

## **Community led High Streets and Intergenerational Housing - a pilot project proposal**

*Inclusive and Intergenerational High Streets Working Group of the Intergenerational Housing Network*

*About us:*

The Intergenerational Housing Network is a non-constituted group of organisations exploring and promoting the potential for intergenerational housing to tackle loneliness and isolation.

<https://www.unitedforallages.com/news>

*Context:*

Many High Streets are flanked by parallel streets that function purely as servicing routes. This didn't used to be the case and these streets were often the location for cinemas and theatres as well as courtyards and mews for smaller businesses. The clearance of these zones for the increasing requirements of retail servicing has been part of the shift to monoculture that has left many of our High Streets so poorly prepared to adapt to challenges like COVID-19 and online shopping. Intergenerational housing is predicated on shared, public spaces that are inclusive to all members of the community as we identified in our grant-funded research project: Rethinking Intergenerational Housing. [www.matterarchitecture.uk/intergen](http://www.matterarchitecture.uk/intergen)

Recently there has been a lot of attention on how vacant retail units might be turned to community-based uses and repurposing for intergenerational activities is a logical step. Little thought has been given to re-occupying the service and parking zones behind retail however and the default is that these are parcelled off for speculative residential development. We think there is a much bigger opportunity to revitalise and enrich the High Street.

*Proposal and ask:*

Creating intergenerational housing in the service and parking zones behind the High Street and connecting through linked community hubs onto the High Street will create a new relationship between housing and the community, embedded in its place and strengthening High Streets. We are keen to talk to organisations that may be involved in or are looking to develop community housing or / and hubs on the High Street to see how this thinking may be aligned. We are an unfunded organisation but can offer our network's broad range of experience and ideas to promote new forms of community and intergenerational life.

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