Transcript: Inclusive Space: Visibility, Inclusivity and Allyship in Built Environment Professions

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

Inclusive space, LGBTQIA+, allyship, representation, built environment

**SPEAKERS**

Anna Coltrane, Dr Sam Chandan, Adrian Silver, and Tres Seippel

**Tres Seippel**: Okay, so I think we're going to kick it off everybody. So, welcome to the Inclusive Spaces seminar series at The Bartlett the Faculty of the Built Environment here at UCL. Today, you have joined February edition of Inclusive Spaces titled visibility inclusive at an ally ship in the built environment profession. entre cycle will be moderating the event this session will be recorded and added to the Faculty YouTube channel Bartlett EDU website in forwarded to registered attendees. We encourage you to submit questions for the speaker at any point during this lecture by clicking the Q&A function at the bottom of the screen, you can submit your questions or about others.

The first half of this will be short introductions and kind of a brief conversation where we'll kind of talk through our experiences. And then the second half, will be Q&A, so as you hear things are interested in things just, please post your questions early enough and we'll try to get to as many of them as possible in the second half of this session. It will be a little bit different than previous ones, we don't have a formal presentation. We are going to just kind of talk about experiences and how to be a good ally, how to be creative with an inclusive and open environment, both in your workspace your lecture hall and kind of just in your general lifestyle, so it's all personal not research based, at least from my end and was taken from there, so everyone's going to go around and kind of introduce themselves tell you kind of what they do a little bit about their experience and who they are so and you want to start.

**Anna Coltrane**: Yeah, for sure my name is Anna Coltrane. I am from, I guess, well, I’ll make this quick but we'll start from I’m from North Carolina. I went to university of North Carolina at Chapel hill, graduated back in 2012 immediately moved up to New York and got my career started in real estate finance, so I worked in finance for four and a half years and then went and I knew I wanted to be on the principal side of the business, no, I wanted to develop, so  I went out and did development for a couple of different shops, one of which was related and you are working on Hudson yards and then after that I worked on a kind of a Silicon Valley tech hybrid that was, you know, looking to bring technology into multifamily construction and now I have three partners and we work on development in the southeast of us right now we're expanding from our first market which is Charlotte North Carolina. And yeah so, my kind of experience in the business was or in commercial real estate was very much in person, finance and then Now, in development and and actually you know, creating the built environment so very relevant for this conversation I got married last year, I have a beautiful wife at home and two Australian shepherds and yeah like to ski and be outside that's kind of that's kind of me, in a nutshell.

**Tres**: Cool, thanks Adrian you want to go next?

**Adrian Silver**: Yes, hi everyone thanks for joining my name is Adrian silver I my background very much not on the principal side I got started in real estate to stickability and energy efficiency in the built environment  working for a company called carbon White House out in San Francisco and I studied at Columbia University i'm originally from Boston. I fell in love with cities from a very young age and knew that I wanted to work under the umbrella the general realm of urban sustainability and when I learned how much the built environment contributes to climate change in the summer between 30 and 47 pending on which how you how you slice the data I thought here's this wonderful place where you know landlords can save money and do good and all the incentives are aligned. It's actually a little more complicated than that, but I still maintain that general optimism. And then I also teach at the University in the master’s in real estate program, of course, on real estate sustainability and how to rally all the stakeholders, because my perspective, from the sales side is seeing how much of it is people and change management. In regarding sustainability and built environment and getting energy efficiency projects there so that's my background and i'm really happy to be here on the personal side I live in Harlem New York with my beautiful partner on whom I met at work, actually in real estate so that's a fun story and and i'm calling from Mexico City, right now, where I just love the new remote work environment.

**Tres**: We're all jealous as we sit in our cold and grey apartments. Sam do you have to kick off next?

**Sam Chandan**: Sure hi I’m Sam chanted First let me say you're trying to everyone at the bar, but I really appreciate the opportunity to join you today. The four of us folks have been actively involved in kicking off an organization called the pride Council that you'll hear a little bit more about over the course of the next hour, but again really appreciate the opportunity to join you this morning, or this afternoon, depending on where you happen to be For the last six years I’ve been the dean of the shack institute at nyu a real estate program at the school of professional studies and opportunity opened up recently to join the finance faculty at the Business School so actually shifted over in the last couple of weeks to NYU stern. Where I had the real estate program and it's a pretty big tense with the real estate program we're focusing on a range of different issues, of course, our core real estate finance Program but also issues related to a sustainability of the built environment property technology data analytics artificial intelligence and the key one for us under the umbrella of leadership in the built environment. Is a diversity equity and inclusion and so that this has been sort of I think an area of focus for you know everyone you're going to hear from today and and one where I think we have ambitions to do our part in making sure that particularly sort of you young folks entering the industry from college or university if people who may be new to the profession at any stage of their of their career  find that there are people that they recognize can connect with that they at no time should ever feel alone or isolated in their particular firm or part of the world In terms, my academic background attended Wharton, Princeton and Yale my cross trained or cross training, I should say in economics finance on one side, but epidemiology, on the other, with a particular focus on Infectious diseases and the end urban spaces, but try again, thank you, let me hand it back to you.

**Tres**: I appreciate that Sam and I, you know if you're not comfortable answering questions for everybody, or asking questions you send them directly to myself if you don't want to put them in the Q&A. It's up to you, just as, like a side note, but uh you know and i'll kick it off with myself here I’m Tres Seippel I were taking we're kind of also I live in Brooklyn New York with my partner. We recently moved here from Queens so I've now hit three of the five boroughs which is kind of worked my way around the city, I think that's about as far as I’ll go, though  I went to the bartlett for my masters of international real estate planning in 2011 and 12 and I am the Chair of the New York alumni club and a board member of the UCL FAA at Which, focusing on creating scholarships, as well as kind of just building the brand of UCL in the US so…  My background is, I work in real estate finance currently I’m the general manager of construction lending for pure street, which is a fractional and lender out of LA. Prior to that, I worked in development consulting for 10 years and kind of did the opposite of Anna going from development into finance getting heavier and heavier into finance and now more technical finance so  I think across the board, all of us have very different but unique experiences, and I think you know, hopefully this conversation will be pretty opening and encouraging to a lot of people with you know if you're trying to figure out which direction to go in and real estate or even you know, finding a space where you feel comfortable you know, hopefully there's some answers here is some advice so we'll start kind of with the first question for all of us, how do we create a safe inclusive space within our teams companies and industries.

**Anna**: You know.

**Tres**: You don't want to start that one off.

**Anna**: Yeah.

**Sam**: Cool, pick one of us and yeah.

**Tres**: Okay, and we'll start with that one. Sure.

**Anna**: Yeah, so I think I mean. Probably starting at the most, like The Center of the nucleus, so to speak, how do we create safe and inclusive spaces within our teams. I think there are a lot of ways that we do that, but I definitely think that We you know, one of the things that we've all talked about, and probably can agree is that it starts with visibility.  So, you know learning how to You know, adjust language so that it's gender neutral learning how to You know, be open about our home life, and you know I ran into situations where I was you know asked.  Oh so who's your boyfriend or like you know very pointed questions like that which led to this awkward exchange where I had to correct, instead of just being like you know my girlfriend her name is jess you know and kind of like now my wife, but like being normalizing I think those kinds of interactions brings visibility, which can permeate you know, an entire culture, and so, at least, for you know my way of walking the walk was definitely when I came out and got more comfortable with myself, was to you know, be very open about who I was and how you know It just be visible be more visible than I was previously, because I think that if I had someone if I had you know somebody that I had seen within my firm or within The commercial real estate, in general, frankly, who was open and out, and you know not like you know just operating under a normal in a normal capacity, but was you know, open about who they were then I could have maybe you know, had kind of the leaders had the example to emulate which would have been helpful at various stages so I think visibility is a big one, I think there's a lot of different areas, we could go but I’ll leave it visibility and let somebody else.

**Tres**: I know and I actually think that's The great part of that sort of the topic is visibility, you know doesn't have to mean you have to You know where a rainbow flag or run around or even like you know be as open, but like just creating a safe space by being visible and being an ally and that that environment is I think very helpful for creating a comfortable workplace, not only for LGBTQ+ but for anybody in general and, being a visible ally to everybody yeah  Adrian you're consistently.

**Adrian**: Yeah they're just going to provide a little anecdotal story that I think demonstrates that because I remember that one of the Probably the most public setting which I came out in the industry was for an urban land institute council which are these closed groups of 20 to 40 people who have specialized interest and deep experience in a topic, and so the average age is Probably 45 plus I was by far the youngest person in the room, and I had recently joined, I recently learned and joined the Gabriel upstate New York that visibility of seeing so many out open and successful professionals  Who, I was able to emulate was the visibility that gave me the courage to in that environment to the other Council members  In a in a semi public forum simply just say we're doing know three interest lives ourselves saying yeah, this is what I do for work, this is, who I am at home and oh, by the way, like this is something I’m really excited about professionally that recently developed I joined this game real estate Group and Little did I know I thought that wasn't that big of a deal because I’d seen the gate real estate group, but that see that happen little I know there were actually two other older members of the group who in their entire 30 plus year career real estate had an ad you know for plus your membership in this group had not come out actively to anyone in the group. And my stepping forward in that particular example actually open the door for them, they came to me privately afterwards and said, you know wow. I’m really impressed with your courage, and I was like there's no courage it's 2020 it's not that big of a deal, I guess, it would have been 2018 2019. it's not that big of a deal, you know we're in modern day. But that I feel like those are the kinds of you know unwitting examples of casual visibility that end up opening the door for others to walk and save and again to reemphasize like I would not have done that or thought I would have probably thought twice about it, if there hadn't been this demonstrable example to gay real estate group of this, you know nucleus of wonderful professionals and someone had to start that 20 years ago when it wasn't easy. So, I really that hits home visibility, I think, is definitely.

**Tres**: Great Sam did you want to add anything to that?

**Sam**: Yeah, sure I think reveal echoing serve Adrian and anna's points of visibility being incredibly important or to dial back 10 years, I think that one of the things that's changed, more recently, is that you know at that time. You know if I had been looking for a terrific job in the private sector. You know, certainly for some of my students, I might have looked for firms that were saying the right things about sort of you know that they might have an inclusion policy that included LGBT Q plus. The taking that as a strong signal you know their commitment to being an inclusive and supportive environment you fast forward certainly over the last couple of years. Every firm in our industry has learned how to say the right things and knows you know that it's important that they say the right things, but I think sort of as  You know folks looking for opportunities and industry, particularly the students at the bartlett or anywhere else we're smarter consumers than we were and better informed consumers than we were 10 years ago and for a company to say the right thing is quite frankly not enough we're going to look for visibility and I suggest that there is a big difference in one of the things that we should all be looking for is visibility across the different levels of the organization and we see this one we're looking at not only LGBTQI visibility and inclusion in the organization, but across a broad spectrum of diversity within firms that there are many firms that may be Achieving their inclusion targets or goals at the level of the analyst or the young associate but, as you move further up in the hierarchy of that organization and particularly when you look at sort of the senior management teams it starts to look a lot more traditional and I think that is a very powerful signal about whether or not, as a diverse person, however, that diversity is expressed, you know whether or not within. That particular organization, there is an opportunity for you to find a champion for yourself whether there's an opportunity for you to find a mentor for yourself Whether you'll have the same opportunities, you have to work hard, be recognized in advance within that organization. So, I think you know when i'm talking to students, today, you know Those are the kinds of things that I think people are looking for much stronger signals that not only are you an organization that's going to welcome me. As someone right out of college or university, but you know, are you going to be a supportive organization as well. Where you know my opportunities for advancement, are going to be a function of my effort and my accomplishments and my contributions so you know all of those things part and parcel with. You know, saying the right stuff having the right policies in place having those three have the flexibility to support people with different backgrounds experiences and needs. That you often have to balance different you know types of obligations be between trivia their home life in their work life. Those are three to all of the things that I think are increasingly important for organizations that you really want to and I may be dating myself with this expression want to walk the walk. In knowing that their commitment to diversity and inclusion within the organization is real.

**Tres**: It actually leads into another great question. When you started a firm when you look at it from even for you know hunting for a job. Are there other things that you would look for either in their website and their bio is it is it their board is that their C suite or is it interactions with people is there an easy way to kind of streamline through that process of hiring or a job.

**Sam**: I think we're looking at a large firm certainly to look at the management team look at the board yeah You see, whether or not you know they're they value, because I think it is a strong signal. You know, when looking at their management team and their C suite executives is there, clear evidence that they value a diversity of background and experience, or is it the case, as we see. For so many firms in the real estate industry over the last couple of years, that there are selective appointments being made to senior roles that are ultimately performative. Because if that's the case that comes across quite differently in terms of what it signals about the value of diverse opinions, is there, someone on the investment committee. Is there someone in you know who's tasked with sort of do an important function, you know, on the board. That is, you know diverse again, however, that diversity expresses itself, I think those are key things to look for as well as sort of yo the theory of the broader picture and landscape of Serbia what's being said on the website. What are the challenges we face in real estate is that many of the firms to which you know we will want that will want to go work for are relatively smaller than may be the case in sort of traditional you know finance role?

And for a smaller firm, it can be more difficult or challenging. To try to express those values, because they don't have a critical mass of LGBTQI persons that are part of the organization, but I think you know, for that smaller firm, there are many, many other ways in which they can express. That you know their commitment to supporting of trivial diverse. Diverse pool of people, whether it's through their way in which they input engage with vendors clients. Whether it's you know that the associations that they partner with, so there are avenues and opportunities for firms. across the spectrum to clearly demonstrate and signal that commitment. And that it's part of their DNA, but I think we do have to recognize that PR firms have different scale, not everyone is going to be sort of a CB era or another sort of yo very large global. Services organization that has a critical mass of people that's able to support sort of you know, the infrastructure that you might see there.

**Anna**: Yeah and I think Sam that's when asking questions as a candidate becomes. Pretty critical right, you know just asking questions about policies and.  You know,  mentorship groups or advocacy you know of any sort I mean I think it's  It can be across you know it can be a variety of different things, in addition to looking at you know the groups of people that make up their senior staff, I think that's a great hack, so to speak, for like You know, looking at whether or not they walk the walk to steal your expression Sam. But I do think that candidates don't realize the power that they have I mean we we are actively and always seeking incredible talent to join our our team, and that has been the case that every firm every real estate firm I've ever worked at and I mean it is, it is especially in this job environment, at least for us, it is very much the the employer seeking the candidate and that's how it should be, frankly, but I think if you know if you if there's not enough for you to sniff out around critical mass, as you mentioned, Sam and you know if I think you know, looking at the website is great, because sometimes you can see You know values that drive the firm and that sort of thing again that's a little bit of like they can throw up anything, but if you get in there, I mean. You have the power so ask questions, and I think that that is a great that's also a great signal to you know the people internally, I mean if you have an HR manager who's going back and it's like This kid just asked me about like what our HR policy is around like sexual discrimination in the office and like gender orientation then like you have a major problem, like the that those need to be like very quick answers.  And, and if you're you know and there's a little bit of investigation that has to happen on the candidate side to see whether or not like the answers are pass the sniff test of you know I’m doing this because it's PC or I’m doing this because it's actually a deeply ingrained value that our firm holds and You know this is a place that you can be successful right which is kind of what you're what you're trying to sell us out as a as a potential candidate to join a firm, so the guys from questions is the other thing…

**Tres**: I would encourage people to do yeah and you can also I mean it is 2022 Now you can look at most of these firms track record and you can kind of see you know, did they get into this in 2018 that they Have they been trying to a very diverse, and you know income all-encompassing community. LinkedIn is a great source that you can go through, and just kind of click around and see what they're involved with where they are, how long your people have come from where people have worked from so you can kind of see how people have come and gone from the firm and you know it's it's the Internet and sincere forever. So, another question, I was going to lead to the next one is you know was there, someone in your first job or your second job that kind of was an ally for you or you know kind of was that person who made you feel comfortable to be yourself and your role, you know, to give names you don't have to give specifics, if you don't want to but you know there's always that first job, where you, you have to kind of not only have your first job and set it up, but also be yourself and figure out your balance of personal and professional life. Does any way I can start, I mean my first job in New York City, I worked for a brokerage House and my first boss, I mean, I guess, we never really had the conversation, but I knew he was he was gay as well, and it was you know very open environment brokerage in general is pretty pretty open and accepting in New York at least my experience and our C suite was very much the same way and there's a very comfortable place to work and to feel fully accepted but also to be able to talk about my personal life, and you know just kind of everything that went with it, so you know that was something that I felt very comfortable about. Now, I think it might have been a little different if I had stayed in other parts of the US or kind of gone to a little bit different field but working analytics and brokerage was very helpful and very, very eye opening she was my first job in New York is my first job in general, and so I kind of was a very good experience anyone else want to?

**Sam**: I think for myself, I think that my first private sector role, and I should preface this by saying in academia lots of champions are incredibly supportive environment, and I should qualify that by saying you know I realized that you give any of us have been very lucky to be an academic environments that you know, have been very inclusive and welcoming and supportive and where there has been that's really a critical mass of you know both allies and other people who identify as LGBTQ is the bit that's not you know I shouldn't assume that that's going to be the case sort of in every academic setting. The but on the private sector side and have historically gravitated towards very small firms, and when I was starting my career, I think that I did not have anyone, you know in that particular first firm. Where I felt like it would not be anything but sort of you dangerous to my career to come out and The history of the physical and emotional and psychological stress of having to live a lie in your workplace, particularly where during an analyst an analyst in a role where you're very likely spending, almost all of your waking time at work was really, really tough and I eventually left that role, because It was not an environment in which I felt like I could safely, you know come out the and that should be a lesson, you know back to anna's point about to the You know where we are in the Labour market cycle right now that's a lesson for every single employer out there, that if you want to compete for you know the best talent you've got to be inclusive, otherwise that best talent, is going to go somewhere else the given that the preponderance of relatively small firms in our industry in that your we're going to have a lot of folks that do find themselves in a small. Firm setting particularly up here on the development side that might be even more likely than sort of on the finance or investment side. Or if you're in private equity, which you know, the average firm size tends to be quite small as well just one more plug for pride Council, I think that it's not necessarily the case that you're going to find you know that you know mentor within your own firm. Sometimes it's going to be the case that you can and should be able to rely upon sort of a broader community of LGBT Q persons in the built environment to support you. And I think you know again for for younger folks in students on the call today, the thing that I would want to emphasize is that Part of the reason the four of us are here is because we want to signal so strongly to you that you do have friends and allies and mentors in the industry we're here to support you and to stand by you, so that if there isn't that person. Within the organization, where you end up in your first career know that there is a larger community of professionals who are here to to be with you and to support you.

**Adrian**: Amen. I couldn't have said it better myself my story my first job was out in San Francisco so on a relative basis, I would say fairly easy to come out, but it did take me I don't think I was out for my entire first year i'm in my was a bit of a funny double whammy so  I was the company was 30 was a 30 person startup and my partner my dad partner six years had joined the company, and so I say it's a double whammy because I both came out at work to to our boss, and the one person in HR, and this was obviously before there was a policy at workplace relationships, so we wanted to get out in front of it as well, so I basically came out in a relationship, and also as gay in in the workplace, all at once, which was a lot for for my boss, but yeah that's my story.

**Tres**: And I think this is actually a really important point, and part of this, you know. The small firms across the across the globe there's not always a one HR department necessarily or even like a di script or program kind of in place, and so I think sam's right where he talks about that the pride Council being a great outlet or a great resource for young professionals, as well as companies in general, trying to figure out how to engage better with new hires but also their current employees and figure out a better path forward for their entire company outlook, I think you know that's something that you know the pride Council can actually get a lot of lift to and there's both a young committee and a regular committee the for lack of a better word That actually kind of can give that support.

**Anna**: Both through.

**Tres**: Research and through all kinds of other aspects of it and we did get a great question you know. This is we're going to kind of shift a little bit, but according to you, what will the impacts of covert 19 pandemic on the future of inclusive it in full inclusion of all groups if humanity and human society, so you know we are as everyone's very well aware, still in this pandemic and still keeping distance and working remotely most of us and not socially interacting on a face to face level. So what do we think the long impacts of that will be you know one thing I’ll kind of just start with is you know you're all in my house right now. And so, while it was a little bit less personal it's a lot more personal the same time, and so I think. Depending on how you engage with your colleagues with your friends with even new acquaintances um some of it can be a little more personal and you can feel a little more safety. Some people feel safer in the Internet environment of not having to socially engage in that way, and so I think it has opened a new dialogue, of how we engage with our colleagues but also might allow for a lot more openness than we actually anticipated.

**Sam**: For sure I tried looking at it through you know, through an economic lens and sort of the dynamics of the Labour market that Anna mentioned, you know I think one of the things that this is done  is to force a re-evaluation on the part of many people in terms of how they want to prioritize Serbia they're against your to paint a broad brushstroke your work life balance review how they think about you know the importance of location. speaking to you know, Adrian big in Mexico City the but there, not just because of the relative tightness of the labour market today, but you know because of This reveal a revaluation of priorities that the pandemic has motivated that I think will exhibit some persistence won't simply you'll fall by the wayside, a year from now, or two years from now, or whenever it is that we find ourselves in an endemic environment for covid-19, But that place is a waiver onus on the employer to be an attractive place, whether it's a virtual or real place you know, to the employee and as that bargain or a contract implicit or explicit between the employee and the employer shifts You know I think you know part of the legacy of coven 19  Is that every employer needs to be thinking more carefully about how it is that they not only attract but also retain and advance a diverse set of employees, that is something that you know as a Community, we should not be bashful or shy about taking full advantage of and supporting one another and our advancement in our respective careers, but I think there is an important labour market dynamic here that has shifted as a result of of the pandemic And that's coincided with because the pandemic has highlighted so many of the extraordinary disparities, you know in society and the labour force, not just in the United States, where the you know, three of the four of us are right now. But you know in other parts of the world as well, many of those disparities have focused on you know historical injustices socio economic disparities. In the economy and the labour force, but I think that has also opened the door to a larger conversation about disparities and economic opportunity for diverse peoples.

**Tres**: yeah, well I go to the next question here, you know, this is a great question and it's, why is it important to come out in the workplace, and is it necessary and what does it involve even if your workplace is inclusive, I think, Anna kind of touched on this originally with the visibility. But either of you or anybody else want to add anything else to this.

**Anna**: yeah, I think it's a great. It's a great question I think, first and foremost it's not necessary, I mean that's my opinion I don't think that anyone needs to feel like they need to come forward and just like anyone who does come forward doesn't need to take on the burden of educating the greater group on. You know, on kind of Language or what you know what your life entails, I think that there's no burden on the employee it's more on the company and setting up either organizations that you can join from an advocacy perspective or actual like You know HR policies and that sort of thing the burden lies on the company to kind of come up with that um I don't so I don't think that there's any obligation. For me personally, I couldn't be what I eventually came to for me, I came out when I was 25 so I was kind of older I guess than your average I was two and a half years, and he still secured, which was a very inclusive environment, but I personally was just not ready to You know kind of be open And it was you know I got I got a promotion, which I think gave me a little boost of confidence, frankly, and I just it just there became a line in the sand for me and fork in the road where I couldn't be half of myself anymore in a workplace culture, the people meant too much to me, I had You know, I was very much that analyst that Sam mentioned that was you know working 100 220 hour work weeks and was Really passionate about their job and that meant that I spent a lot of time with the people that I worked for and I care a lot about them and they cared a lot about me and eventually, after two and a half years, you know it was far too long for my own, just like personal sanity to not be open about who I was and so it's and it was incredibly empowering to you know kind of finally share that with them, and I was, I think shocked at the like, I mean, first of all, it was it was very supportive, but it was also A fairly like Okay, you know and would you have for breakfast this morning, you know it was you know very It which was very helpful to me in normalizing everything um and kind of realizing that this was not going to be this devastating thing that I was going to tell people that was going to you know shake the ground that they walked on they were like Wonderful like is there anything that we can do to help, as you go through this kind of experience of coming out in the workplace, so I do need to know what I encourage it. From my personal experience, it was very impactful for me and also lead to all kinds of other connections being made, you know people when you share something private, and you are private and you are vulnerable. In your you know just in information sharing, and I think people tend to respond with vulnerability as well, which can deepen relationships and connections So for me, it has been a wonderful thing to share and it's been very empowering to me and it allows me to bring my full self into the Office every day, but I don't think that anyone is under any obligation to do anything but they don't want to do.

**Tres**: Now I’ll echo that I think it's important that you know you have to feel comfortable in the space, and if you aren't comfortable. Even if it isn't inclusive office kind of announcing that or even being open with colleagues than it is your personal experience and how you engage with it so I don't think there's any requirement to be to be open to be out, but you can still be an ally, without being open and you can create a safe space that is fosters that that same feeling without having to disclose your identity. Across you know any of it. For another great question actually from Luke here. So the question is in the US and the UCL is in the UK, as you know, in the US context people choose their state for how open, inclusive, it is before applying to live and work there. And I think you know that applies to most places, you know some cities are a little bit more open and accepting and you kind of know that from either the news or from kind of location even density of other aspects of it. But I mean I’m from North Carolina and North kind of over the history of the last 10 years has had some ups and downs with their battles for the LGBTQI community and even the south, has a bad reputation, but not all of the South is as. Conservative as one has historically seen so you know, I think it has blessed to do about the state and more about the city and location and the people you work with I mean were you engaged but does anyone else have an opinion on that?

**Sam**: Yeah, they started this dovetail with my colleague Richard Florida is for creative class thesis. You know, competitive cities are going to be ones that you know signal and are sort of your attractive to folks from diverse backgrounds and that by bringing together or to. That diversity background experience you know thought process that you'll be a more creative and ultimately market competitive city. We don't want to sort of do miss you know the gentrification elements you don't want to miss sort of the of the interview of the important this local fiscal policy and tax policy elements of what makes cities competitive because there's a lot going on, besides Just being open to and attractive to folks from different backgrounds. The data does sort of suggested that yes, people of different backgrounds are going to you know you'll look for and are going to prioritize you know places that are going to be welcoming. And that does tend to favour large cities, but the one thing that I probably contest is that while we absolutely do see vast differences. In social and cultural norms and behaviours were in some of let's say and I don't want to I don't want to fall back on six or your southern states northern states or red vs blue but your where there are parts of the country where you're at the state level it's perceived as being more conservative will often also observed. It was significant difference in what's happening in the largest urban areas. And so you know Austin I think is a very good example of a city where you know that is perceived and seen as being more open and inclusive than perhaps the larger context in which it lifts while that's true the one qualifier I think is that you know Austin still exists within the large context of a state that, in some cases is adopting state-wide policies that are going to apply and bind on Austin, no matter how you know, progressive the local electorate is that you are going to give, you know LGBTQ, a people pause and certainly you know Florida is another state where you know, in the last couple of weeks we've seen legislation introduced or policies introduced that… you know, I'm not a parent - everyone else mentioned their partner if I don't I’m going to get into big trouble, we live on the upper West side but I think if I if we had a child I would have to think very, very carefully around sort of your what norms are being set up for school aged children, and in that state, and if you know my son or daughter was not able to speak openly and might even be sanctioned for you're talking about his or her two dads you know it doesn't matter whether you're in Fort lauderdale doesn't matter whether you're in Walton manors, both of those places exist within a larger state context that matters…

**Tres**: yeah, I mean Florida, is a great example of this, they just rolled out even further restrictions today the past two days and on school aged children and for those in the UK who don't know Florida is kind of trying to put in some legislation to limit the ability to I think use the word gay in school as a possibility of indoctrinating new Members to the club, so they say. And it's kind of a one of those situations where now I think they said, if teachers are required if they suspect a child to be LGBTQI, they’re now required to out them to their parents legally that's kind of what they're trying to introduce the second phase of that bill. Regardless of if it puts the child at home at home so Florida, is trying, some of these things, and I think things and that's actually a very valid point. You know, North kind of the same thing with some of their transfer via back a couple years ago you see it still coming up in Kentucky and Tennessee regardless of all the things that are the positive things that are going on in those states, but I think there is still a grassroots movement, especially in the south. You saw it Atlanta kind of how George is kind of making some turns and even the Georgia legislator kind of stood up a little bit for some of these things.  But it's a state-by-state level there are these issues, I think you kind of have the same thing in the UK but Charlie is actually a great question kind of follow up on this is the question is for geographically centralized neighbourhoods better than scattered ones like, in other words he used the example of Manchester’s gay village are signed in soho clap on box oh kings cross smile and you know, is there a benefit for being in a centralized gamer hood for anything. You know, because he The other example here is the Manchester stood together to protest, the commercialization of pride back in the day. But also, when hate crimes, crimes happen in the gay village people voice more loudly. Does anyone want to speak on that?

I mean I’ll say even from coming from North Carolina you know that neighbourhood downtown and the town I lived in in Raleigh was a very strong tight knit neighbourhood and it kind of while we were still fairly small relative to the size of both Manchester, London, New York, San Francisco it did feel very comfortable that also safer in some aspects, especially as I was trying to figure out, who I was and go through the entire process of coming out and self-realization and in my early 20s, and so I think there is a benefit to it. I think there's also something to be said for Self-isolation. And what that kind of does in the long run, I don't know if it's positive or negative. But I think ability to interact and engage with people who are different from you only makes you a better person and being in a population of only people like minded like yourself exactly then also lead to some problems.

**Sam**: it's it a try there's when there's a basic urban agglomeration argument here that serve if you've got folks with purview a year shared set of Shared demand profile in terms of goods or services, then you have some concentration know that there's some benefit that derives from concentration and it's not necessarily the case that Okay, you get a bunch of guys together and so you've got the critical mass to provide a sort of turbo a bar or  sort of your clothing store it could also be that when you've got that concentration you've got a set of your suppliers and vendors and retailers in the neighbourhood that are there make your cake, you know, so there, you know that there, there are two of your benefits that accrue the servant ideal circumstances in which they also your points very well take them that you know it's a safe space to come home to and there's value in that perhaps or via the ideal scenario is one where you do have a neighbourhood you know where you do have a critical mass of people were the you know sort of do it is a safe space where There are sort of you know, certain goods and services offered, that you know are meeting the needs of the community, whether just be in terms of not having to worry about Serbia mentioning to your Barber that you know that you have you know same sex partner at the same time, so imagine sort of a scenario where you have the benefit of being able to access that Community and that concentration, but you don't need it. What you don't want is a scenario where you know that concentration exists because people feel they need and must have that safe space to go to, it exists or you know, but because it's there for us to take advantage of you know, but we elect in as opposed to sort of feeling like we need to retreat.

**Tres**: that's a great point.

**Anna**: yeah, I agree, I think it kind of breaks down in this whole like question of you know, scattered versus concentrated, I think it breaks down to what you want, in a community, you know I mean, I think that there's a lot of benefits the that you guys done a great job of kind of outlining of living in like the hell's kitchen of New York, so to speak, but community can involve a lot of different factors and can be You know it's about what fills your cup and makes you, you know feel kind of completed and safe, you know, first and foremost, but then what you what you like to rub up against in the world, you know, and what that kind of looks like in a community orientation that could be a really diverse area or that could be You know that could be West village in New York, and it could be very quaint and quiet and familial and you know I’m going I think it's just You know we're at my current company spacecraft we're very passionate about just building neighbourhoods and we have like a very strong inclination towards diverse 10 minute neighbourhoods where you know you can kind of grab everything you have a pharmacy you have you know, food and beverage you have bars, you have the ability to grab a salad when you, you know, are coming out of you, when you want to grab lunch or something like that I think those kinds of communities, for me, are what I get really excited and really passionate about, and it was a lot of different groups of people, but I think that there's huge merit. You know kind of being in in those concentrated communities as well, I think it's about going experiencing and deciding what's you know what kind of nurtures you and allows you to be the best version of yourself.

**Tres**: that's a great point I think we have time for one last question. She actually asked her first question. kind of asked the idea of how you build suitable ally ships to reach full inclusivity. And what does that kind of look like to everybody, I mean will there be full inclusive it ever is it you know people scared of the unknown.

**Sam**: Surely, you've asked so many great questions and makes many great comments today, thank you, the ethics or via one of the things sort of that we're learning to do in the industry is to approach issues around diversity and inclusion. More broadly, and holistically so it's not just about Okay, what is our strategy for people of colour. What is our strategy for women in our company, but how do we think about you know, creating an environment that is broadly inclusive because there are always going to be people by definition? That bring differences to the table that make them unique and special it's not just about identifying two or three very specific, you know group identifiable groups that extremely also raises are critically important point that you know even within the LGBTQI community we're still thinking and learning about how to be respectful of and inclusive of intersectionality that you know people don't only have one identity and when you have you know plenty shared identities are overlapping identities, you know that creates sort of unique scenarios the  interview, and I think you know, and I mentioned a lot of the times folks hesitate, because they don't want to be in the position of having to educate their entire organization or speak on behalf of an entire people. Yeah, that's not something any one of us was sort of appointed or elected to do. But you're thinking about how we can you know recognize celebrate and be supportive of intersectionality as part of our larger diversity and inclusion efforts I think again it's critically important.

**Anna**: yeah, I think this is an awesome question to think about because I think the work is probably never done. As we evolve as a human species, inevitably, more and more minority populations, whether they're physically disabled whether racial or nationality or gender orientation or sexual orientation, we will continue to kind of know ourselves better and evolve, and so the work is probably never done and, for me, and what we try to think about a lot. As we are actually you know kind of crafters of space in terms of the built environment, the space itself is not what's special right like it can be special, but what happens in the space is what's actually special that's you know where you go to vacation in your hotel room where. You go to the doctor where you go to work every day, where you live. I mean those are you know people's homes those are, it is the people to make them special and so what we try to think about is collecting the most diverse and you know just integrated group of people that we can around beauty of Real Estate is it requires a lot of people to come to the table to you know, make these spaces you've got architects consultants engineers builders finance ears, you know debt providers equity providers mean this touches such a broad swath of you know kind of the job market and just you know population in general. That, how can you make that table big and inclusive and make the people who are actually crafting the spaces, who have unique perspectives, you know, as diverse as possible, because that will, at the end of the day, will enable a space to adhere to you know kind of their personal experiences and allow them to have fingerprints on you know kind of what you're actually building that are better for a larger pool of people.

**Tres**: And I think that they're part of that really is, you know, being able to listen. You know that's kind of helps build a very inclusive space, if you can listen to the people around you and listen to their experiences and engage with them and Try to empathize rather than fully understand where they're coming from, I think that you know not only creating a space that is more inclusive and comfortable but making someone feel comfortable in that space that's something that I think is a big part of that people have to feel comfortable. Being themselves in the space that they engage in they live in and even events like you know it's like this inclusive space, the series, or the pride council that starts a conversation that people can then listen to and understand a different perspective that's not necessarily their own and that's kind of something that you know. for lack of a better, I think the US has lost a little bit of that over the past couple years to engage and like a manner that's compassionate so I'm just going to wrap up I guess guys, I really want to thank everyone for joining today. It's been a pleasure to kind of speak to you all and listen to your questions and kind of hear everyone's perspective on this inclusive spaces is back next Wednesday or Wednesday the 16th of March with inclusive space exploring gender inequality in the built environment and the details are in the chat and hope you all can join and see you all there.

**Anna**: Thank you.

**Sam**: Thanks very much.