lullingstone]

In the 2010s, a punishing programme of austerity put pressure on the public sector, and was particularly felt by those in social housing. Corners were cut, and the brutal reckoning came in 2017 with the Grenfell Tower fire. Grenfell became, and still remains, the emblem of austerity Britain and its legacy continues.

It was also the 2010s that gave us today's culture of mid-life, rented flat shares. In the years after the crash, most banks would only lend at four to five times salary – and this, based on a median London salary of c. £44,000, kept the capital's housing stock firmly in the hands of 1990s investors.²⁰ TV dramatists were quick to capitalise, not least in the escapism of the decade's greatest cultural project, *Downton Abbey* (ITV, 2010).

It's no accident that a show about an aristocratic house skyrocketed in a period defined by housing-related woes. There's also a longer term parallel between the

place of *Brideshead Revisited* in the 1980s, and the role of *Downton Abbey* in the 2010s. Both show the glamorous world of the aristocratic elite, in some ways, offering escapism from tough times most Brits were facing.

Key Takeaway:

This was a defining period for the UK and, in many ways, we're still here. Housing has increasingly become a luxury for many, with multiple generations squeezed into family homes and HMOs dominating the landscape. As a result stories of escapism dominate, with shows like *Downton Abbey*, *Sanditon* and *Safe House* featuring beautiful (and importantly fictional) homes.



Housing in Austerity Britain. The escapism of Downton Abbey (2010-15)

Looking to the Future

WFH, Shrinkflation, and the Great Wealth Transfer (2020–2030)

Key Statistics

	2020	2030
UK POPULATION	64.8m	~72m
UK HOUSING SUPPLY	29.6m (2.2 people per house)	~31m
AVERAGE SALARY	£37,024	~£53,048
AVERAGE HOUSE PRICE	£229,819 (6.2 x salary)	~£279,640 (5.1 x salary)
KEY WORDS	Pandemic; Furlough; WFH; Great Wealth Transfer	
KEY ACHIEVEMENTS	Change in working habits; Large scale intergenerational transfer of wealth	

The Covid Ripple Effect

The heady days of COVID-era remote work are behind us, and 44% of the UK workforce now travel to work full-time.²¹ Nonetheless, a nearly equal proportion (41%) is either hybrid (28%), or remote (13%). It's not surprising that the ongoing need to work from home has changed the average UK house.²²

Economists estimate that in the first giddy flush of home working, something like £110bn was spent on UK home improvements, with an average spend of £1,640 per homeowner.²³ Sure, things have rebalanced a little, but the domestic interior is perhaps as important now as it's been since the War.

Britain in Bloom

There's also some evidence that gardening has been a growth area – particularly amongst millennials in the years after COVID. UK-wide spending on gardening has grown steadily since 2013, and peaked at the start of the pandemic.²⁴ According to figures from the Horticultural Trade Association, the market for gardening supplies was worth £8bn in 2023.²⁵

FUTURE: Millennials on the move

Our current housing crisis influences the economy in all kinds of unseen ways. We know that high rents hit disposable incomes hard, and that high home values leave people with large mortgages, and exposure to interest-rate fluctuations.

There's the prospect of change. The present government has promised to build 1.5m homes by 2029. At the moment, UK assets are disproportionately held by older citizens, but the next three decades will see the largest intergenerational transfer of assets in history.²⁶ This transformation, which will see £7.5tn passed down in the UK alone, is being called the Great Wealth Transfer.²⁷

Will there be a clamour to move into houses vacated by the previous generation? Or another boom of renovation, as buildings held onto by the elderly require refashioning? As capital is passed between generations, the UK government stands to be a major beneficiary. Inheritance Tax Receipts (IHT) are up 11% year on year, and the Treasury stands to collect £50bn by 2030 alone.²⁸ And all this before the estimated peak of the transfer, in around 2035.

In the next five years, many Millennials might unexpectedly find themselves on the property ladder.

This presents an opportunity for brands with a newer generation of first-time homeowners looking to inject their newly acquired homes with personality and panache. ITVX's home mover targeting tool represents an opportunity for brands to speak to those who have recently moved in or in the process of moving home. A demographic that is set to grow over the next few years.

FUTURE: Sustainable living

There's a fault line beneath Britain's housing. Around 4 million UK properties now lie in areas of medium to high flood risk, especially across the Thames estuary, south-west England, and parts of Yorkshire.²⁹

The Bank of England warns that, without meaningful adaptation, those 4 million households could be uninsurable against flood by 2030.³⁰

As the climate crisis starts to encroach on our homes - there will be more pressure than ever for the brands in our homes to do good. Whether that be helping Brits do their bit for the environment, reducing emissions or offering sustainable alternatives to disposable household products.

For brands looking to land the right tone when it comes to sustainable messaging, check out ITV's *The Green Print* guide conducted in collaboration with System 1.

FUTURE: The space race

Us Brits often measure our houses by the number of bedrooms, unfortunately this means that we're often cheated when it comes to space. In recent years British houses have been subject to shrinkflation, and are now amongst the smallest in Europe. The floor area of the average UK home has shrunk 20% since the 1970s, with the average newbuild coming in at around 76m² compared to Denmark, at 137m².³¹

With more Brits than ever working from home, space is at a premium. For household and homeware brands it's important to think how you can empower Brits to make the most effective use of their living spaces, whilst making sure your products aren't costing us Brits precious living space in our homes.

Conclusions

We've followed the British house for the whole of ITV's lifetime. It's an immensely consequential series of decades in the nation's experience, spanning the whole duration of the postwar consensus.

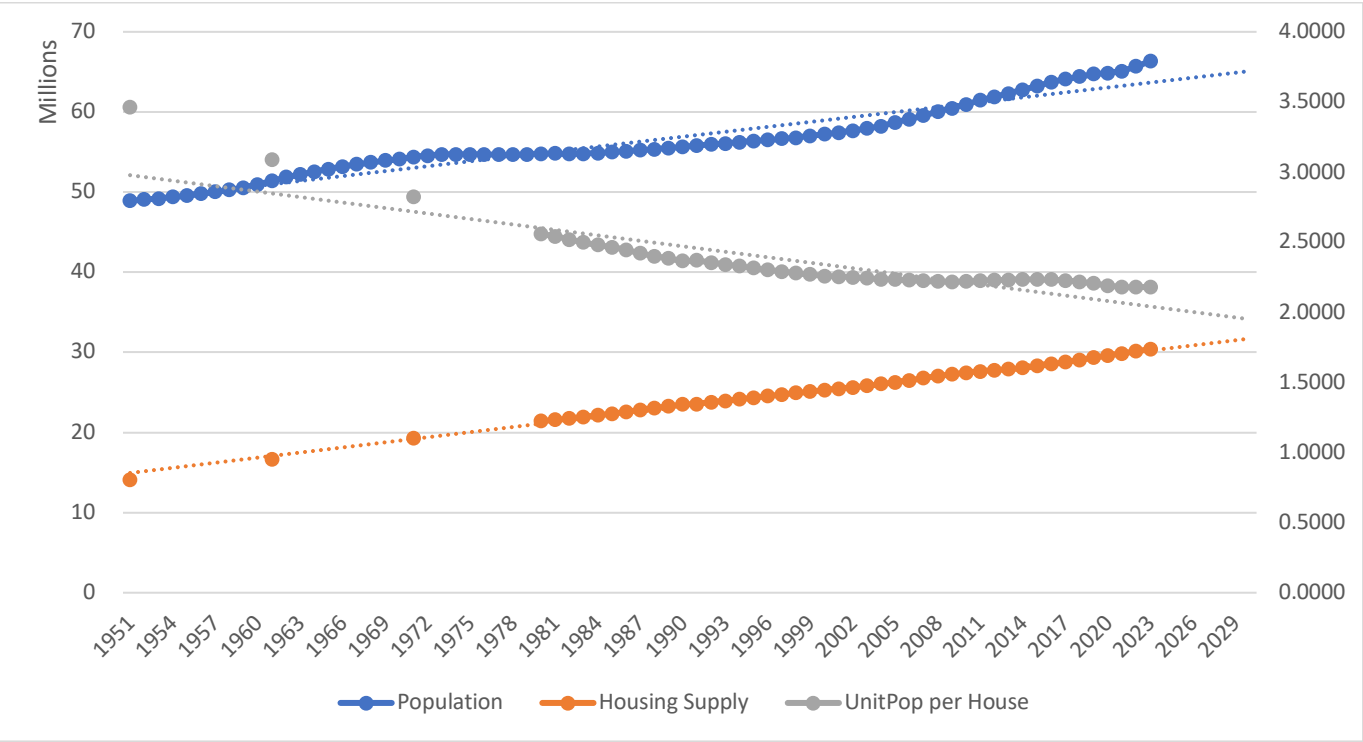
We've started with a post-war reconstruction effort. The government built one million homes after the Second War, and we close with their ambition to repeat that achievement.

In some ways, we have much to be proud of. When ITV first screened over 10 million Brits were making do with an outside toilet, or without proper washing facilities. Mothers bathed their children in tin baths, with a kettle. Now, the equivalent figure is glancingly small.

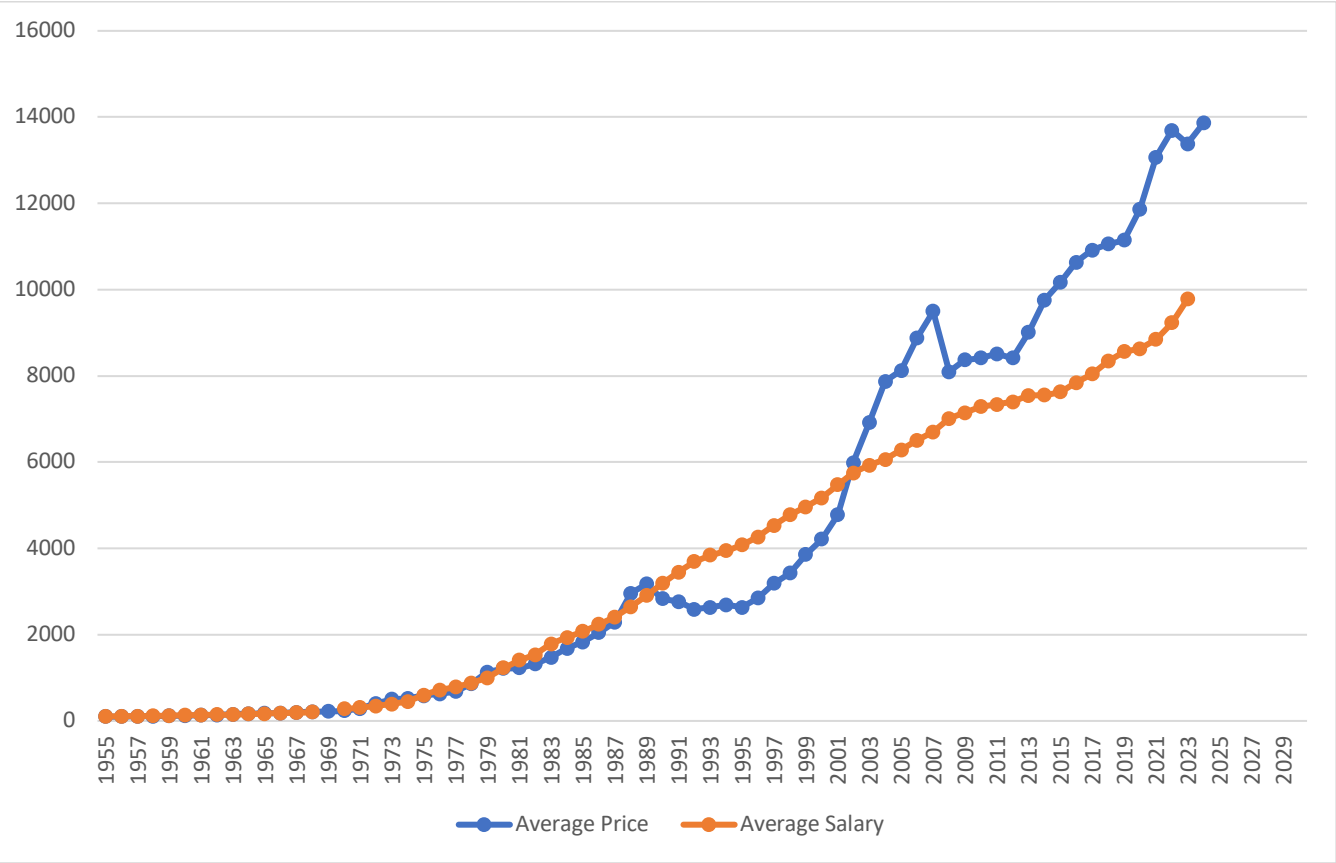
In other ways, we've regressed. Notions of ownership, and the necessity of ownership, have blossomed in the years after Thatcher. Leading to 'buy to let' and the current housing crisis we see in 2025, with young adults struggling to find affordable rental or mortgaged housing.

But there is hope, houses are being built, and for some, capital wealth is on the move. The Great Wealth Transfer, coupled with the scale of state building ambitions, leaves the country at a unique crossroads.

References



Graph 9. The Whole Picture (1951-2030): Number of People (m) vs Number of Houses (m).
[The Grey Line = no. of People per House]



Graph 10. The Whole Picture (1955-2030): Wages vs House Prices (Index Points)

¹ **A note on data:** The ‘Key Statistics’ tables, and Graphs 1-10 all derive from a dataset created for this report (July 2025).

The long period of time under discussion means that statistical reporting conventions, and reporting periods, have changed several times. Practices also differ across the different devolved administrations, and this means that not all data can be truly compared on a ‘like for like’ basis. As such, these figures will indicate general trends, but should not be relied upon absolutely in individual instances. The source data is as follows:

FOR POPULATION:

- For the period 1951-70, there are no UK-wide estimates. Figures are obtained by adding up the following datasets:
 - For England and Wales: *Table P1: Population estimates for England and Wales, mid-1865 to mid-2017* (<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5e8f3bda86650c2dd8151c28/population-data-tables.xlsx>)
 - For Scotland: *Mid-Year Population Estimates for Scotland: Time series data* (<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/publications/population-estimates-time-series-data>)
 - For Northern Ireland: *Northern Ireland Population Estimates 1872 to 2014* (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/adhocs/004362northernirelandpopulationestimates1872to2014>)
- For the period 1971–2023, estimates are available on a UK-wide basis. The source for these is: *United Kingdom population mid-year estimate* (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/timeseries/ukpop/pop>)

FOR HOUSING SUPPLY:

- For the period 1951–2014, we use the following data from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (and predecessor departments): *Table 101: by tenure, United Kingdom (historical series)* (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5b055108ed915d13371dc836/Discontinued_LT_101.xls). Note that there are only three data points prior to 1980, and that these are 1951, 1961 and 1971 (being census years).
- For the period 2015–2023 (both dates inclusive), we use the following dataset from the ONS: *Dwelling stock by tenure, UK* (2023 Edition) (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/dwellingstockbytenureuk/2023/ukdwellingstock2023.xlsx>)

FOR AVERAGE HOUSE PRICES:

- ONS/Land Registry Data only begins in 1968. Instead, we have relied on the Nationwide House Price Index which has data for the whole duration of this study. See: (<https://www.nationwide.co.uk/house-price-index/methodology/>)

FOR AVERAGE EARNINGS (‘SALARY’):

- For the period 1951–1969, we use Department for Employment’s Labour Statistics. This is the only data available for this period, and it is imperfect through only considering full-time wages for manual work.
- For the period 1970–1996, we use the New Earnings Survey (NES), which includes all occupations (Sample: 1% of National Insurance Cards).
- For the period 1997–2023, we use the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), which includes all occupations (Sample: 1% of National Insurance Cards).
- The three datasets outlined above are available in collected form (*Average Gross Weekly Earnings*), with further explanation, [here](#).

Note on the use of price and wage data:

- All data for earnings is presented as a weekly average in its raw form. We annualise it throughout this report.
- In the ‘Key Statistics’ tables, average earnings (called ‘salary’ for ease of use) and average house prices, are given in absolute terms. Where earnings and prices are plotted on graphs over time, however (Graphs 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10), both are indexed to 1955 values. That is, both have a starting value of 100 points in 1955.

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- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Rapid Transition Alliance, “The first flush of transition: The rise of British indoor plumbing...,” *Rapid Transition Alliance*, 15 March 2023, accessed 22 July 2025, <https://rapidtransition.org/stories/the-first-flush-of-transition-the-rise-of-british-indoor-plumbing-and-what-it-tells-us-about-rapid-transition/>.
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- ⁷ Kevin McCloud, “Bathrooms: Kevin McCloud on why bathrooms now matter in Grand Designs,” *The Independent*, 1 June 2024, accessed 22 July 2025, <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/bathrooms-kevin-mccloud-grand-designs-b2606243.html>.
- ⁸ People’s Collection Wales, “Story 378120,” *People’s Collection Wales*, accessed 22 July 2025, <https://www.peoplescollection.wales/story/378120>.
- ⁹ ITV in-house subtitle tool for *Coronation Street*. Search terms were “indoor bathroom” and “bath tub,” accessed 22 July 2025.
- ¹⁰ Based on 94 Lyth Hill Road, Bayston Hill. The national average wasn’t far behind – travelling from £4,378 in Q1 1970 to £23,497 in Q4 1980. Nationwide Building Society, *House Price Index*, accessed July 22, 2025, <https://www.nationwide.co.uk/house-price-index>.
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- ¹³ Based on 35A Jackson Road, London, N7 6EG. See: <https://themarket.com/tools/propertyprices/35a-jackson-road-london-n7-6eg#email-signup>.
- ¹⁴ The Online Etymology Dictionary, s.v. “buy-to-let (adj.),” accessed 22 July 2025, https://www.oed.com/dictionary/buy-to-let_adj?tab=meaning_and_use#1372586070.
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