



Changing Housing Preferences Influenced by the Gig Economy and Smart Living Technology

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Abstract

The modern housing market is experiencing huge changes. This is influenced by two main factors: the growth of gig economy jobs and the rise of smart living technologies. This paper analyzes how these factors are changing housing preferences of different demographic groups and locations, for urban areas of Southeast Asia. This study looks at three aspects. First, the move towards flexible, rental-based housing for gig workers and remote employees. Second, the role of smart home technologies as a key selling point in residential properties. Third, the rise of hybrid housing types, such as co-living spaces, serviced apartments, and build-to-rent projects. Key findings show that remote work has separated housing location from job location. These let workers have their lifestyle, cost, and access to amenities rather than commuting distance. In Bangkok, remote workers are staying longer than planned. This makes a 15-22% increase in rental prices in popular locations since 2022. The smart home market in Thailand is expected to grow from USD 1.26 billion in 2024 to USD 6.11 billion by 2030. This is a growth rate of 28.6% per year. This is driven mainly by climate comfort management and urban time constraints. This paper highlights the rise of the 'Generation Rent' mentality in Thailand, where 23% of renters say high home prices are the main reason for renting, and mortgage rejection rates are over 40%. This analysis study gives a framework for understanding changes in housing preferences and provides strategic advice to adapt to this shift.

Discipline: Housing & Real Estate Management.

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1 Introduction

The term "gig" is just slang for a short-term, specific, or freelance job. It comes from the jazz music scene of the 1920s, where musicians used it to refer to a single, temporary performance they were booked for. Nowadays, the word is commonly used in the gig economy to talk about flexible,

project-based work. Instead of receiving a regular salary, workers are paid for each task or project they complete. The gig economy is currently gaining traction due to COVID-19, global internet access, and international trade.

In the twentieth century, the connection between work and home was pretty straightforward: where you worked influenced where you lived, how long it took to get to work limited where you could live, and moving from renting to owning was seen as a sign of achieving financial stability as an adult. However, the twenty-first century has shaken up all of these assumptions.

The gig economy is known for its short-term contracts, freelance jobs, and work that happens via platforms. This has changed the temporal and spatial dimensions of employment. Workers no longer base their housing choices on one job or a regular commute. Instead, they can be flexible, mobile, and move based on new job opportunities or personal choices.

Also, smart living technologies have changed homes from just places to live into active, responsive spaces. Things like lighting, climate control, security, and entertainment can now be controlled from afar. These can also be set to work automatically. They can also be fit into a larger digital lifestyle. These technologies are not just nice to have; they are becoming what people expect, especially younger professionals.

The combination of these two trends is creating a new way of thinking about housing—where flexibility and connectivity are just as important as the size of the place and its location. This paper looks at how these changing preferences are showing up in housing markets, focusing on Thailand as a specific example.

1.1 The Gig Economy and Housing: Decoupling Work from Place

The gig economy includes a range of work setups. It may be tasks done through platforms (like ride-hailing and delivery) to freelance jobs and fully remote salaried positions. What connects these setups is the fading of the traditional employer-employee relationship. This used to involve fixed hours, a specific workplace, and a clear path for career growth.

The effect of remote work on housing markets has been huge. By 2025, over a quarter of US workers were either fully remote or in hybrid work situations. This change impacts the housing market. Families no longer have to choose between renting a small apartment near their job or buying a house that requires a long commute. Now, they can choose the quality of space, lifestyle features, and affordability rather than just being close to a central business area.

This shift has created new housing markets. The home demand has increased in suburban and rural areas. This is true in places where houses are cheaper compared to big cities. Secondary cities, which are neither major centers nor rural, have become attractive to renters and buyers. Terms like "Zoom towns" have emerged to describe small cities and rural areas that have suddenly become popular with urban workers who can work remotely.

However, this freedom in location has created new uncertainties. Remote workers are now more cautious. They consider the balance between job flexibility and the long-term commitment of homeownership. For many, renting provides the mobility that fits with today's careers. Jobs, companies, or even entire industries can change. Thus, renting allows for easier relocation without the hassle of selling a house. Also, remote work allows for lifestyle experimentation. Thus, workers can explore living in different areas before making a long-term decision.

This research explores how remote and nomadic gig work reshapes housing tenure and location choices. It analyzes emerging housing forms and evolving smart home markets in Southeast Asia. This work also looks at how generation, income, and urban context mediate these contemporary housing choices.

2 Literature Review

Urbn (2024) discussed how the gig economy is affecting real estate. Life has gone beyond co-living and co-working. Urbn (2024) argued that the gig economy is a key driver behind the growth of short-term rentals.

Sukereman et al. (2025) studied the gig economy's adoption in the real estate sector in Malaysia. They looked into the factors driving this trend, the challenges faced, and the effects on innovative business strategies. They identified many challenges. For example, companies struggled with trusting gig workers' reliability and skills to consistently deliver quality work. Also, assessing skills and qualifications proved difficult. Further, there is a lack of standardized practices and regulations for gig work in the real estate sector. This leads to unclear worker classification, absence of benefits, income instability, and no clear labor protections.

Khillare & Zagade (2024) examined smart housing solutions and how cities are transforming urban living using technology. Their study shows how cities use these innovations to greatly improve residents' well-being and create resilient, urban environments for the future.

Dowling et al. (2020) explored affordable rental housing's role in fostering innovation for employment growth in Australia's metropolitan and satellite cities. Affordable housing is fundamental to smart city models. Successful innovation districts require mixed land uses. It should also be socially, culturally, and economically diverse. It should also feature a variety of housing types, tenures, and prices. Being close to co-working spaces and clusters of businesses is crucial for networking opportunities to develop a business and client base. Comfortable housing is vital for the high-intensity work culture with maximum productivity. The lack of affordable rental housing has led younger entrepreneurs to adopt coping strategies to sustain their livelihoods, such as taking second jobs, living with parents, or sharing housing.

Das (2024) proposed smart growth-based policy recommendations for accommodating the evolving gig workforce in American cities. He argued that the unprecedented expansion of the gig economy for urban policy is causing repercussions for effective land use. He found that mixed-use brownfield development is the most optimal solution for future city planning.

Ehrenberg and Keinonen (2021) discussed co-living as a rental home experience of smart home technologies and autonomy in a Nordic city. They interviewed residents related to topics of contracts, community, and space. This was to find deep insight into the personal lives of the residents. The new technology allows insight and influence over the lives of the residents to shift the nature of co-living, creating a need for more up-to-date policy. Singh & Rana (2025) studied co-living spaces for GEN Z under sustainable and socially interactive interiors.

Harun & Yigitcanlar (2025) found that digital disruptions are separating urban functions from their geographic locations. It weakens the traditional factors that determine land value. E-commerce, remote work, and gig economies are changing the demand for retail, office spaces, and housing. Platform urbanism is leading to the privatization of public areas and the corporatization of governance. These changes make new types of innovation hubs, logistics centers, and virtual marketplaces. Changes in behavior are altering settlement patterns and worsening socio-spatial inequalities. Also, urban mobility changes from owning private vehicles to using on-demand, shared, and autonomous systems. This puts pressure on current transport infrastructure and land use policies.

3 Gig Economy, Gig Job, Gig Preferences, & Gig House

3.1 Bangkok as a Remote Work Hub

Bangkok has emerged as a significant node in the global geography of remote work. The city delivers on several fronts simultaneously: Thailand's fibre and mobile internet infrastructure is genuinely reliable, co-working spaces are ubiquitous and well-equipped, international flights connect to practically everywhere, and healthcare quality is high and affordable.

The financial arithmetic is compelling. A one-bedroom serviced apartment in a good central Bangkok neighbourhood costs between THB 18,000 and THB 28,000 per month (USD 500–800). Meals at street food stalls and local restaurants cost THB 60–120 per meal. A remote worker earning USD 4,000 per month can live comfortably on USD 1,500–2,000 per month and save the difference—a savings rate simply not replicable in most home-country cities.

This economic logic has translated into extended stays. Remote workers who arrived for what they imagined as three-month stays are extending to twelve months or more. The decision to extend is driven not only by cost but by social infrastructure: co-working spaces serve as daily social environments, online communities facilitate network-building, and the city itself offers a density of experience that becomes addictive.

The impact on Bangkok's housing market has been measurable. Neighbourhoods popular with the remote work community—Ari, Thong Lo, Ekkamai—have seen rental increases of 15-22 percent since 2022. Such an increase is driven partly by higher-spending international demand. This has created a tension: while the Thai government's approach to this phenomenon has been broadly positive, the distributional effects within Bangkok's housing and services economy are beginning to generate concern about the accessibility of these neighborhoods for local workers.

3.2 Gig Workers Gig Jobs

Figure 1 shows the typology of gig workers. Some gig workers may do many gig jobs at the same time.

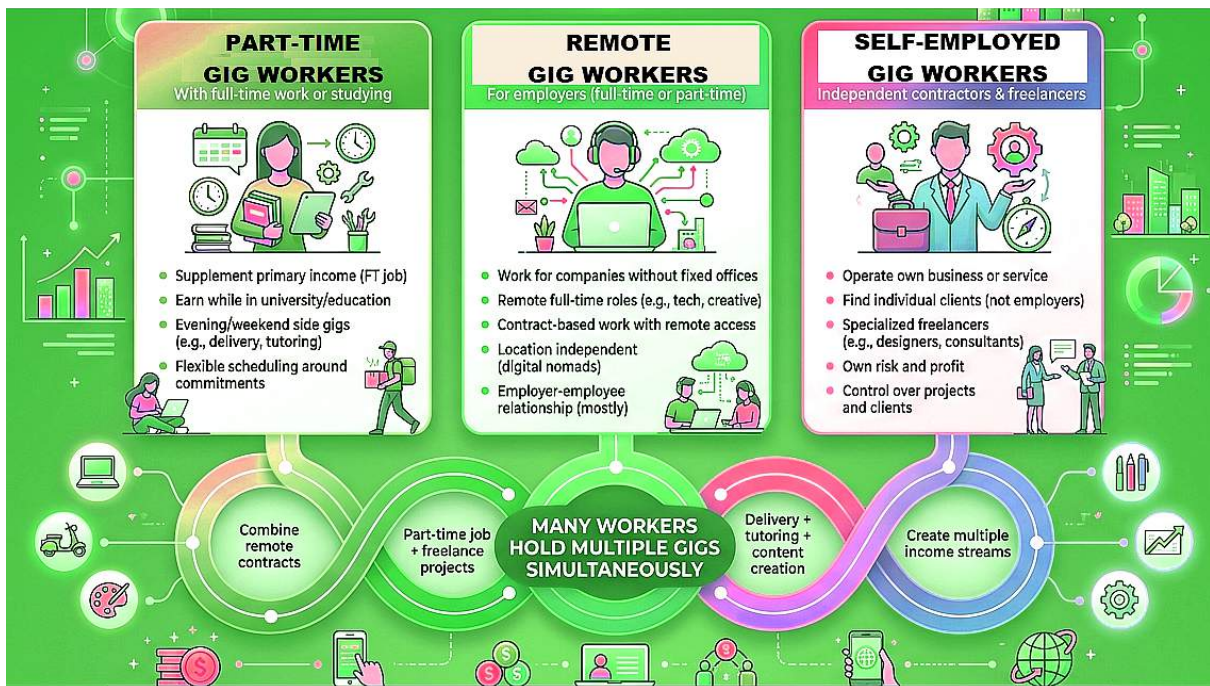


Figure 1: Typology of gig workers

3.3 Smart Home Technology: From Novelty to Expectation

Parallel to the transformation of work arrangements, smart home technology has evolved from a niche interest to a mainstream expectation. The Thailand Smart Home Market was valued at USD 1.26 billion in 2024 and is expected to reach USD 6.11 billion by 2030, growing at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 28.60% (Prachachat, 2024, NMSC, 2026). Multiple factors drive this growth.

3.3.1 Climate Comfort Management

Climate Comfort Management (CCM) is the most significant driver in tropical Thailand. Prolonged exposure to heat places heavy reliance on air-conditioning, fans, and ventilation systems. Households are adopting smart AC controllers, automated cooling schedules, and temperature sensors that reduce manual adjustment while controlling electricity expenses. Smart homes are perceived as everyday comfort-management tools rather than advanced automation ecosystems.

3.3.2 Urban Time Constraints

Urban time constraints constitute a second driver. Long commuting times, unpredictable traffic, and extended working hours in Bangkok, Nonthaburi, and Chiang Mai reduce residents' ability to manage households physically. Smart lighting, remote surveillance, door access systems, and appliance controls allow users to maintain oversight while away from home. Smartphone-based control aligns naturally with Thailand's high mobile usage, enabling real-time alerts and simple interventions.

3.3.3 Price Sensitivity and Infrastructure Gaps

Price sensitivity and infrastructure gaps remain constraints. Many households prioritize housing payments, transportation, and daily expenses over smart home investments. A significant portion of older or informally built housing lacks the electrical or connectivity infrastructure suitable for advanced automation. Fragmented ecosystems where devices from different brands fail to integrate reliably also reduce confidence.

3.3.4 Emerging Opportunities

Emerging opportunities lie in hospitality and rental property integration. Landlords and serviced-apartment operators increasingly use smart locks, occupancy monitoring, and remote management tools to improve operational efficiency. At the household level, rising electricity costs are driving interest in smart plugs, usage tracking, and energy-optimization tools.

3.4 The Rise of Monthly and Mid-Term Rentals

The convergence of remote work preferences and flexible housing needs has fueled dramatic growth in monthly and mid-term rentals (30-180 days). In 2025, Furnished Finder logged over 2 million tenant inquiries with a 105 percent year-over-year increase. This shows the shift toward stable, month-long stays.

Tenant profiles have shifted accordingly. Business travelers and digital nomads constitute 35 percent of monthly rental tenants, prioritizing comfortable, furnished workspaces, reliable Wi-Fi, and flexible lease terms. Healthcare professionals (25 percent) look for clean, quiet spaces close to medical centers. Relocation and academic renters (30 percent combined) appreciate turnkey homes with ample storage and practical amenities.

Notably, pets have become a critical consideration. Nearly 32% of bookings now include pets, marking an 18% year-over-year increase, requiring hosts to implement pet-friendly policies and amenities.

On average, each monthly rental stay now includes around 2.6 guests, up notably from previous years. Studios & one-bedroom units account for 55% of total demand, while two-bedroom apartments make up 25%, indicating a strong preference for smaller, efficiently designed units.

3.5 Generation Rent: The Shift Away from Homeownership

In Thailand, the residential rental market in Greater Bangkok is gaining momentum, driven by shifting preferences among young adults and by developers adapting to stricter mortgage rules.

Younger adults are reshaping housing demand by emphasizing flexibility and financial resilience rather than long-term homeownership. Many young Thais delay buying homes, valuing mobility and work-life balance. With careers increasingly flexible and driven by freelance/technology, renting allows them to relocate easily, live closer to workplaces or mass transit, and avoid long-term financial commitments.

High housing prices relative to income remain a key deterrent. A survey conducted by property portal Ddproperty (2025) found that nearly one in five renters cited unaffordable home prices as the main reason for renting. Financial readiness is another constraint: about one-third of respondents had sufficient savings to buy a home, while 38 percent were halfway towards their savings goals, and more than a quarter had not begun saving at all.

Household debt further limits purchasing power. Data from TMBThanachart Bank's (2025) financial health check showed that eight in ten salaried workers carry debt, largely from personal loans and credit cards. High debt service ratios reduce mortgage eligibility, particularly for first-time buyers. The Housing Business Association reported mortgage rejection rates exceeding 40 percent in the third quarter of 2025 (HBAT, 2025).

Faced with these barriers, young consumers embrace the "Generation Rent" mindset. The Ddproperty (2025) survey found that 23% of renters chose leasing because homes were too expensive, while 20 percent lacked sufficient savings, and 12% saw no urgency to buy. However, renting is often viewed as transitional: 57% of renters plan to lease for no more than two years before buying.

3.6 Developer Responses: New Business Models

Real estate developers are adapting to these shifts. SET-listed Sena Development launched LivNex to target buyers who aspire to own a home but are not yet mortgage-ready (Sena, 2026a). This allows them to rent a unit with a portion of the monthly payment later credited toward a down payment. The company also offers RentNext, focusing on pure rental demand across low-rise and condo projects with professionally managed leasing and maintenance services (Sena, 2026b). These programs reflect changing consumer realities rather than short-term market weakness. Mortgage approval has become more challenging, especially for first-time buyers, despite clear underlying demand.

Other developers are beginning to follow suit, exploring rental-led models and more flexible leasing terms as access to mortgages remains tight. Industry observers suggest such adaptations could reshape residential strategies if restrictive lending conditions persist.

3.7 Co-Living and Collaborative Workspaces as Housing Models

The gig economy has also accelerated interest in nontraditional housing models that blend the flexibility of renting with the wealth-building potential of ownership. Co-living spaces—housing arrangements where multiple tenants share larger homes—cut costs while providing community. Remote workers who feel isolated often choose co-living to balance affordability with social connections.

The relationship between co-working and co-living is not coincidental. Research on collaborative workspaces reveals that they function as "middlegrounds" mediating between freelance workers and corporate worlds. Betahaus in Berlin, a case study, operates as a broker through events where the corporate world meets the gig-economy world. Creative individuals offer

innovative ideas in exchange for access to worldwide networks and capital (Cohendet, 2010; 2011). It argues that "community as a service" has been commodified, offered as a value exchange without raising questions of reciprocity and mutuality.

Similarly, research on nomadic work practices in smart cities notes that coworking spaces serve as "social infrastructures" that support collaboration, innovation, and community for mobile workers. The design of such spaces must balance universal versus specialized demands, maintain "perpetual messiness" that supports creativity, and integrate into the broader urban ecology of workspaces.

3.8 Research Gaps

Despite the increasing amount of literature, there are still significant gaps. First, there is limited research on how gig economy housing preferences relate to the adoption of smart technology. It is important to understand how these factors interact and support each other. Second, there is a lack of longitudinal data on the stability of housing changes driven by remote work. Third, there is limited comparative research in urban areas for Southeast Asia. Fourth, the housing effects of gig economy jobs for lower-income platform workers (like those in ride-hailing and delivery) have not been thoroughly examined compared to the high-income remote professionals.

4 Methods

4.1 Research Design

This study employs a multi-method qualitative and quantitative synthesis approach. This study combines industry reports, market analyses, academic literature, and policy documents. Given the rapidly evolving nature of both gig economy work patterns and smart home technology adoption, this synthesis approach enables triangulation of diverse data sources.

4.2 Data Sources

In this study, data were drawn from:

Industry reports: Market analyses from Next Move Strategy Consulting on the Thailand smart home market, Cushman & Wakefield (2026) on Southeast Asian property markets, and PriceLabs (2025) on monthly rental trends.

Property market analyses: Bangkok Post (2025; 2026) reporting on rental market dynamics and developer responses, and EEC housing market conditions.

Remote work analysis: The Asian Affairs reporting on Bangkok remote worker patterns and Beem (2025) analysis of US remote work housing impacts.

Academic literature: information is learned from recent works, e.g., Papageorgiou et al. (2025) on collaborative workspaces and the gig economy; Foth et al. (2026) on nomadic work practices in smart cities.

Market data: NextMSC (NMSC, 2026) smart home market forecasts and Ddproperty (2025) survey data.

4.3 Analytical Framework

The analysis is organized around three interconnected dimensions:

1. Work arrangement transformation: How remote, hybrid, and gig work affect location preferences, tenure decisions, and space requirements
2. Technology integration: How smart home features influence housing choice and property value
3. Market adaptation: How developers, landlords, and technology providers respond to changing preferences

5 Results

5.1 Remote Work and Housing Market Reconfiguration

The evidence strongly supports a causal relationship between remote work adoption and housing market reconfiguration, though the magnitude varies by national and urban context.

The US market evidence is observed. Remote work has opened new housing markets. Suburban and rural housing demand has surged, particularly in regions with lower costs than major cities. Urban rents have cooled slightly in some metros, while secondary cities have become sweet spots for both renters and buyers.

Generational patterns shape these impacts, see Figure 2.

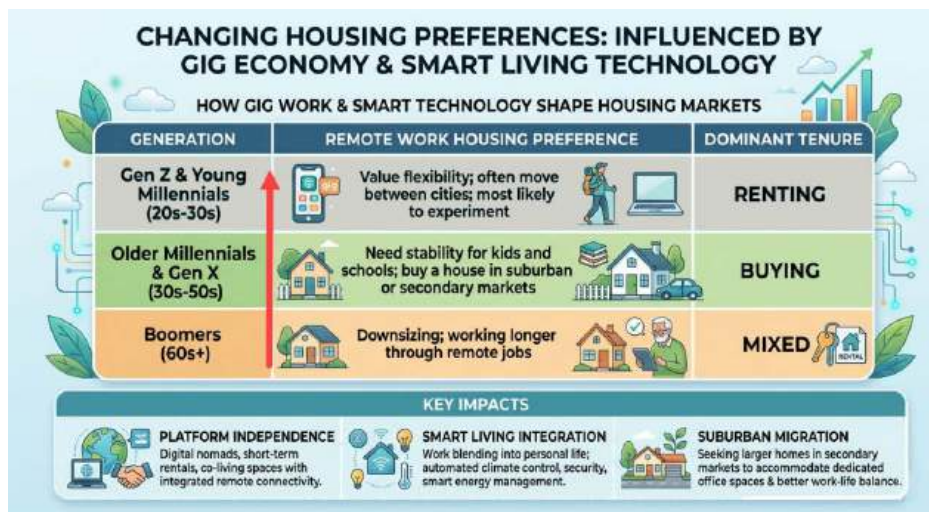


Figure 2: Changing generational housing trends & shaping the housing market.

The risk dimension is significant: remote work is not guaranteed forever. Some companies are pulling workers back into offices. Buying far from a corporate hub could backfire if job requirements change.

Bangkok market evidence is seen. Bangkok remote workers are extending stays beyond initial plans. A UX designer who booked a three-month stay renewed for eighteen months. The financial logic is compelling: USD 500-800 monthly rent for a central apartment, USD 150-250 monthly food budget, versus significantly higher costs in home countries.

Visa accessibility has improved. Thailand's Long-Term Resident (LTR) Visa (introduced 2022, refined subsequently) provides up to 10-year stays for qualified remote workers meeting income thresholds. Health insurance adds USD 200-500 monthly, and air quality (particularly January-March) is a worsening concern, with the 2026 burning season rated the worst in five years.

Market tensions are emerging. Rental prices in popular remote worker neighbourhoods have risen 15-22 percent since 2022, driven partly by international demand pushing up what landlords expect to receive. For Bangkok's young professional class, these neighbourhoods are becoming financially inaccessible.

5.2 Monthly and Mid-Term Rental Market Growth

The monthly rental market has experienced dramatic growth. Platform supply metrics illustrate the trend: Furnished Finder leads with roughly 300,000 furnished monthly listings, compared to about 80,000 on Apartments.com and 36,000 on Zillow.

Demand metrics are even more striking. In 2025, Furnished Finder logged over 2 million tenant inquiries—a 105 percent year-over-year increase—demonstrating the shift toward month-long stays.

Tenant booking behavior has shifted. Monthly rentals now have a 36-day booking window (two days longer than 2024), suggesting tenants are planning further ahead. Mid-term rental tenants prioritize comfortable furnished workspaces, reliable Wi-Fi, flexible lease terms, and increasingly, pet-friendly accommodations.

Unit preferences are clear. Studios and one-bedroom units account for 55% of total demand. Two-bedroom apartments make up about 25%, while larger units (3+ bedrooms) represent just 20 percent. On average, each stay includes around 2.6 guests.

5.3 Smart Home Technology Adoption Patterns

The Thailand smart home market is expanding rapidly. Table 1 gives the smart home market size and value for Thailand.

Table 1: Details of the Thailand smart home market.

Indicator	Value
Market size 2024	USD 1.26 billion
Projected market size 2025	USD 1.74 billion
Projected market size 2030	USD 6.11 billion
CAGR (2025-2030)	28.60%

5.4 Generation Rent in Thailand

The home rental market in Bangkok is picking up speed, influenced by the changing preferences of young adults and developers/banks adjusting to tougher mortgage regulations. Young adults are changing the demand for housing by prioritizing flexibility and financial stability instead of long-term homeownership. As careers become more adaptable—often freelance or tech-

based—renting provides the ability to move, stay close to jobs or public transport, and steer clear of long-term financial obligations.

Table 2: Economic barriers to homeownership.

Economic barriers to homeownership	Details
Unaffordable home prices	Nearly one in five renters cited this as the main reason for renting.
Savings constraints	One-third had sufficient savings to buy; 38% were halfway, and over a quarter had not begun saving.
Household debt	Eight in ten salaried workers carry debt (personal loans, credit cards)
Mortgage rejection rates	Exceeding 40% in Q3 2025 (HBAT, 2025)

Renter intentions: Renting is often viewed as transitional. The survey showed 57% of renters plan to lease for no more than two years before buying. The most popular rental price range is THB 5,001-10,000 per month.

Developer adaptation: Sena Development launched LivNex (lease-to-own) (Sena, 2026a) and RentNex (pure rental) (Sena, 2026b) programs. The rent-to-own model allows tenants to rent a unit with a portion of the monthly payment later credited toward a down payment. The pure rental program rents homes ready to move in, both low-rise and condo projects, with professionally managed leasing and maintenance. These programs help developers monetize unsold inventory amid slower residential sales.

5.5 Emerging Housing Models and Typologies

The convergence of gig economy preferences, smart technology capabilities, and shifting demographics is generating new housing forms:

Co-living spaces: Housing setups where several tenants live together in larger homes, reducing expenses while fostering a sense of community. This is especially attractive to remote workers who may feel lonely working by themselves. It combines the flexibility of renting with the potential for wealth accumulation through ownership in certain cases.

Build-to-Rent (BTR): Homes designed specifically for renting instead of selling. This trend is growing in US markets as developers cater to ongoing rental needs. It provides the benefits of homeownership, such as space and amenities, without the need for a down payment or mortgage obligations.

Serviced apartments with integrated technology: Properties that provide both short-term and monthly accommodations, managed professionally, and equipped with smart technology. These are particularly common in popular areas for remote workers in Bangkok.

Hybrid tenure models: Shared ownership systems that enable groups to co-own properties, allowing them to share usage or rent out parts. This option is appealing to remote workers who wish to benefit from real estate value growth without taking on full ownership duties.

5.6 Thailand in the Regional Context

Thailand's experience shares features with regional neighbors while exhibiting distinctive characteristics. In the Southeast Asia property market context, the real estate investment market rebounded decisively in 2025, with volumes climbing 16 percent year-on-year to USD 21.8 billion. Data centres emerged as the largest property type by investment volume, while Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam remain relatively underserved digital infrastructure markets.

Thailand offers a special 10-year Long-Term Resident (LTR) visa. Thailand's LTR visa provides formal pathways for long-term high-potential individuals, investors, and remote workers stays not available in all regional competitors. The country's tourism and hospitality infrastructure also positions it well for serviced apartment and monthly rental models. However, air quality concerns and rising rental prices in popular neighbourhoods may affect long-term competitiveness.

6 Discussion

6.1 The New Housing Logic: Flexibility as a Primary Value

Flexibility has emerged as a primary housing value, challenging the traditional primacy of ownership and stability. This shift is not merely a response to economic constraints (though affordability barriers are real) but reflects evolving preferences among younger cohorts who have witnessed the financial precarity experienced by older generations during the Global Financial Crisis and COVID-19 pandemic.

The Generation Rent mindset documented in Bangkok mirrors patterns observed in global cities from London to San Francisco. What distinguishes the Bangkok case is the additional layer of international remote worker demand, which has introduced competitive pressure in neighbourhoods previously accessible to local young professionals. The 15-22% rental increases in Ari, Thong Lo, and Ekkamai since 2022 represent a form of remote worker gentrification that raises questions about housing equity and inclusive urban development.

For developers, this shift requires rethinking product offerings. The traditional model of for-sale condominium units may no longer match demand patterns in certain sub-markets. Sena Development's LivNext and RentNext programs (Sena, 2026a; 2026b) represent early responses, but the industry may need to move further toward build-to-rent models and professionally managed rental communities.

6.2 Smart Technology as Housing Feature, Not Add-On

The projected 28.6% CAGR for Thailand's smart home market through 2030 indicates that smart technology is transitioning from novelty to expectation. The drivers, climate comfort, and time efficiency, suggest that adoption is being propelled by practical needs rather than technophilia. In Thailand's tropical climate, the ability to remotely manage air-conditioning and monitor energy consumption delivers measurable value.

This has implications for property developers and landlords. Smart features are becoming differentiation points in competitive markets. Properties without basic smart capabilities (remote access, energy monitoring, security integration) may be at a disadvantage, particularly for younger, tech-savvy tenants.

However, the fragmentation of smart home ecosystems remains a barrier. The lack of interoperability between devices from different manufacturers creates frustration and reduces long-term usability. This presents an opportunity for platform providers who can offer integrated, brand-agnostic solutions.

6.3 The Co-Living and Coworking Connection

The emergence of co-living as a housing model must be understood in relation to coworking. Both respond to the same underlying conditions: the atomization of work and domestic life, and the corresponding need for community and social infrastructure.

Collaborative workspaces function as middle-grounds where freelancers, startups, and corporations interact. Community is commodified and offered as a service. The same dynamic is visible in co-living: residents pay for not just private space but access to shared amenities, programmed events, and curated community.

This commodification raises questions about authenticity and social equity. When community becomes a service, what happens to organic, uncommodified forms of neighbourhood sociality? The risk is that co-living developments become enclaves for mobile professionals, disconnected from the broader urban fabric.

For nomadic work practices, coworking spaces must balance universal versus specialized demands, maintain "perpetual messiness" that supports creativity, and integrate into the broader urban ecology. These design principles apply equally to co-living: spaces must accommodate diverse needs while supporting the spontaneous, unplanned interactions that generate genuine community.

7 Policy Implications

The findings suggest several policy considerations. In housing policy, the increase of Generation Rent and mortgage rejection rates over 40% shows that we need to rethink homeownership options (HBAT, 2025). In Thailand, high household debt impacts mortgage rejection rates, but the main issue of unaffordability points to the need for different housing models and better rental market regulations.

In urban planning, the rise of remote workers in specific Bangkok neighborhoods, causing rent hikes of 15-22 percent, indicates that planning changes might be necessary to maintain housing access for local employees. Tools like inclusionary zoning, affordable housing mandates, or rental price limits could be useful policy options.

For digital infrastructure, the growth of the smart home market relies on dependable connectivity and compatible standards. Supporting policies for broadband expansion, 5G

implementation, and open data standards would be advantageous for both consumers and tech companies.

In terms of labor policy, the housing effects of the gig economy reach beyond high-income remote workers to include lower-income platform workers. Delivery riders and ride-hailing drivers encounter housing affordability issues that have not received enough policy focus. It may be necessary to implement targeted housing aid or support initiatives.

7.1 Future Scenarios and Strategic Implications

Several scenarios for the evolution of housing preferences can be projected. Figure 3 shows scenario#1-4 with the following details.

Scenario#1: Remote work stabilizes. If remote and hybrid work arrangements become permanent for a significant segment of the workforce, the demand for flexible rental housing, suburban and secondary city locations, and properties with dedicated workspace will continue. Developers should prioritize built-in office space, high-speed internet infrastructure, and flexible lease terms.

Scenario#2: Return-to-office intensifies. If corporations mandate return-to-office, the geographic dispersion of the workforce may reverse. Cities with concentrated employment may see renewed demand for central locations. However, the flexibility gains of the remote work era—once experienced—are unlikely to be fully surrendered.

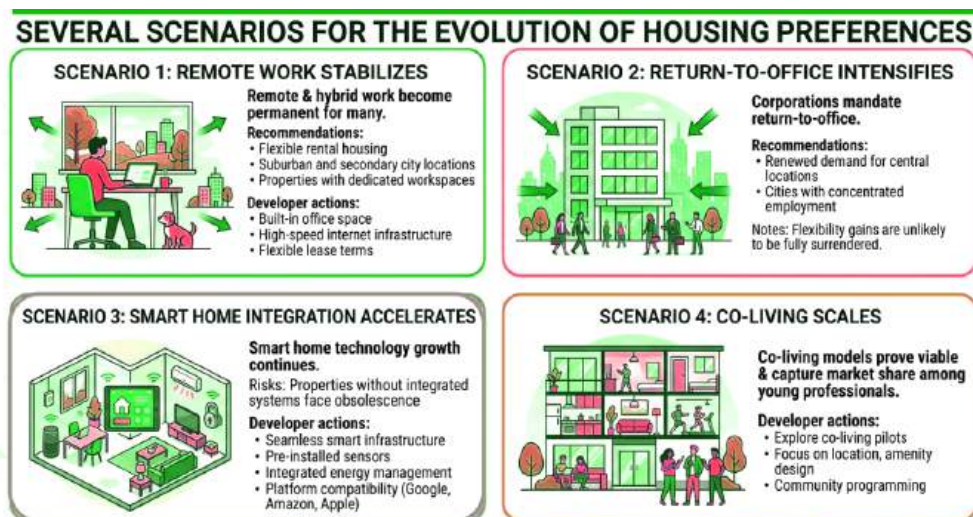


Figure 3: Scenario#1-4 for the housing preferences.

Scenario# 3: Smart home integration accelerates. If smart home technology continues its projected growth trajectory, properties without integrated systems will face obsolescence. Developers should plan for seamless smart infrastructure, including pre-installed sensors, integrated energy management, and compatibility with major platforms (Google, Amazon, Apple).

Scenario#4: Co-living scales. If co-living models prove economically viable and socially sustainable, they could capture significant market share among young urban professionals.

Developers should explore co-living pilots, focusing on location, amenity design, and community programming.

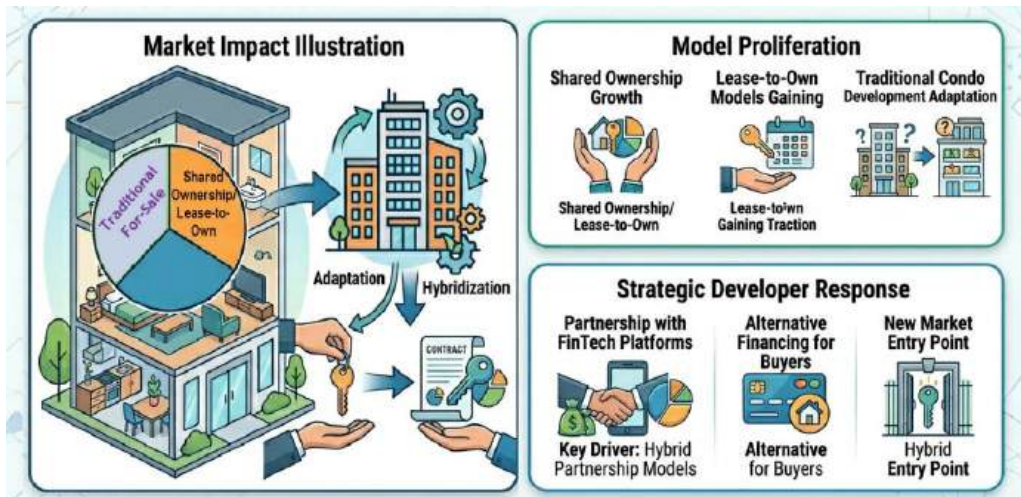


Figure 4: Scenario#5 Hybrid tenure models proliferate.

Scenario #5: Hybrid tenure models proliferate (Figure 4). If shared ownership and lease-to-own models gain traction, traditional for-sale condominium development may need to adapt. Partnership with financial technology platforms offering alternative financing could be a strategic response.

7.2 Gig Economy Affecting Real Estate Trends

The gig economy profoundly alters real estate by favoring highly flexible, short-term lease options over stable, long-term housing commitments. This structural shift expands niche investment channels but simultaneously threatens local affordability and overall market stability. Figure 5 shows the evolution of real estate due to many factors relevant to the gig economy (Urbn, 2024)

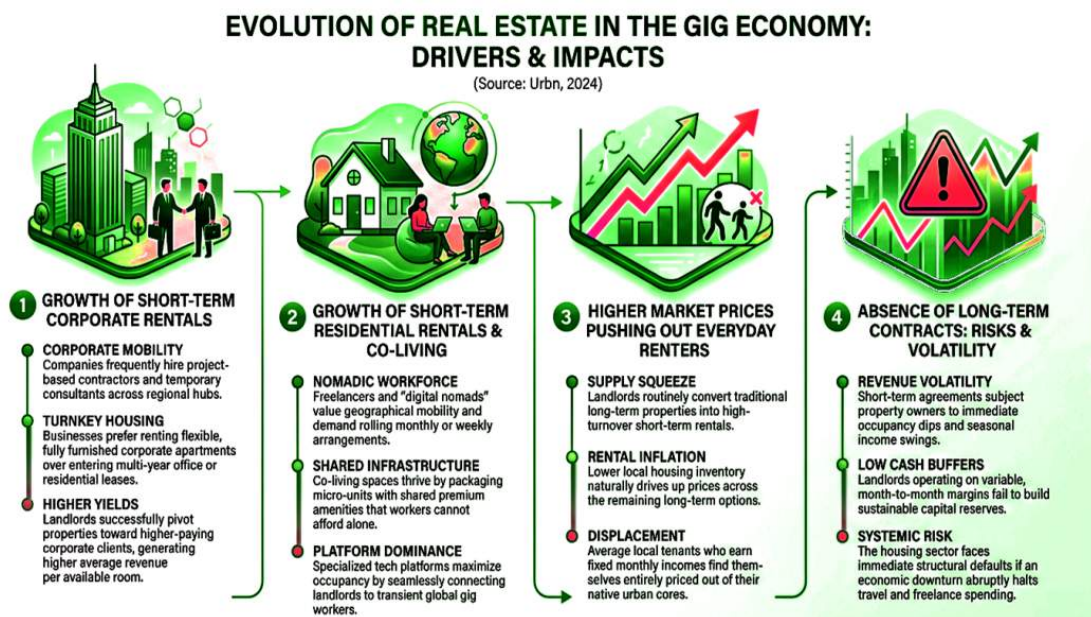


Figure 5: Gig economy affecting real estate trends. (concept based on Urbn (2024)).

8 Framework for Changing Housing Preferences Influenced by the Gig Economy and Smart Living Technology

This study can develop a framework for changing housing preferences influenced by the gig economy and smart living technology. Figure 6 shows a complete framework of housing preferences for flexible connected workforces.

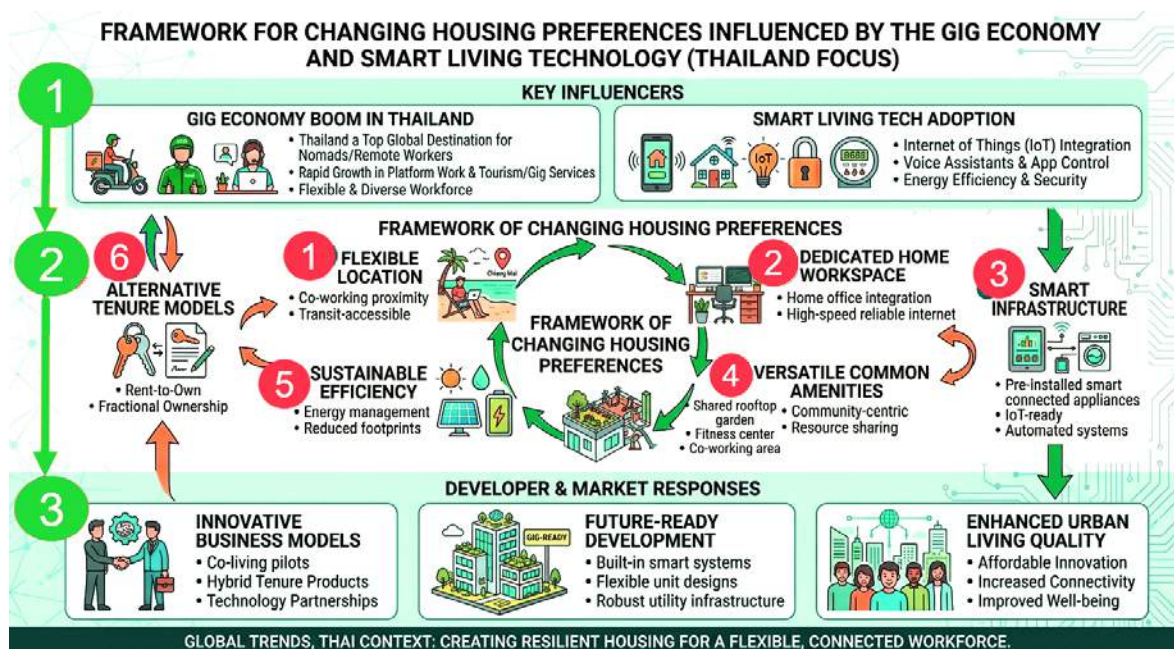


Figure 6: A framework of changing housing preferences influenced by the gig economy & smart living technology.

9 Conclusions

Remote work has fundamentally decoupled housing location from employment geography. The 25% of US workers in remote or hybrid arrangements (Beem, 2025) and the extended stays of Bangkok remote workers (TAA, 2026) demonstrate that this is not a temporary pandemic-era adjustment but a structural shift. Workers can now prioritize lifestyle, affordability, and amenities over commute proximity.

Monthly and mid-term rentals are the fastest-growing segment of the rental market. The 105% year-over-year increase in tenant inquiries on Furnished Finder (PriceLabs, 2025) and the 36-day booking window indicate that tenants plan further ahead and value stability within flexibility. Smaller units (studios and one-bedrooms) dominate demand, reflecting the preference for efficient, well-designed spaces (PriceLabs, 2025).

The Thailand smart home market is poised for dramatic growth, with a projected CAGR of 28.6% from 2025 to 2030, reaching USD 6.11 billion. Climate comfort management and urban time constraints—not technophilia—are the primary adoption drivers, suggesting that smart technology meets genuine needs in Thailand’s tropical urban environment.

Based on the structural shift toward the gig economy and rapid smart home integration, the traditional real estate landscape in Thailand (particularly in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, and Phuket) has

officially transformed. This study looks at how the gig economy and smart home integration are reshaping housing preferences for developers, investors, and residents, including:

- **The Rise of a "Generation of Renters" and Hybrid Tenure**

High domestic household debt, coupled with the inherently variable income streams of gig workers and digital nomads, has deeply disrupted the traditional "build-to-sell" model.

- *The Shift:* Over 65% of younger demographics (Gen Z and Millennials) are prioritizing flexibility over rigid 30-year mortgages.

Real estate liquidity is relying heavily on alternative housing structures. To survive, developers must pivot from purely selling condominiums to offering *hybrid tenure products*—such as rent-to-own, fractional equity, and fractional luxury villa ownership. Sena Development's LivNext and RentNext programs exemplify the shift toward rental-led models and more flexible leasing terms. Other developers are following suit, and this adaptation could reshape residential strategies if restrictive lending conditions persist.

Thailand's "Generation Rent" reflects a durable shift in preferences among young adults, driven by affordability barriers (mortgage rejection rates exceeding 40%), household debt (80% of salaried workers carrying debt), and a genuine preference for flexibility and mobility. However, renting is often viewed as transitional, with 57% of renters planning to buy within two years.

- **Infrastructure Over Location: The "Gig-Ready" Asset**

Proximity to physical downtown corporate offices is no longer the sole driver of premium property value. Instead, digital and utility infrastructure dictate demand.

- *The Shift:* Gig workers require flawless, uninterrupted digital environments.

A property's value is now fundamentally tied to its data readiness. For digital nomads in Thailand, a location is only as viable as its power stability, high-speed fiber-optic routing, and built-in remote workspaces.

- **Smart Living as a Shield Against Property Obsolescence**

Smart home technology has evolved from a luxury marketing gimmick into a standard expectation for urban apartments and resort villas, not premium options. Integrate smart home features as

- *The Shift:* Tech-savvy gig workers manage their entire lives via applications, driving the demand for properties that optimize automated energy efficiency, remote security, and device interconnectedness (IoT).

Properties built without pre-installed smart ecosystems face rapid, systemic obsolescence. Future-ready developments must feature seamless integration with major global tech ecosystems right out of the box.

- **Decentralization and the "Lifestyle Investment" Boom**

Because the gig economy uncouples work from a physical desk, Thailand's geographic demand has fundamentally decentralized away from traditional CBDs.

- *The Shift*: Locations like Chiang Mai, Phuket, and Koh Samui have transformed from seasonal holiday destinations into primary residential choices for expatriates and domestic freelancers.

Real estate investment has shifted toward "lifestyle communities." Demand is surging for low-rise, eco-conscious developments situated within walking distance of wellness hubs, cafes, and co-working spaces rather than high-density urban office corridors.

The era where a "rising tide lifts all boats" in Thai real estate is over. Success now belongs exclusively to developers who recognize that housing is no longer just a static product; *it is a service*. Creating resilient, highly connected, and financially flexible spaces is the only blueprint for capturing market share in a gig-driven economy.

10 Availability of Data and Materials

All information is included in this article.

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