

Zeitwohnen Update

The Long-Term Flexible Housing Newsletter



Jan Hase

Jan Hase is the Co-founder and CEO of Wunderflats GmbH, the market leader for flexible housing in Germany. Wunderflats has its headquarters in Berlin.

Dear Readers, Dear Friends of Zeitwohnen,

The energy transition in the building sector no longer depends on technology or funding alone. Increasingly, the question is how energy-efficient renovations can be implemented faster, at scale, and more effectively, especially in occupied buildings. Long construction times, complex processes, and limited skilled labor capacity are slowing down the transition in many places. This is why serial renovation is increasingly gaining attention from policymakers and the housing industry. Industrially prefabricated facade and building technology modules promise shorter construction times and more efficient processes.

However, as serial renovation becomes more widespread, a question that has received little attention so far is coming into focus: Where will residents live if extensive renovations are to be carried out faster, in a more coordinated way, and with fewer disruptions? This issue of the newsletter examines the connection between serial renovation and long-term flexible housing and shows why temporary housing options can play an important role in accelerating the modernization of the building stock.

Yours sincerely,

Jan Hase

Housing Market and Temporary Rentals

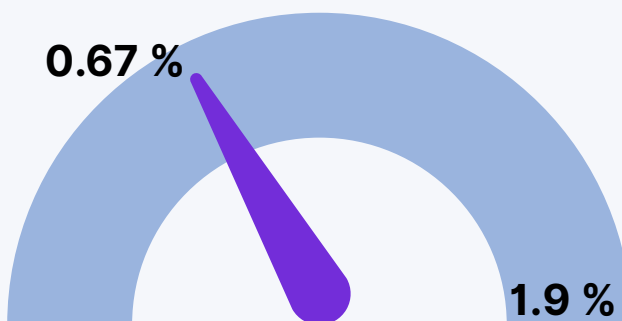
Democratization of housing sustainably eases pressure on conventional housing markets



The Energy Transition Needs Practical Solutions

Energy-efficient modernization of the building stock is considered essential to achieving Germany's climate goals. At the same time, the actual renovation rate has remained well below the required pace for years. Serial renovation is therefore seen as a promising approach to implementing renovations faster and at a larger scale.

Recent evaluations show that construction and project timelines can already be significantly shortened. At the same time, practical experience shows that extensive renovations often involve disruptions and burdens for residents. The energy transition therefore depends not only on technical solutions or funding programs, but increasingly also on how renovations can be organized in occupied buildings. Temporary housing options can play an important role in facilitating modernization projects and reducing the burden on residents.



Current Renovation Rate and Target Path to 2030

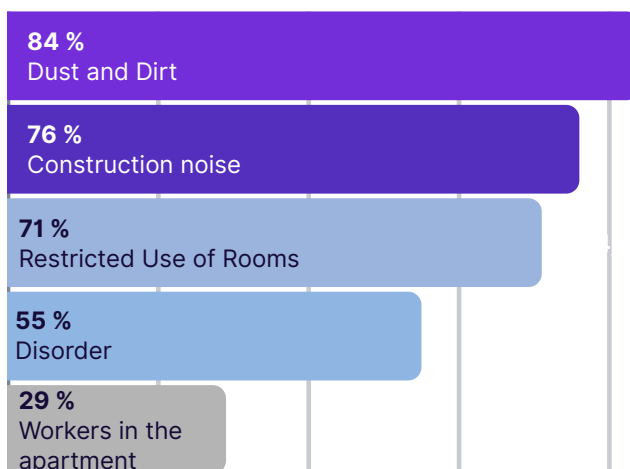
The energy renovation rate for Germany's residential building stock was 0.67 percent in 2025. According to BuVEG, an annual renovation rate of 1.9 percent is needed to achieve the 2030 climate targets. The long-term goal is a climate-neutral building stock by 2045.



Project and Construction Timelines for Serial Renovations

Average project and construction timelines for pilot projects mostly implemented before 2023 and follow-up projects mostly implemented from 2023 onward.

Sources: BuVEG, dena, Energiesprong DE, Institute for Housing and the Environment (IWU).



Burdens During Energy-Efficient Renovations

Percentage of respondents who perceived the respective impacts of energy-efficient renovation measures as a strong or very strong burden.

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Serial Renovation: Why the Energy Transition Is Increasingly a Matter of Implementation

Energy-efficient modernization of the building stock is increasingly becoming one of Germany's greatest infrastructure challenges. On the one hand, political pressure to meet climate targets in the building sector is growing. On the other hand, the renovation rate has remained below the level needed for a climate-neutral building stock by 2045 for years. Solutions are therefore needed that not only work technically, but can also be implemented quickly, cost-effectively, and at scale under real-world conditions. This is where serial renovation is increasingly gaining attention.

Unlike conventional individual renovations, serial renovation uses digitally planned and industrially prefabricated facade, roof, and building technology modules that can be installed on-site within a short period of time. This shifts a large part of the work from the construction site to prefabrication. The goal is to standardize processes, shorten construction times, and use limited skilled labor capacity more efficiently. The German Energy Agency (dena) sees significant potential for making renovations faster and more predictable. The approach is considered particularly promising for larger apartment buildings. According to Agora Energiewende, several million residential units could potentially be suitable for serial renovation.

Its real strength lies less in individual building components than in the process itself: coordinated work steps, standardized procedures, and on-site work kept as brief as possible. But this is precisely where the industrial approach meets the reality of occupied buildings. Where people live, coordination, restrictions, and organizational considerations are unavoidable. Additional disruptions and coordination needs can make the standardized and coordinated processes that serial renovation relies on more difficult. The key question is therefore no longer just how buildings can be renovated from a technical perspective. It is also how extensive work can be organized in temporarily unoccupied apartments or parts of buildings, allowing serial renovation to better realize its advantages in terms of speed and scalability.



Key Questions

Do residents have to move out for a serial renovation?

No. Many energy-efficient renovations can also be carried out while residents remain in their homes. However, for extensive renovations, temporarily moving out can be beneficial. It makes it easier to organize construction work, reduces disruptions for residents, and helps make better use of the time-saving benefits of serial renovation.

Why are renovations often more complicated when residents remain in the building?

Renovations have to accommodate residents' daily lives. Apartments must remain accessible, work often has to be carried out in phases, and disruptions caused by noise, dust, or temporarily unusable rooms have to be taken into account. This increases the organizational effort and can slow down construction. Serial renovation depends on processes that are as standardized and coordinated as possible, which is harder to achieve when residents remain in the building.

What role can long-term flexible housing play during a renovation?

Long-term flexible housing will not solve the renovation backlog, nor can it replace funding programs or additional skilled workers. However, it can provide support where extensive renovations require temporary alternative housing. Temporary housing options can allow residents to leave their homes for the duration of the work and avoid the disruptions caused by construction. At the same time, renovations in temporarily unoccupied apartments or parts of buildings can be carried out in a more coordinated way and, in some cases, more quickly. Long-term flexible housing can therefore become one element that supports the practical implementation of the energy transition.

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Long-Term Flexible Housing as an Underestimated Infrastructure for Transformation

The answer could lie in an area that has rarely been considered in connection with energy-efficient renovation: long-term flexible housing. Extensive renovations in occupied buildings are among the most complex situations in the housing stock. Work has to be organized in phases, access coordinated, and disruptions for residents continuously taken into account. At the same time, these considerations often extend overall construction times and significantly increase the organizational effort. Various studies show how disruptive such processes can be in everyday life. Common issues include noise, dust, limited use of apartments, and temporarily unusable kitchens or bathrooms. In addition, residents may face prolonged construction work in their immediate surroundings. This creates a fundamental conflict, particularly when serially renovating larger apartment buildings. On the one hand, processes should be as fast, standardized, and coordinated as possible. On the other hand, occupied buildings often require smaller construction phases and long transition periods. This is where long-term flexible housing takes on a new role. Temporary housing options provide flexible alternatives during extensive renovations. Residents can move into long-term flexible housing for the duration of the work, allowing apartments or parts of buildings to be renovated while temporarily unoccupied.

What has so far been seen primarily as a solution for professional mobility or transitional periods can take on a new strategic role: supporting the infrastructure needed to accelerate the modernization of the building stock. The benefits extend well beyond the construction process itself. Residents could face significantly shorter periods of disruption, while housing companies would have better conditions for implementing serial renovation processes at the intended pace. The energy transition depends not only on technology or funding, but increasingly also on whether transformation can be practically organized in occupied buildings.

Political Recommendations

Promote a Holistic Approach to Renovation.

Funding programs for energy-efficient renovations should consider not only the construction work itself, but also the challenges of renovating occupied buildings. The practical organization of renovations often determines whether measures are accepted and implemented efficiently. Communication, construction processes, and the situation of residents should therefore be given greater consideration in funding frameworks and program design.

Place Greater Emphasis on Implementation.

The public debate on the energy transition often focuses on technology, financing, and regulation. Equally important is the question of how extensive renovations can be carried out while taking residents' daily lives into account. Organizational aspects should therefore be given greater consideration in renovation strategies and policy frameworks to facilitate practical implementation on the ground.

Plan for Temporary Alternative Housing.

Where extensive energy-efficient renovations cause significant disruptions to daily life, temporary alternative housing should be considered early on as part of renovation planning. Long-term flexible housing can offer residents a flexible alternative for the duration of the work while also improving conditions for coordinated construction processes. Funding programs for energy-efficient renovations should therefore also take into account the costs of necessary temporary accommodation in long-term flexible housing.

The Wunderflats Team

Shape the future of housing with us



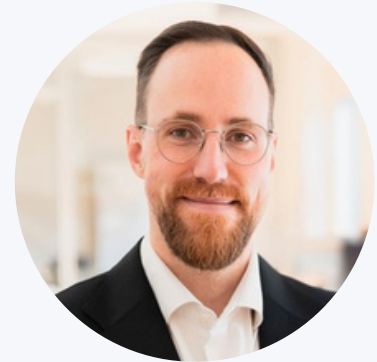
Join us on the road to the future of housing

Wunderflats is a digital platform for flexible housing that brings together the demand and supply of landlords and tenants.

While vacation rentals take away housing space from cities, long-term flexible housing helps relieve the pressure on the traditional housing market. This is because specialists, project workers, and highly specialized experts often request apartments that are rented out temporarily in a manner that conforms to the intended use, but are not currently available to the permanent housing market.

At the same time, long-term flexible housing is still too little known in terms of its importance and the many opportunities it offers, among other things, for a fair housing market and its contribution to economic promotion by solving the shortage of skilled workers.

Therefore, it is necessary to create a framework that recognizes long-term flexible housing as a pillar of support and a solution to the problem.



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As a digital scale-up from the heart of Berlin, Wunderflats welcomes any dialogue on digital and housing policy issues.

