

00;00;03;26 - 00;00;24;18

HOST

Welcome to the People Property Place podcast with me your host, Matthew Watts, founder and managing director of Rockbourne. This is a podcast where I share the stories, views, opinions and career journeys of the movers and shakers, innovators and leaders in the real estate industry.

00;00;24;20 - 00;01;00;07

HOST

Welcome to the People Property Place podcast. Today I'm joined by Inger Ahaneku, Senior Vice President and Head of ESG at MARK. MARK, formerly Meyer Bergman, is a multi-platform investment manager which specializes in strategies that run parallel to that closed ended value add funds as a vertically integrated real estate investment managed business. They have assets across multiple geographies and sectors, including last mile logistics, mixed use retail, offices and residential at Mark.

00;01;00;08 - 00;01;27;10

HOST

Inger is responsible for driving ESG initiatives across the MARK corporate and investment platforms. Prior to joining MARK, Engel worked at Pulsar Development Management, where she developed their ESG platform, including targets and objectives and the submission of the B Corp certification. And prior to this, she worked for Tishman Spa in London as EU Head of Sustainability and EU Head of Procurement.

00;01;27;16 - 00;01;29;12

HOST

Inger welcome to the podcast.

00;01;29;14 - 00;01;30;23

GUEST

Thank you so much for having me.

00;01;30;24 - 00;01;34;27

HOST

Not at all. Well, I think we can have a lot of fun with this. I certainly feel like that.

00;01;35;00 - 00;01;36;13

GUEST

I hope so.

00;01;36;16 - 00;01;56;24

HOST

I know, and I'm really interested to find out a little bit more about your role at MARK. Unpacking ESG, what it means, how we can apply it to real estate and the different assets and geographies that no doubt your role covers. But before we get on to that, as you know, a place I always like to start is how, how and why did you get into real estate.

00;01;56;26 - 00;02;21;18

GUEST

It's a really interesting question, a long winded one and not a direct pathway as, as some of your previous participants possibly have. But it's an eclectic mix and it's been great to hear, you know, differing stories. I literally was raised in the middle of central Queensland, Australia, many, many moons ago, decided, I didn't really know what I wanted to do, obviously.

00;02;21;18 - 00;02;41;13

GUEST

But, you know, being a bit of a country bumpkin, I thought, you know, the world is my oyster. Who knows? Got into a university and wanting to do politics and Southeast Asian studies and a bit of an eclectic mix,

and ended up, working for the Northern Territory government for a stint, and then also, for a member of the federal government.

00;02;41;13 - 00;03;10;18

GUEST

So my background in Australia is, political based, but my father and brother, both work in construction and have for a number of years. And so I've already, you know, kind of understood a lot of the, the challenges of actually doing construction in a, in a regional setting, which is, you know, procurement challenges, temperature challenges, you know, accessing goods from a very limited supply chain.

00;03;10;20 - 00;03;34;19

GUEST

I came over here to start afresh. It must be 21 years ago now. And, I started at the very bottom of my career again, working for Minerva, who were a development company at that point. And, there was a real interesting, eclectic group of people that really gave me a broad experience of what development and property was all about in London.

00;03;34;19 - 00;03;59;17

GUEST

And, for that, I kind of feel that that gave me the real, you know, lust to learn and really wanted to get into, you know, further developing my career. So it started out literally just being in the kind of administrative side of life. And then, you know, project management, getting exposure to all kind of different, you know, aspects of it.

00;03;59;19 - 00;04;31;06

GUEST

Right through, asset management, you know, development, the project management spectrum, PR marketing, all of that wonderful stuff. It really did expose me to a fantastic amount of high end London real estate and had the Walbrook some sort of scheme Lancaster Gate, real eclectic, high end, you know, A1 offices, high end residential, fantastic way to kind of start and cut your teeth, as it were.

00;04;31;08 - 00;04;37;01

HOST

Can you just paint a picture of what it was like growing up, where you where you grew up because it's so far away from London?

00;04;37;02 - 00;05;09;05

GUEST

It is. It is, it's a very unusual upbringing. So, I was basically on a sheep station, and, my mother was my teacher. But we were 2.5 hours from any kind of major, services, shall I say. So I was, schooled school of the ER, and we had, the flying doctor service. So my mother used to say, you know, unless you're dead, we don't go.

00;05;09;07 - 00;05;26;20

GUEST

We don't call them because, you know, it's just a long way out for, for people to come. And you know, postal services, medical services, whatever. You really had to just graft on your own and make the best of what you had. And unless you were, as my mother put it, near death.

00;05;26;23 - 00;05;26;27

HOST

Along.

00;05;27;04 - 00;05;28;28

GUEST

With it, you just got on with it. Exactly.

00;05;28;28 - 00;05;30;14

HOST

It's a really, really remote.

00;05;30;19 - 00;06;01;00

GUEST

Very remote. Yeah, very community orientated. Absolutely. I think our you know, our closest neighbors were still, you know, a schlep away. There were now, from homestead to homestead. It was a, a vast, you know, quite arid, you know, landscape. But it was a very close knit community. We used to have these tennis days, which were extraordinary on these really very basic, they had tried to compact the Earth, shall we say.

00;06;01;00 - 00;06;13;07

GUEST

It wasn't quite your clay court, you know, experience, but, you know, it brought everyone together. At least I'd say, you know, a couple of times a year, we'd have these big events. It was absolutely fantastic.

00;06;13;09 - 00;06;16;08

HOST

You would fly in on that little Cessna and, quad bikes.

00;06;16;08 - 00;06;42;11

GUEST

None of them were quite. You know, these were sheep farmers in central Queensland. We didn't have that, kind of wealth. But, you know, I mean, people would come together. We had several cases where we had people from the town come in, you know, buy a property, have no understanding of how to run it, and, and the dangers that come with running, you know, in a remote location which has our conditions, you know, droughts, whatnot.

00;06;42;14 - 00;06;53;08

GUEST

Several occasions we had to do manhunts together as a community because people had got lost wandering into the wilderness. And, you know, if you don't know how to.

00;06;53;08 - 00;06;55;12

HOST

Survive and your temperature.

00;06;55;13 - 00;07;25;24

GUEST

Yeah, you're in trouble. Yeah, absolutely. So it was a very wonderful childhood, very unique. But I think it does put you in good stead to really be able to manage your self and manage expectations about life. You know, not everything's there, you know, and and it kind of helps me explain a little bit about, you know, when I'm talking about ESG and resources now in this, you know, modern context, we've got limited supplies of stuff left.

00;07;25;24 - 00;07;49;05

GUEST

We can't just merrily keep using it to the degree we are. So I think it's, it's given me appreciation for climate. It's giving me appreciation for resources. It's given me appreciation for people. And I came out of that experience, I think, flown the nest completely and, you know, quite a way away. Quite. But I just couldn't wait to see the world.

00;07;49;05 - 00;07;58;01

GUEST

You know, it's great being part of that very close knit community. But it's also, you know, so much to see in the world. And I just couldn't wait to go and see it.

00;07;58;03 - 00;07;59;12

HOST

You went to university, right?

00;07;59;14 - 00;08;28;09

GUEST

I did, I went to Charles Darwin in, in Darwin. Nice name. Was a Northern Territory University then, but, I dropped out. I didn't complete my course. I was on track to do, political studies, Southeast Asian language. And I kind of got three quarters of the way through that. And I was like, I loved learning, but it was challenging to see where that was going to lead.

00;08;28;09 - 00;08;56;17

GUEST

And then, behold, serendipity. We had a election coming up, Northern Territory, and, and I was kind of part of the crew that's, you know, started this youth university youth movement. And I was approached by a political party and said, hey, would you like to come and do a little stint with us, obviously free of charge, because that's how these things work.

00;08;56;20 - 00;09;20;25

GUEST

To help campaign and, I did, and I haven't looked back. I mean, I did fully intend to go back and finish my degree, but, yeah, three quarters of the way through and I pulled the plug, but it was absolutely fantastic experience. I learned an incredible amount. I learned what I wanted to do and what I didn't want to do.

00;09;20;25 - 00;09;38;00

GUEST

And, you know, ethically, politics can pull you in a lot of different places. And I think as a young woman, I felt it was really hard to have a positive effect and felt that there were other ways I could probably do it better. So you have more impact.

00;09;38;04 - 00;09;39;22

HOST

So you got a one way ticket to London?

00;09;39;24 - 00;09;42;03

GUEST

I did. Oh that's terrible.

00;09;42;05 - 00;09;44;10

HOST

How did I get on with your parents?

00;09;44;13 - 00;10;08;22

GUEST

Do you know what I think? My mother thought it would be a short stint and I'd be back, and I fully intended on doing a little, you know, European to, see the world, you know, have have a, period away from the kind of, the sticks, as it were. But it was it was an interesting jump from a very small pond to a very big pond.

00;10;08;22 - 00;10;25;06

GUEST

And I absolutely loved it. I absolutely loved it. And I wanted to see if I could prove myself in a, in a much bigger context, you know, can I survive this is this, you know, can I adapt to my surroundings?

00;10;25;08 - 00;10;33;19

HOST

How did you find that? Did you find that challenging just because of the cultural changes?

00;10;33;21 - 00;10;39;17

GUEST

I mean, listen, this is an English speaking, you know, country, so it wasn't too hard, right? But it was.

00;10;39;19 - 00;10;42;14

HOST

In to be able to relate to people. Right? And have shared experience.

00;10;42;14 - 00;11;19;17

GUEST

And. Yeah, I mean, I have always felt, that, you know, you should be able to speak to the people at either ends of the spectrum, you know, the most, you know, I think the most valuable asset any person can have is that ability to cross culture conversation. Right? Whether whether it's a cultural, a religious, an age, a, you know, a social class, everyone has something to offer, everyone has an opinion to give and should be valued.

00;11;19;17 - 00;11;37;11

GUEST

And I, I feel that hopefully I speak to, you know, the security team and the receptionists the same. I would speak to, you know, my CEO, investors, you know, so if you can get on with the spectrum of people, I think, you know, you're three quarters of the way there.

00;11;37;14 - 00;11;38;18

HOST

So you landed in London.

00;11;38;25 - 00;11;39;09

GUEST

00;11;39;12 - 00;11;42;07

HOST

And you joined Minerva says.

00;11;42;09 - 00;11;48;05

GUEST

Yes. There was a short stint before that, but, yes, Minerva is my my first major.

00;11;48;07 - 00;11;50;25

HOST

Property role. But you said you're doing well. Admin and.

00;11;51;02 - 00;12;25;06

GUEST

Admin. I was doing admin. I did a stint at Woolworths before Woolworths became no more in the pic mix has disappeared into the ether. Yes, I did work for the the property department of Woolworths. Just actually not too long before they, they dissipated unfortunately. And that was fantastic. I got, exposure to doing, you know, fitout, which we were undertaking at that time, you know, moving people around, fitting

out half the building, moving the rest of the other half back in.

00;12;25;06 - 00;12;54;18

GUEST

It was, you know, nice little logistics challenge, but, yeah, that was that was a, a brief stint. Minerva was my first large, tenure, which was eight years in total. And that was absolutely fantastic. And I had that opportunity, very graciously, from two gentlemen who I still keep in contact with. And they are possibly the most brilliant of men when it comes to property development.

00;12;54;18 - 00;13;22;13

GUEST

I have learned so much from them, and the opportunity that they gave me that they saw in me, that I was capable of more than just arranging a few meetings, was absolutely life changing and brilliant. I mean, if I hadn't have worked it out in property, I probably would have ended up in something else. But they saw that I was keen, eager and, you know, wanted to crack on and give it a shot.

00;13;22;15 - 00;13;26;10

GUEST

So that I was very fortunate, very fortunate life I've had.

00;13;26;12 - 00;13;35;01

HOST

And so in terms of real estate context, you said your, your, your brother and your dad were in construction. Yeah. That was your exposure, I guess, to to real.

00;13;35;01 - 00;13;58;07

GUEST

Estate and the ultimate challenges of it, like in the extreme right, in a rural environment, you don't have a wonderfully accessible supply chain, you don't have, wonderful conditions. You know, my brother was working for many, many years in, you know, absolutely searing heat. You know, and I'm still boggled to this day how he how he managed to keep that going.

00;13;58;07 - 00;14;16;29

GUEST

It's a very challenging physical environment to to be producing, you know, estate. It's not we have our own constraints here, but I always think physically it's a lot more challenging when it's, you know, in extreme weather that be cold or hot environments. Amazing.

00;14;17;06 - 00;14;32;14

HOST

So you, you had these two gentlemen that kind of guided you, took you under there? Yeah. When was that your opportunity to kind of work out? Like what? What does really they actually mean as an industry? What does it look like? What am I various different, different routes because you start off in development and project manager.

00;14;32;19 - 00;14;57;04

GUEST

Absolutely correct. Yeah. But the exposure of actually and I think this is one of the things that we really undervalue real estate or, you know, is such a huge area as a sector in terms of the plethora of opportunities that there are for people. And that's everything from, you know, property management, facilities management all the way up, you know, to investment management.

00;14;57;07 - 00;15;23;17

GUEST

A lot of our, experiences tend to, if we're in the large institutions, tend to be siloed into certain categories,

and you don't get a lot of cross, you know, experience or cross exposure to different, I think that's changing. Some of the big, institutions are saying that actually, it's great to give people a bit of work experience in each of that, especially as they're coming up through their career.

00;15;23;19 - 00;15;52;20

GUEST

But I found it fascinating. The different intersects within real estate, and I just loved it. I thought, this is, you know, real estate as a, as a, as an investment class is just so compelling. You know, it's and it's changing. It's ever evolving. And, you know, you've got all types of people that come together to do all kinds of different functions within that, that space.

00;15;52;20 - 00;16;43;21

GUEST

But it comes together either well or not so well, depending on the people. The same people that occupy real estate or the estate itself. Right? We want our spaces to be good and functional for the people who are in it. And it's that that people journey genuinely. I love I love the kind of cross-section I've had some amazing experiences with, some really talented, consultants on the design front who just really can envisage take, take your, your aspiration and really deliver it into something amazing and very special and right down, you know, through that experience, I really understood what it meant to build a building and to create a space that was coherent, efficient,

00;16;43;23 - 00;17;09;20

GUEST

esthetically pleasing, you know, to be able to make the space work in flexible conditions, right? Not just building it for one specific remit, but actually if we were to, I don't know, look at different floor heights. If it was possible, what would that then expose the building to in future uses. And this is something actually that's come full circle into sustainability is genuinely trying to make those spaces future proofed.

00;17;09;22 - 00;17;26;09

GUEST

Yeah. But also they have to be compelling for humans, right? We have to enjoy and get what we need out of that space. And there's a whole raft of wonderful people who bring that together. And that is just such an exciting part, you.

00;17;26;09 - 00;17;27;06

HOST

Know, tangible.

00;17;27;10 - 00;17;28;15

GUEST

Oh, absolutely.

00;17;28;20 - 00;17;29;19

HOST

Market.

00;17;29;21 - 00;17;50;15

GUEST

It's a it's a proud moment to say you've been a part of something, a small part of it. And I genuinely think, as you know, as developers, you you do have to see that, you know, vision clearly and be able to deliver it. But it takes an entire team to do that with you. And it that's the exciting bit.

00;17;50;15 - 00;17;54;27

GUEST

That's the the thing that gets me up in the morning. I love it, love it.

00;17;55;04 - 00;17;58;12

HOST

So your your role evolved right.

00;17;58;14 - 00;17;59;09

GUEST

Twists and turns.

00;17;59;09 - 00;18;07;20

HOST

Twist and turn. But it was kind of development and project management driven. That was the kind of the niche within this whole landscape of real estate.

00;18;07;20 - 00;18;27;23

GUEST

Yeah. And you kind of focused on. Absolutely. And I got the opportunity. One of the gentleman I was talking about, at Minerva, very kindly gave me, an opportunity to really grow and develop. And that turned into, you know, even more exciting with, with Tishman was being able to work on there. And they're still there today.

00;18;27;25 - 00;18;54;26

GUEST

They HQ, in, Verde Victoria. And it was just such an absolutely brilliant project to be part of. It was a great team behind that. You know, process. We had, some amazing engaged investors on that. And the whole story from start to finish. I mean, obviously this, you know, hurdles, challenges, all the rest of it, as you would expect.

00;18;54;28 - 00;19;23;19

GUEST

But it was an absolute delight to to deliver that with the team and with my director at the time and the plethora of consultants and actually contractors and subcontractors who brought that together. It was a challenging project. It was absolutely brilliant, though, start to finish and, I'll give it a small shout out to Spicer. They did the first, Embodied Carbon survey on that building, which was well before time.

00;19;23;19 - 00;19;47;10

GUEST

That was 20 2014, 2015, which I think is interesting because we're still having challenges and we're still talking about embodied carbon. And you know, how and when you do that as a as an exercise within an asset, particularly as most of the assets we have now are here and we're not going to be doing an awful lot of new build.

00;19;47;12 - 00;20;17;29

GUEST

It is it's really interesting. And the longer you're in the world of real estate, I think in, in London, the more you realize, how intersectional these, these kind of movements or changes evolve. And they've always been fundamentally they're it's just how how are we taking it to the next step? You know, we're starting to think about buildings differently now from the outset rather than just retrospectively.

00;20;18;01 - 00;20;24;27

GUEST

Yeah. We'll build it now. Come. It's a lot more involved, considered absolutely absolute.

00;20;24;28 - 00;20;33;07

HOST



And integral right from the start. So you moved from a developer to Tishman, which is a capital allocator or a private equity business.

00;20;33;09 - 00;20;36;11

GUEST

Yes. And also development that I mean they all.

00;20;36;12 - 00;20;36;29

HOST

Integrate.

00;20;36;29 - 00;21;15;10

GUEST

Still. Yes. Fully integrated platform. I moved a little bit halfway through my tenure there and that again was another seven years. I moved away a little bit halfway through that towards focusing more on sustainability and procurement, which actually was really interesting because moving those two kind of roles together, I found really compelling, you know, actually, from a delivery point of view, because you were able to really make change within the procurement side of life, enabling ESG metrics within that.

00;21;15;10 - 00;21;40;03

GUEST

And, you know, I think a lot of our assumptions about the supply chain and, you know, people have different opinions on this. But I think if you can help your supply chain early on, understand what it is you're trying to achieve and how to go about it and have some flexibility with that ambition so that they can, you know, create and curate that project or that product around you.

00;21;40;03 - 00;22;07;05

GUEST

You have so much more value to be gleaned out of that experience. And again, it comes down to people and stakeholder management, dare I say, but I found that was a really interesting mix of roles for me. And that was yeah, moving away from just being project faced to more of the sustainability investor facing procurement was also, you know, quite an interesting trick.

00;22;07;08 - 00;22;12;17

HOST

Did you think you would have been able to make that move without that project management and development delivery experience?

00;22;12;19 - 00;22;37;28

GUEST

I think it helped immeasurably. I think it definitely gave me the standing to really understand the assets from the ground up, right, to really know what it takes to, you know, to have those conversations, you know, with supply chain, I was having conversations with subcontractors, with contractors, with the design team, really trying to bring that experience together and use it well.

00;22;37;28 - 00;22;55;17

GUEST

So it was just bringing that real estate understanding from a from a, you know, base level and applying it to something different. And ESG actually wasn't a huge jump. I mean, the first people to really consider ESG in any.

00;22;55;20 - 00;22;56;17

HOST

00;22;56;19 - 00;23;17;03

GUEST

Project are the developers and the project managers. You have to start embedding this early if you're going to meet certain criteria. They were the you know, they are the instigators of a lot of the opportunities for innovation, particularly when we're doing refurbishments. Right, which is where most of our next projects are probably coming from.

00;23;17;05 - 00;23;34;16

HOST

If we coast on mine backs, I know there's a lot of investor pressure in terms of assets that have got certain credentials, and there's also a lot of occupier pressure as well. Yeah. To, occupy these buildings ten years ago, whatever we're talking. You said there was guidelines and there was, you know, they're the instigators of that change.

00;23;34;19 - 00;23;37;03

HOST

Who really was driving it back then?

00;23;37;10 - 00;24;06;23

GUEST

Well, I think there was ambitions. If it if it made sense from a, from a product delivery side and it wasn't a massive CapEx uplift. Right. You would have a far more compelling case. And most people go, yeah, okay. That makes sense. Where I think it's changed and where I think it needed to always come from is the investor, you know, the capital markets really drive change, true change right down to the ground.

00;24;06;25 - 00;24;43;18

GUEST

If you have investors saying we're only going to purchase assets that are net zero, right. That is a compelling reason for people to go right. Okay. Design day one. It's net zero. And then we move accordingly. I think from the development project management side, we were always trying to find ways. And this is back to value adding. And you know the good old SHS making sure you're actually getting value for your money a lot of sustainability which people haven't really appreciated, is about using resources efficiently.

00;24;43;20 - 00;25;16;21

GUEST

Do you think that you're going to pay more because you've asked, I, I don't know, garbage? Refuge, company to, to segregate your waste. Do you really think you're going to be paying more? Actually, no. You actually save money by doing that. You know, a lot of jurisdictions, not every jurisdiction, obviously, but in most jurisdictions, particularly in London, that actually saves you cost, particularly if you say to the, you know, contractor, I want you to segregate this, you know, it's an ESG remit, but it's also a cost saving, like genuinely.

00;25;16;28 - 00;25;19;15

HOST

The net benefit from just doing the right thing.

00;25;19;16 - 00;25;43;21

GUEST

The right thing can often be actually quite cost effective. And that goes to, you know, we've gone full circle with this now, and we've gone to this circular economy, which is about reusing the building fabric or MEP where we possibly can. Why on earth would you go and get brand spanking new anything unless there was a health reason or an efficiency reason?

00;25;43;28 - 00;25;57;22

GUEST

You know, there's quite a lot of kit in our buildings that are perfectly reusable, and we should be doing that and it's cost effective. Why wouldn't we? And actually, in most cases you can save time on programs. So win win win.

00;25;57;24 - 00;26;07;27

HOST

So did you identify this this this changing or this opportunity in and go, I want to lead it. And, you know, combine that ESG and sustainability aspect with a procurement.

00;26;07;27 - 00;26;08;21

GUEST

I wish I was.

00;26;08;21 - 00;26;25;20

HOST

In a case of, this is this is a bit of a pain. This is this is quite a lot of admin. You know, we know it's good business. You know, we should be doing it. But actually, the time it takes to do it, who can we. Yeah. We assign. Yeah. Take on this monkey. Yeah. And be responsible.

00;26;25;23 - 00;26;48;03

GUEST

For delivering it. I was going to say I would love to say I was that fortuitous in seeing this, but I mean, you know, I think probably from my upbringing and actually resource, management actually from my days on the farm, genuinely, you know, you couldn't waste water. It was not a good idea to waste a very limited resource.

00;26;48;03 - 00;27;18;29

GUEST

Right. And naturally, that made complete sense to me. You can you know, I was speaking to people, you know, ten years ago about ESG, and you were having to explain why it was a good idea. I don't think you have to do that anymore. I don't think people genuinely see the benefits of, you know, reusing and, and, and, and limiting what they don't need in terms of resources.

00;27;19;05 - 00;27;52;07

GUEST

I fell into this completely. And it was a fortuitous move, that Tishman had a need for ESG reporting, but actually goes far more than, you know, ESG reporting to the starting block. Right. But there's actually a whole lot of initiatives. And, you know, policies and, you know, development directionally was heading in that way. You could see that the tenants were going to have to do this for their own requirements, their own reporting requirements.

00;27;52;09 - 00;28;13;06

GUEST

You could see that the, the resources and sometimes, you know, I think Covid actually gave us a great insight into limited supply chain and what that actually means. And gosh, maybe we should think about, do we really need this particular thing from this particular jurisdiction? But I think with all of it, it came back down to timing and opportunity.

00;28;13;06 - 00;28;43;18

GUEST

And as most of us in our careers just have the chance to develop and use our previous skill sets in a different way, in a, in a more, specific way that the companies need at that point. And I think you just have to be open to the fact that, you know, we all evolve. Change is going to happen, and be open to the opportunity, see it as an opportunity rather than, oh, gosh, I've just been offloaded.

00;28;43;18 - 00;29;06;13

GUEST

This. Yeah, nobody else wants to do it. And, you know, you seem a likely suspect. Why? You seem willing. Yeah. You're very chatty today. Why don't we give this to you? No, but I, I genuinely do think every chance you get to learn a different aspect within, you know, whatever sector you're in. But in real estate, there's just a plethora of things to learn.

00;29;06;13 - 00;29;40;12

GUEST

And actually, one of one of the the kind of evolutions for all of this is that eventually we're all intersecting, right? And so you bring your different skill sets, your, your specialisms. But actually I think we're becoming there's need to become more generalist with understanding of how things work from cradle to grave, genuinely. Because you I think you become acutely aware value and how to add it or to be wary of certain going down a certain road because you've had that eclectic.

00;29;40;14 - 00;29;50;06

HOST

Is that because you've got that development background? Is it easier to look at it or identify it because you've you can look at it from, I think, development in a lifestyle perspective. Yeah, I.

00;29;50;08 - 00;30;25;05

GUEST

I think development gives you a really broad skill set in understanding, you know, taking a site and being given a remit on a design or coming up with it and delivering it to a market at a point in time is a very intricate and very challenging mix of, you know, I've kind of opportunities and also, you know, risks that come with it.

00;30;25;05 - 00;31;06;10

GUEST

Right. And it's navigating that and lo and behold, ESG is opportunity and risk. It is exactly the same. It's just looking at your asset with a I don't want to make this delineation, but it's there. It's a there are financial risks and opportunities. There are non-financial risks and opportunities. And I think the bleeding of those two considerations is really coming to the fore with ESG, because evidence is suggesting that we're moving towards a very real risk situation with some buildings that just won't be able to function in ten, 20, 30 years time because the MVP is outdated or because nobody wants to be in it because it's inefficient.

00;31;06;10 - 00;31;08;16

GUEST

We're going to be paying through the nose for our energy.

00;31;08;20 - 00;31;10;05

HOST

Or banks wouldn't lend against it.

00;31;10;12 - 00;31;39;21

GUEST

Quite. And, and, and investors are driving that change. They are, you know, the, the most pivotal direction is at the same time as the tenants were taking space. I think it's it's really coming together now. I would love and be quite happy, as I'm sure some tenants are, to be in a more efficient building with more efficient systems and perhaps willing to pay a bit more for that.

00;31;39;24 - 00;31;43;29

GUEST

It would be simple. It's going to hit my reporting. Bottom line, it's going to hit my financial bottom line.

00;31;44;03 - 00;32;20;02

HOST

Some quick one from me. If you haven't already subscribed or follow this show on the podcast or app where you listen or watch, please do. It takes 10s and helps tremendously. I've got really big plans for the People Property Plays podcast, and that one small action really, really helps grow the show and the present and enables us to keep doing what we're doing.

00;32;20;03 - 00;32;38;07

HOST

So if you haven't already, please follow or like on the platform you watch or listen to. Thanks so much. You moved after seven and a half years or so from Tishman to Polestar. Can you just tell me about that transition and how and why?

00;32;38;12 - 00;33;08;27

GUEST

That was a big that was a big shift. That was a big shift. I did mention it to people at the time, and there was a bit of shock and horror like, you came for this very large institution, you know, hey, HR department, i.t department, all these, you know, global institutional, you know, company to this very small, you know, UK based company.

00;33;08;27 - 00;33;35;22

GUEST

And it was the best decision, it was exposing me to areas I had not been in to in detail. It was really fantastic to have that exposure and to have that, you know, there was no safety net, right? There's no you are in it together with a very limited number of people, and you are really providing that front end service.

00;33;35;22 - 00;34;17;01

GUEST

You're instigating. And I you know, I will forever be grateful, to Brett for the opportunity. Fantastic exposure, fantastic company, fantastic gentleman. It unfortunately paralleled with, trussonomics. And, you know, a very challenging, financial, you know, everything changed overnight. And, you know, I think it's it's a shame of that timing because I was, you know, absolutely bought into the opportunity that we could develop things together and, you know, I wish Brett all the best of luck.

00;34;17;01 - 00;34;22;09

GUEST

It is a tough, tough market to do from a standing start to.

00;34;22;09 - 00;34;22;23

HOST

Development.

00;34;22;23 - 00;34;48;03

GUEST

Work. Absolutely. But I think, you know, Brett is an absolute champion and has worked incredibly hard over his career, to develop, you know, from his Stanhope days onwards. And he is a great operator. I really value, you know, the time that it was absolutely fantastic to be right in the detail on absolutely weeks.

00;34;48;03 - 00;34;49;09

HOST

Of of development.

00:34:49;11 - 00:35:10;22

GUEST

Actually, you know, sourcing investor, you know, the capital raising, it was just absolutely fantastic. And I think those opportunities are a rare find these days. You know, it's you. I really did feel it was a big jump from an institution, but actually it was brilliant. Absolutely brilliant. Wouldn't have changed.

00:35:10;22 - 00:35:20;06

HOST

It. See, you were there for just shy of two years or so. And then you moved to Mark. Can you just tell me about how and why and what it is you do about me?

00:35:20;07 - 00:35:55;00

GUEST

Sure. So, yeah, I moved to markets. Just been over 12 months. Now, Mark's a fantastic company. Great pan European exposure. We've had you know, a fundraise for cross Bay two, which is our last mile logistics platform. We have, quite a number of assets which are mixed residential or retail office, again, pan-European. And, you know, we're doing a fantastic job at the moment with our, last mile logistics, which everyone's very excited about.

00:35:55;02 - 00:36:08;17

GUEST

But it's from my perspective, I'm head of ESG. So I am doing corporate initiatives, but I'm also looking at the you know, the fund level, criteria. So on cross by two we are a sft your article eight funds.

00:36:08;22 - 00:36:09;19

HOST

What does that mean?

00:36:09;25 - 00:36:37;09

GUEST

Yes. We have lots of acronyms in ESG. So SFD are is the sustainable financial disclosure regulation which is EU. So anybody who wants to raise capital in the EU or for EU funds has to have an article status. So you're either article six, which I'm going to really simplify very extensively was very extensive piece of legislation.

00:36:37;09 - 00:37:09;03

GUEST

Article six is, you know, you've disclosed as a fund, but you do not take ESG principles into consideration at all. That's article six. Article eight, you take ESG considerations into, your financial and investment, decisions. There is a large, let's say, plethora of options on that. And that can be, you know, you could say your article eight is going to focus on only purchasing EPC buildings of I don't know, C and above, or you're going to hit Bri.

00:37:09;05 - 00:37:35;14

GUEST

Excellent. Only or you're going to make sure or, and or I should say, you normally have a long list or you can it's certain social criteria where you're going to invest a certain amount of a, into a socially, you know, mobile, opportunity, which is going to be linked to the fund. Then you've got article nine, which is if I could measure this, I'd call it, no green, light green.

00:37:35;14 - 00:37:51;17

GUEST

And dark green. The light green, meaning that article eight pool, does consider, sustainability criteria, but then your article nine really is your more impact fund level, criteria.

00;37;51;17 - 00;37;54;13

HOST

And might an app green evangelist.

00;37;54;13 - 00;38;29;08

GUEST

Well, yes. I mean, I don't think they'd call themselves a market themselves as green evangelists. That could be a new, business line. But they very much take ESG criteria to the heart of the fund. And I always considered that if you were an article nine fund, you were really in the renewable sector. So you were doing, you know, the solar farm or the wind farm or you were into, you know, a very specific social impact piece that is a very, loose.

00;38;29;08 - 00;38;50;19

GUEST

And some of my colleagues out there will be absolutely shrieking at the thought that I've carved it up, so simply as that. But I do think one of the issues with a lot of this, and we've had a huge amount of, regulation come in because it's been so hard to classify funds like, what is green? How green, you know, like on the scale are we like green?

00;38;50;19 - 00;39;13;04

GUEST

Are we medium? We dark. What what does green mean? And it means different things to different people. And so getting some regulation, some clarity and some consistency with standards has really been needed for a long time. And I think the challenge has been trying to synergize what that looks like. And of course, it takes time to feed through.

00;39;13;04 - 00;39;38;17

GUEST

It takes time to resource, it takes time to get it in alignment. But I think we're moving in the right direction. Those investors who are really scoping and saying, unless you're article eight and you have this criteria like, forget it, or it has to be article nine or whatever, it might be, they are having a huge impact on the on the whole, you know, fund management sector and therefore real estate products coming out.

00;39;38;17 - 00;40;02;15

GUEST

But I think the opportunities are there. The value add is there. The challenges come in in how you how you scope and how you advertise it. Without going into the greenwashing, we also have a new thing called greenwashing, where people don't want to talk about what their credentials are because they feel that they might be well, or they might.

00;40;02;18 - 00;40;04;02

HOST

Not be driving them as well as they should be.

00;40;04;02 - 00;40;26;18

GUEST

You know, I think that the green hushing comes from a worry about being accused of greenwashing. Right? So you go to the other end of the spectrum. You say, actually, we're going to say nothing. But there's also, you know, there's a lot of, you know, the the Americans are having a bit of a resurgence of, you know, we we don't want to talk about ESG.

00;40;26;18 - 00;40;33;13

GUEST

We we don't want, this is not a criteria for us. And there's motives and political.

00;40;33;16 - 00;40;33;29

HOST

Of course.

00;40;34;03 - 00;41;09;00

GUEST

Momentum behind all of that. And that's absolutely fine, each to their own. But I do think, you know, we have a a real scientific, you know, factually based issue here in that the world is heating up. We are going to have more climatic events that are going to impact real estate, that are going to impact people. They already are if we choose or we don't choose to assess that risk and then find the opportunity for the value add or, you know, mitigate that risk is a bare minimum.

00;41;09;00 - 00;41;24;06

GUEST

I think, you know, genuinely, there are concerns that we're going to leave ourselves, you know, some decision will leave us, perhaps, you know, in the red and not the black, which is where we all want to be.

00;41;24;08 - 00;41;40;08

HOST

You talked about kind of legislation and needed legislation on the front level. The challenge and I might be really wrong here. So correct me is, yes, you can have it at the fund level, but how does that translate to the granularity at the asset level? And then how does that translate across different asset classes.

00;41;40;08 - 00;41;40;29

GUEST

Absolutely.

00;41;40;29 - 00;41;43;02

HOST

And then different geographies as well.

00;41;43;04 - 00;42;01;00

GUEST

Huge challenge. So I would say, you know, when you have a fund and you're setting up a fund, my golden rule is always ask what people want first, especially in this day and age, because you can get a lot out of, you know, what is it that you would like to see in your in your fund?

00;42;01;02 - 00;42;24;06

GUEST

Your investment pool is doing what what would you like to see? The second thing is to understand that of the fund structure around your ESG credentials can be quite simple. How that goes down into the the asset level is interesting, but it is completely transferable. So for example across B two we've got articulate we are hitting certain criteria on our EPC.

00;42;24;06 - 00;42;42;29

GUEST

Why are we hitting that. Because if regulation changes and it likely will we do not want to have any assets that we can't lease or who have lost value because we need to then go back and do massive CapEx to uplift it. So how do we mitigate it? You go to consider a CapEx plan over a certain period.

00;42;43;01 - 00;43;10;01

GUEST

And, you know, how do we do that at each asset? It is, you know, it's not one size fits all. You have to assess the asset. Where does it sit? It doesn't preclude us from buying, you know, lower than EPC. But as long as we have CapEx in that we can do those upgrades or in a lot of cases, these are if are light



leases, there might be opportunities for the tenants to actually want to upgrade, and we'll help them facilitate that.

00;43;10;01 - 00;43;50;19

GUEST

Maybe it's a joint venture program. Maybe it's the tenant loan. You know, we can have those conversations. But that's, you know, one example at EPC level, we're also looking to make sure that our assets, which, you know, we're building the platform replicating what we did on cross by one, which is a great success. Crosbie two is now, you know, looking at how are we taking these non-institutional products, bringing them onto a platform of institutional standard, what needs to be done that CapEx is in there that is hitting not just EPC, but, you know, regs, any kind of health and safety that hasn't been met by that asset initially.

00;43;50;21 - 00;44;07;20

GUEST

And planning that and just getting it in place. What has to be done first is obviously the regulatory requirements. But what's coming next is when's the next tenant event. What can we do to uplift the spec of the building? You know, all of those considerations which are actually intuitive to what you would do on a business plan or an asset management plan.

00;44;07;20 - 00;44;31;05

GUEST

But we look at it alongside our SFD, our criteria. And part of that is also getting the data, which is lots of fun in, last mile logistics sheds in a pan-European context. But you need to start stakeholder managing, you know, with the tenants and saying, listen, we would love to understand how this building is, you know, is working for you.

00;44;31;05 - 00;44;54;00

GUEST

Is it efficient? Is this something we could help you with? Because of course, the tenant is going to need landlord authorization. And ideally we'd like to see value added to our asset. So how how do we manage that within the business plan. These are all considerations that happen. Yeah. You know based on that legacy assets not necessarily categorized yet.

00;44;54;00 - 00;45;10;11

GUEST

But again you're looking towards your exit. What are we doing to solidify the value as we exit some of these assets, as they're coming up towards the end of the fund life? And they're challenging decisions, right? Because CapEx is not always there at the end of the funds.

00;45;10;14 - 00;45;15;22

HOST

Or, I don't know, maybe the money is five years old. Absolutely. It doesn't make sense to rip it out.

00;45;15;25 - 00;45;39;27

GUEST

Absolutely. Us ex exactly. And we would never advocate doing that if there was life still left in that, in that kit. Right. You have to remember that. Yes. Whilst you've got your operational carbon, which is very important, the embodied carbon, right. The carbon it is cost to put that MEP kit in there. It's not worth ripping it out before the end of its life.

00;45;39;27 - 00;45;55;03

GUEST

But as much as it seems intuitive just to rip out the MEP and do it all, there are some amazing things that you know, all of us as, you know, asset owners can do and can be as simple as a BMS, you know,

commissioning check.

00;45;55;04 - 00;45;56;10

HOST

What's that?

00;45;56;13 - 00;45;58;16

GUEST

So building manage.

00;45;58;18 - 00;46;01;13

HOST

What I'm on a jargon, jargon busting question.

00;46;01;13 - 00;46;31;00

GUEST

Oh, we love a good, acronym and easy to, no BMS, the building management system. So often some of these, you know, simpler pieces of real estate, last mile logistics. They can have very limited, kit in them. You know, it might be one incoming water main, one incoming electric feed, one incoming gas. Simple. The building management system and how that electric, you know, deals with the office component and how it deals with the warehouse.

00;46;31;02 - 00;46;59;08

GUEST

What is it being used for? How is the efficiency being monitored? A BMS upgrade, a very simple piece of, you know, it might be software or might be the whole hardware needs to be upgraded, usually in simpler assets. It is quite, you know, cost effective. But I've seen multiple examples of my, experience in a 20% efficiency within the systems with a BMS upgrade.

00;46;59;08 - 00;47;22;09

GUEST

It's entirely possible it doesn't take a lot of CapEx to get a lot of input. Yeah, absolutely. But I think it depends on the asset class. It depends on the location. It depends on, you know, what you're seeking to do. I would look at, you know, not just I don't want to just get to net zero. Obviously.

00;47;22;15 - 00;47;52;17

GUEST

That's great. And that's where we should move to. But can my CapEx plan allow it, or can I have a conversation with my tenant about looking at their energy consumption, reducing their overall costs? And there's, you know, a potential for a rental uplift that reflects that. Right. Not in every case is that going to be possible. But at the same time, I think the market and the aspiration and where people will, you know, a flight to quality will happen.

00;47;52;19 - 00;48;16;17

GUEST

People want certain buildings in certain locations with a certain functionality and a certain flexibility, and they will be willing to pay for that. I think when it's a quality product that has efficiencies built in and that comes from, you know, the base build side retrofitting, but also understanding your asset and how it's working and how it could better work for both you and the tenant.

00;48;16;17 - 00;48;39;04

GUEST

That doesn't necessarily mean, you know, we will joke in the kind of ESG world that buildings are really efficient until we put people in them. Just on a, on a base consumption level. But it's really important to make sure that the building is doing what it needs to do for the tenant. But also, you know, is it working

efficiently as a, as an overall product.

00:48:39:04 - 00:48:48:08

GUEST

And that's something that I think you can spend very little getting to the bottom of that and really understanding what's going on in the building and adjusting accordingly.

00:48:48:11 - 00:48:54:01

HOST

You know, students on the other day and they said, we need to get rid of this rhetoric around that's an ESG building.

00:48:54:03 - 00:48:59:13

GUEST

No, no, I hate that there is no ESG building right? I think there are.

00:48:59:17 - 00:49:01:11

HOST

There's environmental.

00:49:01:14 - 00:49:02:11

GUEST

Credentials.

00:49:02:12 - 00:49:07:26

HOST

Or credentials associated, but they might lack social or impact or governance aspect to it.

00:49:07:29 - 00:49:34:16

GUEST

Potentially. I think the way to look at this is not to consider an ESG has such a plethora of sub matter to it. It's that people get lost in in the reads. And I think the best way to, to kind of look at your assets is to look at, you know, efficiency. First, I, I'm a big believer, you know, it's great to have green building certifications etc..

00:49:34:18 - 00:50:07:06

GUEST

But I believe the best, determination of a building's efficiency is, is in its, in the backbone, in the BMS, in understanding like what is your CO2 output per meter squared. That's a really important number for a tenant to understand. Actually. How efficient is this building? And you know, how is that building engaging with its tenants as with its actual occupiers?

00:50:07:06 - 00:50:41:24

GUEST

When I say tenants, that's a very old word, right? Customers, clients, people who walk in the door. Exactly. It doesn't. It could be a guest. I think it's important that that engagement piece really enlivens the space, as particularly when you're talking about mixed use and offices and, and residence context, there is a great opportunity for us to create, you know, an ecosystem that works for everyone, that that is interactive, that is a seamless experience coming into the building.

00:50:41:27 - 00:51:08:18

GUEST

And, I'm actually working a little project at the moment, which is about that exact delivery, making the real estate interact with its users, you know, and give useful feedback to the landlord to be able to adapt and to change and to, you know, tweak certain things about the the offering. It's it's really key. There's some

fundamental data sets that come out of buildings these days.

00;51;08;21 - 00;51;18;22

GUEST

And you've got to determine whether or not it's what you want out of it as a tenant and as a landlord, and tweaking it to say.

00;51;18;24 - 00;51;34;03

HOST

Yeah, and then how to report on it. Right. Quite. Because investors might have capital and lots of different funds. And they're sat there thinking, you know, I'm getting 4 or 5 different reports on lots of different things. And we're standardizing one of the key metrics. Yeah, that they need to look for.

00;51;34;03 - 00;51;52;03

GUEST

And investors are very savvy about what they're wanting to produce. You know what they have either they're a net zero targets or they have their own social targets. You know, a lot of these institutional pension funds, you know, they're driven by people like you and I who've got money and pensions, and we want to spend our money ethically.

00;51;52;03 - 00;52;19;17

GUEST

We don't want to be investing in things that aren't, either pushing towards a more sustainable future for our children and grandchildren or, you know, whether or not we're doing that in a just they call it the just transition. This is a bit of an ESG, vibe word, but it's about making sure you take people on that journey because investing money in assets is fantastic, but being able to uplift the community around it is even more important.

00;52;19;20 - 00;52;34;17

GUEST

So I think, there's lots of drivers and investors are very savvy and very focused and very driven on how they would like to see their capital deployed, and it's fantastic. It's been a long time coming.

00;52;34;19 - 00;52;53;16

HOST

Can you just talk to me about the ESG teams? Because it's normally quite a small team on the, on a, on an investor side, but you lean on external consultant as well, right? Yeah. It's not driven primarily because you are a cost to the business. Whereas an external consultant is, is a cost to the investor.

00;52;53;18 - 00;53;00;21

HOST

And so actually you can kind of keep a leaner team. Yeah. You know, you kind of tick the boxes in terms of being able to have someone to sit in front of capital.

00;53;00;24 - 00;53;01;00

GUEST

Yeah.

00;53;01;01 - 00;53;06;24

HOST

You don't want to have to large a team because then that kind of attracts the profit. So I think.

00;53;06;26 - 00;53;35;13

GUEST

It's a it's a question that only each fund manager or investor can answer, depending on what their, what

they're trying to achieve. I'm obviously in at market marketed at 12 months. I need to prove my value, which I hope hopefully I'm doing that. It's important to have in-house expertise. I think that is a really important thing to have, but it's also an evolving market and it is difficult to find the right people.

00:53:35;13 - 00:53:57;20

GUEST

Right? There's a lot of people needing internal ESG consultancy and advice, and that's fantastic. But at the moment, I think our trajectory at the moment needs to keep. I am a team of one, which is very exciting, but I do have a huge amount of, help and support from my, team on the ground, which, you know, they're in the assets every day.

00:53:57;20 - 00:54:31;06

GUEST

I can't be across a pan-European portfolio, so easily, nor would I want the, miles attributed to that book. So ever. But it is really important that we are integrating ESG through the entire business. And my whole aspiration is to actually make my job redundant. If I can get everybody living and breathing our ESG strategy. And it's evolved, which I think naturally happens once you start understanding, oh, actually, this is driven by, you know, this requirement.

00:54:31;06 - 00:54:57;21

GUEST

Or I can actually, you know, impact here. It becomes, you know, part of the business structure. It's not a thing that gets down as a tick box on the side. It's inherently the optic for which you look through and see, you know, your assets and the management of them and the investment of them and the creation of your funds to that level.

00:54:57;23 - 00:55:19;02

GUEST

I think at the moment, you know, it is important to have a representative when you're capital raising. But I also think it's really important that, you know, investors see value for money, right? And having I, I, I couldn't justify a team of ten. Right. That would be excessive. But you know the larger houses do have teams and they are growing.

00:55:19;04 - 00:55:43;15

GUEST

And it is cost effective to a degree. But obviously, you know, things are changing and evolving and people will adapt. I think depending on what the latest regulations coming down the line and, and how it's going to be infused. But I do see, you know, it differing depending on, you know, what the fund is, what the business structure is, and you know where you are on your journey.

00:55:43;17 - 00:55:53;04

GUEST

It doesn't make sense to suddenly like launch a team on my part of the asset managers and acquisitions team. Now, they would not be happy about that.

00:55:53;07 - 00:56:05;09

HOST

So there's an awful lot as a as a one man, one woman team to kind of consider. How does one go about working out what to prioritize, what's important and, and what isn't?

00:56:05;12 - 00:56:32;08

GUEST

Great question. It is it's predominantly a consideration, obviously, for each and every business. Now you can look at it from a business perspective, a fund perspective or an asset perspective. Obviously at Mark, we have to consider everything. So in 2023 we undertook quite an intensive, materiality assessment,

which is really to understand what are the drivers of the business, who are our stakeholders, what are they wanting?

00:56:32;08 - 00:57:02;19

GUEST

How are they reacting to, you know, certain ESG requirements? What are our peers doing? What do our people think? You know, there is the gamut of questions that genuinely, you know, we want to retain talent. How do we do that? You know, our younger, team members have an interest in ESG. Want to know where we're going with our strategy and how we're going to, you know, have a look at this opportunity risk.

00:57:02;21 - 00:57:28;06

GUEST

You know, prism of ESG. And they're very much obviously invested because as a younger person who's considering their own future and where the world's going to be, you know, ESG is very much on the forefront of everybody's mind. My teenagers are forever referencing that, you know, my generation and the generations before blowing the planet. And what are you going to do about it, mum?

00:57:28;09 - 00:57:52;16

GUEST

But it's it's a consideration we have to look at as a business. And we've done that assessment. It's been fantastic for everyone to get involved and to give feedback. We've gone out to our investors to ask their opinions about where they see the market going, because wherever they see the market going is where we need to be aware of of the opportunity and the risk.

00:57:52;17 - 00:58:19;08

GUEST

Yeah. We also had to look at our regulatory, you know, environment and how that's changing. And across a pan-European portfolio, it's huge ever evolving. Exactly. And, you know, it's not out of the realms of possibility that there will be considerations from governments in the near future looking for further tax, opportunities to look at carbon tax. They've done it in New York.

00:58:19;10 - 00:58:43;20

GUEST

You know, they've done it in other jurisdictions. It is a way of having business pay their their dues for the carbon emitted. And so there is a real challenge coming with how how do we mitigate this. How do we how do we value this on the bottom line? And really looking at that. So we've we've undertaken the materiality assessment.

00:58:43;20 - 00:59:03;21

GUEST

We have a mock, new mock ESG strategy coming on the back of it in new policy, which is reflective of all those considerations we've had talking about what is the most important consideration. And every business will have a different focus point depending on where they're at. But I think every business should at some point do this exercise.

00:59:03;21 - 00:59:20;27

GUEST

It's very, it's very involved, but it's also very revealing as to, you know, where the possible blind spots are and how to mitigate them. And how are we considering, each and every kind of part of that process, which there are quite a few parts.

00:59:20;27 - 00:59:32;04

HOST

Yes, a lot of work, but it's it's about getting ahead of the curve. Right? Absolutely. Sure. Proofing yourself.

But the business and the opportunity to raise capital and again, because I guess the people who are just going to be left behind.

00;59;32;10 - 00;59;59;00

GUEST

Yes. Well, quite. And I do I do think there is a lot of, you know, opportunity still out there with the, the, the plethora of, buildings that are still in existence and will be in existence by 2050. We've got opportunities for major value out. And so I think striking while the irons hot and really understanding what that value is, is really important for any business, you know, especially in real estate.

00;59;59;03 - 01;00;14;21

HOST

For someone listening to this who could be an investment, asset management, development or another part of the real estate investment management world who wants to lean further into ESG and sustainability or have more ownership as part of that career? What advice would you give them?

01;00;14;24 - 01;00;32;03

GUEST

Go and find your head of ESG, and if you don't have one, maybe make the best case for one. Yeah, quite. Listen, there are so many resources out there. They're available. You can look on LinkedIn. You just need to hook up with a couple of, you know, ESG consultants. You'll start getting a plethora of information through.

01;00;32;03 - 01;01;03;20

GUEST

But I think genuinely just be inquisitive. Just ask where you think there could be opportunity. Lots of industry events are available now. Go along to a couple of those. A huge gambit will open up in terms of the art of the possible and how far you might want to take it, but I think if you're interested in it, there is a lot to be to be done and to be to be taken on as as a just an educational piece.

01;01;03;22 - 01;01;27;24

GUEST

It doesn't mean every single piece of the ESG world will be compatible or in fact, material to what it is you're trying to achieve with your fund or your career or your, you know, even your investments. Right. It's for you to kind of navigate and see what's out there. And I think the most important thing for a lot of people in real estate is decarbonization.

01;01;27;24 - 01;01;37;09

GUEST

Right? And getting now buildings running efficiently and running well, it's a great return on investment period. But it is it is,

01;01;37;11 - 01;01;41;18

HOST

One part of it. Sorry. That's one part of the wider picture.

01;01;41;19 - 01;02;12;28

GUEST

Exactly. And so, you know, you can take it as far as you want to take it. But the one thing I'll tell you about the ESG community and I think this is a huge positive. We're very collaborative. I want people to take our case studies and learn from them. I don't want people going down rabbit holes, you know, and, and lots of different organizations are out there to prevent people from, you know, wasting time going down a certain path when it may not be actually worthwhile or may not have the return on investment that you're looking for.

01;02;13;00 - 01;02;41;28

GUEST

The Build a Better Buildings Partnership UK GPC, you know, un PR I've got some great, you know, collaborating opportunities for people. I just think if you have an issue or a concern or a, you know, what is my risk on this? Just start getting involved, digging, asking the questions. Have we thought about this? Have we considered what the impact might be from a regulatory perspective?

01;02;41;28 - 01;03;04;26

GUEST

I'd be surprised. A lot of people have started the journey. Yeah, it's just how far you are down that that curve and even those who haven't started, you're probably doing things without even realizing it. Genuinely. There's been movements in the markets, in what's accepted now, what's, you know, sort after. And people, you know, starting to move whether it's badged ESG or not.

01;03;04;26 - 01;03;30;10

GUEST

I mean, I really don't like that generalized term. I think there's, you know, for me, this is all about mitigating risk, adding value, creating better products, creating better, you know, communities. It's might be bad disease, stupid. It seems like, you know, best in class business practice. That's what we aim to do.

01;03;30;13 - 01;03;52;14

HOST

I feel like I could talk to you. I've got so many more questions. Certification mark the business, the platform dealing with mixed use asset. It could go on and on and on. I think we're going to have to reserve that for, for for a future episode. If you'd be so kind to come back and join me. But as we draw to a close, a question that I ask everyone who comes on the podcast is 500 million pounds worth of capital.

01;03;52;14 - 01;03;56;04

HOST

Who are the people? What property and which place would you be allocating money?

01;03;56;05 - 01;04;22;24

GUEST

I love that question. So I would have to say that diversifying your investments is always a good idea. I'm quite a, you know, mitigating risk person as my female nature is, so I would, I would invest in, in different platforms. I think last mile logistics is amazing. I think it's got a huge future ahead of it.

01;04;22;26 - 01;04;46;14

GUEST

I like senior living. I also think residential and retail and office still have a huge part to play in the UK. But, you know, everywhere. It's, human essential need. We're going to need offices, we're going to need retail. We're going to need, residential. I would diversify probably 100 million in each of those. Why not?

01;04;46;17 - 01;05;16;16

GUEST

And, focused on high quality hires, people with really good experience. I think particularly in the development side, it is where the value is. And that's just because I'm slightly biased. Locations, locations, urban cities. It's a real changing face. I think London is still good, but I am intrigued to see where some of the European capital cities go.

01;05;16;19 - 01;05;50;25

GUEST

I really do think that there are some locations that are of huge change, you know, populace wise. And, you know, disposable incomes will drive a lot of change in some of the urban environments. But



underpinning all of it would have to be an amazing ESG strategy, naturally. So 100 million in each pan-European, you know, diversification of locations, urban settings, predominantly and definitely with a great ESG strategy behind it, with.

01;05;50;25 - 01;06;01;05

HOST

A couple of senior hires. And I didn't press you early on in our conversation around, there's two gentlemen who are mentors of yours. Yes. Would they be coming on the journey? Oh, hey, can you disclose who they are? Or is that I.

01;06;01;06 - 01;06;26;23

GUEST

I, I can certainly disclose who they are. So one is a mr. Alexander Morris who's currently with Mental Greenock, who is an amazing operator. And has helped me immeasurably from start to finish of my, career in London. He's had a huge influence and he's an absolutely fantastic operator and an amazing deliverer of ESG. Credentials in buildings.

01;06;26;26 - 01;06;51;06

GUEST

You know, inherently, he is built to deliver, value and efficiency. Former QTS, by the way, and Mr. Peter Holroyd, who actually started my career at Minerva and gave me the opportunity when I was not the most polished, I was not the most educated, and I was not the most of showy class, certain class stock.

01;06;51;08 - 01;07;11;05

GUEST

But, I think I was a compelling hire for him, and hopefully I delivered. But he is also an absolute gem of a gentleman and very, very development focused, great opportunity to work with him. Yes, absolutely. Would take them along with me.

01;07;11;07 - 01;07;25;02

HOST

Well, you've had an amazing background, a phenomenal career. And you're right at the forefront in terms of driving change across, built environment. And I've loved talking to you. So thank you so much for joining me on the podcast.

01;07;25;02 - 01;07;26;01

GUEST

An absolute.

01;07;26;07 - 01;07;28;00

HOST

Pleasure. And the wider business going to achieve.

01;07;28;05 - 01;07;30;27

GUEST

Thank you so much. Thanks for having me.

01;07;31;00 - 01;07;53;13

HOST

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01;07;53;15 - 01;08;20;22

HOST

We should explore further. So do drop me a message. The People Property Plays podcast is powered by Rock born. The team recruit leadership and future leadership hires for real estate owners, funds, investors and developers. So if you're looking to hire top talent for your business, head over to the website. Rock Buncombe, where you'll be able to find a wealth of information.

01;08;20;24 - 01;08;28;18

HOST

Or feel free to drop me a message on LinkedIn. Have a great day wherever you are, and I look forward to catch you next time.