

Modular Comes To Mayfair: The building of Burlington Gate

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By PrimeResi

2/15/2017

On a little-reported page of the [Housing White Paper](#), finally published last week, the Government promised greater encouragement for innovative off-site construction methods. Demonstrating some exciting potential for these techniques in the super-prime sector, Native Land's Joe White explains why modular units were used in the building of a forthcoming project in the midst of Mayfair's arts and fashion district...

One of our current projects, Burlington Gate, is scheduled to complete in 2017 with forty-two new luxury apartments replacing the existing 83,000 square foot commercial building. When constructing these apartments we were looking for a highly 'intelligent' system to supply these homes with heating, ventilation, cooling and lighting control. The modular unit, constructed in a factory offsite by Essex Services Group and installed onsite, provided the solution to that problem.

Using modular units not only has the short-term benefit of reducing installation time onsite. It also ensures a number of long-term benefits. Usually, when utility room services are installed in apartments onsite, the installation varies from apartment to apartment as the result of individual installer preferences and decisions. Whereas off-site production guarantees standardisation and the most efficient installation possible, allowing for ease of access for maintenance after installation.



In addition to this are the environmental benefits provided by the equipment within the modular units. This is provided by the BMS, which functions as 'the brain' for the apartment, and controls the heating, cooling and lighting controls; the MVHR (mechanical ventilation with heat recovery unit); and the HIU (heat interface unit) – the interface between central boiler and apartment which eliminates the need for every apartment to have a boiler.

There are also cost-efficient benefits of using the modular unit as complex services interfaces are undertaken in the factory. The ductwork, wiring and pipes distributed throughout the apartment are effectively 'plugged in' once the unit has arrived on site.

While modular units are much talked about, they are still not widely used. This is because off-site manufacture requires the design to be finalised at an earlier stage. Until recently, domestic services were simple enough to be easily installed on site, but luxury apartments in particular have introduced to the domestic market a level of services sophistication that warrants prefabrication.



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Not only do modular units provide benefits for the contractor and those living nearby, considerably reducing time spent onsite, they are also an attractive advantage for buyers due to the increased ease of maintenance servicing. It would be great to see more new builds using this method.





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