We all profit from well-designed homes

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‘We all want to profit from new-build homes’

Janice Morley
EDITOR

WHY are we always having to tell housebuilders how to build better? Is it because we are fed up with those boxy stereotypes that have blighted housing estates for decades — or the punishingly small London flats that offer no storage or decent light? Is it the lack of privacy with just one cramped kitchen-dining-living space, or is it that there’s nowhere to hang washing or dispose of rubbish? Mass-market developers have historically sliced up expensive London land to offer the minimum space for the maximum price per unit. Thoughtful construction with innovative architecture has been a long time coming. This is the theme of the new report to government by the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission. Developers have said the report is unrealistic. However, the underlying message is crucial. We do not want to take away a builder’s profit — but we want everyone to profit from the crucial. We do not want to take away a builder’s

Trophy home of the week
Everywhere for high-end modern family life — and Victorian grandeur, too

£7.35 million: this imposing Victorian home on Fulham’s exclusive Moore Park Estate impresses at every turn. An expansive lower ground floor gives gorgeous family living and dining areas through to an extended Italian designer kitchen set around a vast cooking/breakfast island, all framed by Crittall doors to a landscaped, suntrap garden. High ceilings and sleek, grey wood floors set the tone upstairs in a double reception room overlooking the garden, followed by an elegant master suite above and three further bedrooms topped by a roof terrace giving prime London skyline views. Through Marsh & Parsons (020 8012 4058).

London buy of the week
Come spring you’ll be dining on your private decked balcony in Bow

£525,000: perfectly located for Canary Wharf and just a few minutes from Devons Road DLR, this smart 730sq ft recently built block in Bow, E3. Open-plan living space incorporates a pale grey gloss kitchen with plenty of storage and sleek, white metro tiles, leading to dining and lounge areas. Floor-to-ceiling glass doors open to a large decked balcony with space for alfresco dining come summer. The bright, spacious feel continues in two bedrooms and a generous bathroom. Concierge service is an added bonus and there’s a gym on the doorstep. Through Savills (0203 205 788).

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Too many Londoners, too few homes

SHOCKING pictures of overcrowded slums, taken by Nick Hedges in the early Seventies for the then-new charity Shelter, shocked the nation. Yet overcrowding worsened after 1971. Over the following half-century, the problem became much more acute in 31 per cent of London neighbourhoods. In 2017 the most overcrowded borough was Newham followed by Redbridge, Barking & Dagenham. This is according to the most detailed academic study into the subject to date, by Professor Christopher Lloyd of Queen’s University Belfast. He found that the trend has accelerated from the turn of the century, with a huge increase in the capital’s population and a slowdown in housebuilding. The study comes two months after a police raid uncovered one of the worst examples of illegal overcrowding in London in many years. A landlord in Dagenham is now facing prosecution after 30 occupants were found living in a squalid three-bedroom property. The study found the percentage of Londoners in homes with an average of more than one person per room — its definition of overcrowding — had been on the increase for decades.

Read Jonathan Prynn’s full story at homesandproperty.co.uk
Brooklyn won't be bringing gran

BROOKLYN BECKHAM has got his. Holly Willoughby is getting hers but Claudia Schiffer has been told to forget it — the granny-less granny flat is the latest celeb must-have.

Thoughtful parents Victoria and David are renovating their £31 million Holland Park mansion to include an annexe for when Brooklyn, 20, and his American actress girlfriend Nicola Peltz, left, come to stay. Meanwhile, This Morning host Holly is installing a flat above the garage at her £3 million, six-bedroom house in Barnes. But sadly, model Claudia Schiffer and her film director husband Matthew Vaughn had their application for an annexe at their 14-bedroom Elizabethan manor house turned down. Nicola Peltz, left, come to stay. Meanwhile, This Morning host Holly is installing a flat above the garage at her £3 million, six-bedroom house in Barnes. But sadly, model Claudia Schiffer and her film director husband Matthew Vaughn had their application for an annexe at their 14-bedroom Elizabethan manor house in Suffolk turned down.

Hunger’s no problem with two kitchens

JENNIFER LAWRENCE has dropped the asking price of her Manhattan penthouse, above, by £2.6 million. The Hunger Games star, 29, originally put her NYC base on the market for £11.8 million but has struggled to sell it. She bought the place for £11.9 million in 2016, so it seems she overpaid — not that it would have been a problem. Lawrence, inset, best actress Oscar winner for Silver Linings Playbook in 2013, was the world’s highest-paid actress at the time. She’s still ultra-busy on movie sets, leaving her little time to spend at her 4,073sq ft three-bedroom East Coast duplex. It has indoor and outdoor kitchens and great views of the Hudson River.

FANS glued to series nine of Call The Midwife, starring Helen George as Nurse Trixie Franklin, right, could rent a glam filming location used for the BBC TV hit. Four-bedroom Holborn Close, above, a converted chapel in Mill Hill NW7, is listed with Foxtons for £11,000 a week. The living area has 45ft-high ceilings and there’s a sauna, steam room, gym, cinema, a mezzanine music room, a pretty orangery and a patio garden. Set in seven acres, it is a showstopper.

Pen a TV hit at your riverside retreat

THIS Teddington townhouse was a favourite of husband-and-wife TV writer-producers Jan Etherington and Gavin Petrie. The couple, whose shows include Next of Kin with Penelope Keith, and Duck Patrol starring David Tennant, right, fell for the 1850s six-bedroom pile backing on to the Thames with a private mooring. Built by Dove Brothers, who also built churches, the house features a beautiful stained-glass window. Rent it for £4,950 a month through Hamptons International.

Call The Midwife set delivers for £11k a week

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Photographs: BBC, GETTY, LUCY YOUNG
Are we beginning to get it right?

Why did we need to be told in a new report that our homes should be well built and look good? **Anna White** searches out the beautiful builders

The Living With Beauty paper published at the end of last month made 45 recommendations to improve the design of residential schemes, championing beauty as an essential condition for planning permission. The aim is to see beautiful homes fast-tracked through planning, with the addition of an urban orchard particularly recommended.

The report was written as part of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission, set up to advise the Government on how to stop the spread of shoddy new housing.

Some major housebuilders and leading architects have complained that the report is unrealistic in its demands and claim that implementing its recommendations will, paradoxically, slow the planning process further.

Bob Weston, founder of Weston Homes, says: “It is not acceptable to build poor-quality homes but the Government should be wary of anything that could stifle delivery.”

London architect Matthew Lloyd wades in, too: “The report has not had a favourable reaction. Architects don’t set out to design pretty houses so much as solve urban problems.”

Among the report’s recommendations is the appointment of a “placemaking” housing minister to sit in the Cabinet — an irony given that only last week the 10th housing minister in as many years, Esther McVey, was sacked in the Cabinet reshuffle.

The report recommends reliance on classical and traditional architectural styles, suggesting glass and steel skyscrapers be avoided, says Peter Murray, chairman of New London Architecture.

“As well as the Georgian influences the report favours the new London vernacular that is emerging,” says Murray, referring to modest, low-rise brick schemes which he describes as “rational and elegant”.

SCHEMES GETTING IT RIGHT

A real sense of place: Beechwood Mews is a 17-home scheme in Barnet designed by Peter Barber Architects for developers Kuropatra on an old Transport for London site.

Construction is under way on this contemporary take on the terrace street. Once completed it will have a café and a corner shop and half of the homes will count as “affordable”. A similar scheme by the same team was so popular there is only one home left. Ninety Five Peckham Road is a modern mansion block of 33 apartments. The remaining two-bedroom apartment costs £555,000 (visit acorgroup.co.uk or call 020 7089 6566).

Though the use of the term “beautiful” in the report has sparked debate as to what beauty is and how it is defined, underneath sits a sensible tick-list for new schemes, from placemaking, to building with nature, to consulting the community.

The latest at King’s Cross: much-admired King’s Cross regeneration has a strong sense of place. The 67 acres of abandoned canal-side warehouses now has 2,000 new homes and 20,000 people work in the area. The retail centre Coal Drops Yard showcases emerging brands, cafés and bars, while children play in the Granary Square fountains leading down to the canal.

Big-name companies are on their way, too. Google, Universal, Nike and Sony are all setting up headquarters at King’s Cross, bringing even more bustle.

Next week will see the launch of the first new homes to be sold on site for two-and-a-half years.

The six-sided Cadence building has a striking terracotta façade with homes above viaduct-style arches and a colonnade of shops. Its apartments and balconies overlook a rectangular pond. Prices start from £585,000. Call 020 3691 3966.

New neighbourhood: the creation of a new neighbourhood is under way at Ladbroke Grove. The £200 million 1,000-home Portobello Square will regenerate the Sixties Wornington Green estate.

The 10-year scheme comprises three phases and includes social rental homes, replacing those lost in
the demolition of the estate. Homes in phase two, Bond Mansions, went on sale last month, next to a public park which is being upgraded and replanted. Shops, café and a community centre will follow.

The apartment blocks are built from “soft” brick with deep windows, a nod to the classical architecture highlighted in the report. The new neighbourhood’s streets are being linked to Portobello Road and its lively market scene. One-bedroom apartments start from £645,000 (portobellosquare.co.uk).

Safeguarding history: the report recommends VAT relief on abandoned buildings to encourage developers to bring derelict structures that are often antisocial eyesores to life.

Battersea Power Station is one of the best examples of safeguarding heritage as set out in the Living With Beauty paper. The restoration of the four chimneys that powered London from the Thirties to the Eighties is the cherished centre of the 4,000-home Thames-side village, and the surrounding apartment buildings have been designed to preserve views of the towers. Prices of homes inside the power station building start from £870,000. Visit sales@bpsdc.co.uk or call 020 7501 0678.

Camden gets a pat on the back: the Edwardian Bourne Estate in Camden features in the report as being of beautiful design. Matthew Lloyd Architects on behalf of Camden council was tasked with adding two new residential blocks that would complete and complement the area. They worked to a tight budget but added Arts and Crafts styling such as glazed tiles, double-height ceilings and arched entrances. Playing fields and playgrounds have been created.

The new Bourne Estate project ticked another box for the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission which recommends community consultation and “stewardship” for new developments. “There was a public exhibition and the community appointed us as architects,” says Lloyd.

Healthy homes: the pressure is on for developers to ditch gas boilers in the drive towards making new homes carbon neutral.

Eden House at Crouch End by Mood London Design for Forncelli Homes is almost there. The nine-home block is 90 per cent carbon neutral. The building has a living roof and walls and an electric car pool for residents, and is powered via solar panels. Prices start from £655,000 through Savills on 020 3227 0481.

This sporting life: Chobham Manor is the 880-home Taylor Wimpey development at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, with the area’s sporting culture running through the scheme. The new streets all face parkland and there are cycle and walking routes linking the site to the former 2012 Games Velodrome.

Three-bedroom family homes start at £695,000. Call 020 3504 3638.

CRAIG BULL and his wife Lulu, 39, bought a two-bedroom apartment in Greenwich’s Kidbrooke Village, the £1 billion development set in 136 acres of wetlands and meadows. Natural playgrounds have been dotted across the site which now has a wide variety of birds including herons and kestrels.

“What I really liked about Kidbrooke Village was that it reminded me a bit of home, because it does feel like a village,” says Craig, 40, originally from Leicestershire. “It’s landscaped and green, with lakes and wildlife. There is also a mix of housing and the overall architecture looks attractive.”

Homes are on sale in Birch House, a thoughtful and luxurious build at the centre of Kidbrooke. The block has a sky lounge for morning yoga with views of Canary Wharf. Three-bedroom apartments start from £1,045,000. There are also homes available in the neighbouring complex Centrum Court with Help to Buy starting from £467,000.

Happy buyers: Craig and Lulu Bull applaud the design of Kidbrooke Village in SE3

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Happy buyers: Craig and Lulu Bull applaud the design of Kidbrooke Village in SE3
MATTER staggering property prices, economic and political instabilities and wage stagnation somehow you just can’t keep a determined first-time buyer down.

The number of people taking a first step on the property ladder reached a 12-year-high last year, with more than £350,000 investing in a home nationwide, according to new data from the Yorkshire Building Society. In London, first-timers spent an average of £415,000, while out in the commuter belt the typical cost of a first home was £266,400.

Drilling down into this data, new research from Hamptons International reveals just who these London first-time buyers are, how much they spend and how much their families hand over to help them on to the ladder.

ZONING IN ON THE CENTRE

The average age of a buyer in Zone 2 is 32 — and one thing they must all have in common is deep pockets, to be able to afford a home so close to central London.

Prices vary considerably across Zone 2. At the lower end of the scale, in gritty but regenerating Blackwall, an average flat costs £485,000 according to Rightmove.

On the other side of the capital, in leafy, lovely Maida Vale W9, one of the more expensive Zone 2 options, an average flat costs £719,000.

Buyers in Zone 2 typically put down a 20 per cent deposit which is almost £100,000 in Blackwall and close to £150,000 in Maida Vale. Many rely on family and friends to gift them 3% per cent of the money. There are so few first-time buyers in Zone 1 that the data is unreliable.

Vatche Cherchian, regional director of Portico estate agents, says three quarters of Zone 2 first-timers buy with a partner to cut costs. Around half prefer a period conversion or older home and half like the convenience of a modern new build, with the chance of using Help to Buy to cut their entry costs.

“We predict the first-time buyer market will continue to gradually increase and gain momentum for the rest of the year,” adds Cherchian. “The majority have suffered from Brexit uncertainty up until now but their confidence is picking up as we head into 2020.

“Many feel it’s the right time to buy because we are near the bottom end of market prices which will most likely only creep up gradually.”

For buyers after a new Zone 2 bolt-hole, one of the big launches of this spring’s selling season — and certainly one of the tallest — is Aspen in east London. At 65 storeys it will be the third-tallest residential tower in

WHO PAY WHAT

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<th>Travel Zone</th>
<th>Average age of first-time buyers</th>
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Source: Hamptons International. *Insufficient data for Zone 1

Canary Wharf when completed in 2023. Residents will have access to a private club with a health spa, plus a business suite and a sky lounge with amazing London views. Prices start at £398,000 (aspen-canarywharf.com).

COMMUTER COMMUNITY

Out in the suburbs in Zone 3, the research shows a clear pattern. First-time buyers who want a shorter commute wait longer and lean increasingly heavily on the Bank of Mum and Dad.

Zone 3 buyers are, on average, 35 years old and around a third of their deposit is gifted to them. They cannot afford central London but house prices here are an average £350,950.

In Zone 4, by contrast, where prices are lower, buyers are typically 32 years old and they raise more than three quarters of their deposit themselves.

Across the capital the research found that just over half of first-time buyers pick up starter flat prices with one or two bedrooms. But a surprisingly high number, 45 per cent, buy homes with three or more bedrooms as they attempt to future proof themselves against the cost of repeated moves up the ladder when they have a family.

HOME SWEET HOME COUNTIES

Out in the home counties the youngest first-time buyers are to be found in the boroughs of Runnymede in Surrey, which includes the towns of Chertsey and Egham; adjacent Spelthorne, which includes Staines-upon-Thames, and Oxford, with an average age of 28.

They spend, respectively, an average of £326,000, £312,000 and £361,000, which is far less than their London counterparts.

The oldest first-time buyer commuters, average age 40, are to be found in pricey St Albans, where they spend £388,500 to get on the ladder.

Even with the assistance of their families to raise a deposit, Surrey first-timers are well into their late thirties in Crawley, Horsham and Epsom & Ewell, as they are, too, in Watford in Hertfordshire.

In Epsom, Dale Woods, area manager for Barnard Marcus estate agents, says about six in 10 of the first-time buyers he works with are buying with a partner. The majority — 66 per cent — are moving out of Kingston, with the rest from Sutton and south west London. All are seeking more space and better value.

Half buy a three- or four-bedroom home for £520,000-£600,000, while the rest buy flats, with a budget typically between £350,000 and
First-time buyers | Homes & Property

From £398,000: Flats at 65-storey Aspen in E14, with a sky lounge offering amazing London views. The third tallest residential tower in Canary Wharf, Aspen will be the centre point of Consort Place, a fresh destination with bars, cafés and restaurants.

March launch: 1,300 homes by Hill and Marshall at Marleigh, only a 20-minute bike ride from the centre of Cambridge.

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DEBORA DRAGO was fed up with throwing away £800 a month to rent a basic bedsit in Ealing, so she moved to less-attractive Hounslow. “Ealing is beautiful but I couldn’t afford to buy there,” she says. She wanted to stay in west London, however, and decided to take the plunge and buy her first home, selecting a £300,000 one-bedroom flat at Countryside’s The Assembly development in Zone 4 Hounslow (countrysideproperties.com). In financial terms the move has been a great success. Debora’s monthly costs are now less than her rent used to be, and by using the government Help to Buy scheme her savings covered the five per cent deposit she needed to put down. Deborah, 34, an operations manager, agrees that Hounslow is not as leafy as her old district and certainly doesn’t have the bars and restaurants. “But I am close to the station and to the shops and I have much more space for less money.”

‘LEAFY IS LOVELY — BUT GIVE ME ROOMY ANY DAY’

More space for less money: the monthly costs for Debora Drago's Help to Buy flat are less than she used to pay in rent for her bedsit.

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Prepare to park yourself

Two-bedroom shared-ownership flats in Finsbury Park are a super-connected buy from £115k, says Ruth Bloomfield

A RURAL oasis in the 19th century, Finsbury Park offered an escape for Londoners sick of the noise and grime of the capital. Fast forward to today and while its streets don’t enjoy much respite from 24-hour city living, its open space, vibrant nightlife and brilliant commuter links make N4 a tempting option for a first-time buyer.

The average price of an apartment in this postcode stands at just over £500,000. However, first-time buyers willing to compromise and buy a share of a home instead of the whole thing could get their first foothold on the property ladder from £115k for a good two-bedroom flat.

These homes at City North by Newlon Living (newlonliving.co.uk) have a great location on the edge of beautiful, 110-acre Finsbury Park itself. As part of the development a new entrance to Finsbury Park station has been built west of the railway tracks, giving direct access to the platforms. The station is in Zone 2 on the Piccadilly and Victoria lines and also has train services to King’s Cross and the City.

Prices range from £115,000 to £131,250 for a 25 per cent share of a two-bedroom apartment. As well as mortgage repayments, buyers will have to budget for monthly rental payments of £790 and a service charge of £225 per month.

Unusually, the development also includes a new cinema, while there is plenty more to do locally, whatever your interests. The biggest annual event in Finsbury Park is the three-day Wireless Festival, but you can also play tennis and football, or take an outdoor yoga class.

For culture lovers there is the Park Theatre, with a programme ranging from musicals to original drama, and an excellent little café and bar. On the downside, Finsbury Park remains grubby compared with nearby destinations such as flashy Islington, and the traffic is appalling when Arsenal play at home at the Emirates Stadium just up the road.

You can expect to pay in the region of £400,000 for a one-bedroom flat.

WHAT ELSE COULD I BUY?

BY LONDON standards Finsbury Park is an affordable option given its Zone 2 location. Average property prices stand at just under £600,000 according to Rightmove, up almost £100,000 in the past five years — which also made it an excellent investment option for those who got in ahead of the game.

This is a classic Victorian suburb with red-brick houses on fairly leafy streets where period family houses cost well over £1 million. But for a first-time buyer there are two-bedroom period conversion flats priced around £600,000.

Alwyne Estates has a two-bedroom flat in an unusual corner building in St Thomas’s Road for £625,000. For buyers with less to spend, prices fall significantly as you head north towards the less-fashionable but quieter streets of Stroud Green, where houses & Davies estate agents has a two-bedroom flat in Victoria Road priced at £525,000.

You can expect to pay in the region of £400,000 for a one-bedroom flat.
A renter’s guide: Haggerston E8

‘It’s so convenient and stimulating here’

Prudence Ivey meets a family in love with canalside living and kid-friendly cafes

Suzanne Trotter, Dennis, his daughter Eva, and the couple’s baby, Clara

When they moved in together eight years ago, they opted for the far more central area of Haggerston, the canalside neighbourhood on the fringes of Islington and Shoreditch.

The couple, both 43, pay £2,200 a month to rent the two-bedroom warehouse-style flat they have lived in ever since, along with Dennis’s daughter, Eva, 11, who lives with them during school holidays, and now their baby Clara, just four months old.

The family plan to stay put for the foreseeable future.

“Most people do it the other way round and move out when they have a baby. We talk about moving every January but it would take a lot to actually do it. It’s just so convenient and stimulating here, we’d really miss it,” says Suzanne.

“We now have Clara things are changing a bit. The reason to move would be to have a bigger house and a garden but if you balance that against the area, there are good schools and nurseries, while being near to work is essential because you can get back quicker. I think we will be staying at least for the next couple of years.”

Haggerston is on the London Overground network, linking the area with the Tube at Highbury & Islington. Suzanne either cycles or uses buses to get back to Enfield Road, where her partner, Adrian Lourie, runs Bread & Butter coffee shop.

Settled: Suzanne Trotter, Dennis, his daughter Eva, and the couple’s baby, Clara

Coming to live in Haggerston with Dennis seven years ago, Prudence Ivey met Suzanne, an international researcher at ITV, when she showed her around the area.

“Now we’ve had Clara things are big enough for our buggies, and owners who don’t mind if your baby is screaming its head off — Bread & Butter coffee shop is really welcoming, too.”

Cultural life: Suzanne and Dennis go to the beloved local independent Rio Cinema and also love gigs at Earth. “We have so many music venues on our doorstep. The Glory is a gay pub and disco with a vibrant programme of performances.”

Green space: Regent’s Canal towpath is a thoroughfare for weekend runners, strollers, cyclists and poseurs reclaiming London’s industrial wasteland. Suzanne walks along it to Victoria Park and also takes Clara to Hackney City Farm in Haggerston Park.

Prudence Ivey meets a family in love with canalside living and kid-friendly cafes

Renter’s guide: Haggerston E8

12 WEDNESDAY 19 FEBRUARY 2020 EVENING STANDARD

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Cathy Hawker finds £185k Austrian ski flats perfect for state-of-the-art new cable cars linking three great resorts

More than 40 million people whizz down Austria’s snowy slopes each year, making it the third most popular country for skiers behind the US and France. It also welcomes more overseas skiers than any other country, all attracted by Austria’s beauty, legendary après-ski and impressive, ever-updated infrastructure.

According to Savills Ski Report, Austria has invested an annual average of £10 million in snow-making technology since 2008, extending it to 60 per cent of all its slopes while also spending £6.3 billion on new and replacement lifts since 2000.

New this season is the 3K K-onnection, a state-of-the-art seven-and-a-half-mile cable car connecting Kaprun in Salzburgerland, 15 minutes from Zell am See, to the ski area on the Kitzsteinhorn glacier. It is the longest cable car in the eastern Alps and makes the Maiskogel snow park completely snow sure.

“When the new lift is a real game changer, linking Kaprun with the glacier where before skiers had to catch a bus,” says Giles Gale of Alpine Property Finders. “The lift benefits Zell am See, Kaprun and Saalbach, three areas all linked on one ski pass.”

HOMES WITH GLACIER VIEWS

British oil trader Jonathan Hudson currently living in Singapore with his wife and young family, recently bought a four-bedroom home in Kaprun. He toured 16 resorts, including Three Valleys and Chamonix in France, before choosing Kaprun.

“Kaprun represents good value and strong rental potential,” Hudson says. “I chose it for its family-friendly, cozy vibe and proximity to several airports including Salzburg, Innsbruck and Munich. Austrian hospitality is the best and of course everyone loves the après-ski.”

Close to the piste in Kaprun and with a view of the glacier, Alpine Property Finders is selling a 188sq ft two-bedroom flat with small private garden and underground parking for £400,800. As is usual in Austria, owners have six weeks personal use but otherwise must rent their home through an excellent on-site team from developers Avenida. High above the lake in Zell am See and 300 yards...
From £184,800: selling off-plan, studios to four-bedroom homes at Nikolaus, above the lake and near the piste at Zell Kaprun:
a two-bedroom garden flat with glacier views in the resort is £400,800 (alpinepropertyfinders.com)

"This is a prime project in a prime location where very little new-build is available," says Gale. "It will appeal to summer visitors as much as winter ones. Hardcore skiers will probably head to Kaprun or Saalbach but Zell’s lake provides a true year-round focus for water sports."

CLOSE TO THE PISTE

Charming Hinterglemm at the head of the Saalbach Valley is Salzburgerland’s most chic resort, though very seasonal. Gale is selling 44 off-plan apartments at Glemm Residences, a short walk from the piste, priced from £229,600.

"Entry level prices for new-build homes are fairly low in Austrian Alps as developers have created smaller studio apartments to meet demand," concludes Gale. "Austria continues to make life easy for skiers with excellent lifts and storage lockers for ski equipment at the base of the mountain."

Austria might not always feel so welcoming after Brexit because non-EU citizens must either apply for a permit or form a company in order to purchase property. Austria has confirmed UK citizens can purchase normally until the end of the transition period — throughout this year — but after that the position remains unclear.

★ Alpine Property Finders: alpinepropertyfinders.com (020 7692 0786)
★ Savills: savills.com (020 7016 3740)

"SKI RESORTS occupy some of the most naturally beautiful locations on the planet and Austria has a proud reputation for being eco-minded," says Jessica Delaney of Alpine Marketing:

"Kitzbühel, one of Austria’s most popular resorts with the largest ski bus system in the Alps, utilises electric buses across the mountains," she says. "Its ski lifts are equipped with an energy-saving drive saving over 600,000 kWh each year and it has banned skiing in protected forest areas to protect flora and fauna."

Many of Alpine Marketing’s properties for sale in Kitzbühel, priced from £417,600, follow passive house standards with triple-glazed windows, renewable Austrian wood and air source heating pumps, for low utility costs.

★ Alpine Marketing: alpinemarketing.com

Austria’s going greener still

SO Resi Clapham Park is a contemporary collection of one and two bedroom shared ownership apartments. Set in the village-like neighbourhood of Clapham Park, with easy access to Clapham, Brixton and Balham. Prices from £116,750 for a 25% share** with a 5% deposit from under £6,000

Contact details:
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To find out more or book a viewing Search SO Resi Clapham Park

By Metropolitan Thames Valley

*10% deposit based on full price of £497,000. **Prices starting from £497,000. Eligibility and income criteria will apply.
**From Clapham South underground station. Source: RERA. Details correct at time of print February 2020.
Watch the world go by

Set beside the Thames, new Riverside Quarter combines a healthy lifestyle and beautiful vistas.

Living within sight of open space can change your life. A series of academic studies published over the past three decades strongly suggests that a great view isn’t just pretty to look at. Being able to throw open your windows to enjoy a lovely vista can actually make people feel physically healthier, less stressed and generally happier and more content.

So it makes sense that anyone looking for a home in central London ought to be considering the outside of their property as carefully as they do the inside.

Housebuilders are increasingly upping their game when it comes to outside space. Riverside Quarter, a new development of more than 500 homes set by the River Thames in Wandsworth, comfortably passes the green space test. Each of its individual low- or mid-rise buildings is positioned overlooking private estate gardens which can be enjoyed from the balcony, terrace or winter garden of each home. There is also a new tree-lined square.

Almost next door is the small but perfectly formed Wandsworth Park, right on the river, and a 40-minute waterfront stroll along Putney Embankment, past several of this area’s rowing clubs, is the peerless London Wetland Centre at Barnes, one of the most peaceful spots you will find in Zone 2. Riverside Quarter also has its own fitness suite, with a glamorous pool overlooking the Thames and Hurlingham Park, just over the river in Fulham. For those who prefer to take things a little easier there is a Jacuzzi, as well as a fully equipped gym with running and cycling machines, and weight and exercise machines.

The feel-good factor of this location continues well beyond the gym. Simply watching life on the Thames is fascinating. You will have a front-row seat for the Boat Race and if in a New York loft apartment.

For getting away from it all, Heathrow airport is just 11 miles to the west, while you can pick up the M3 or M4 for escapes to the West Country. Today it is a thriving little neighbourhood with a great selection of eating. Foodilic — which also caters, healthily, for meat eaters.

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From £755,000: above and top, each new home will have a terrace, balcony or winter garden

WENDY’S 30th Anniversary show at South London Gallery

The fine art of craft

A stunning piece of contemporary craft is guaranteed to lift a room and start a conversation. Corinne Julius previews Collect selling show at Somerset House

CRAFT has now been recognised as a major art form. Contemporary craft offers amazing value with work by acclaimed makers and is still considerably more affordable than the work of fine artists, even though the output is of equal and sometimes superior status.

One of the major selling exhibitions of contemporary craft in the world, Collect opens in London next week. In its 16th year, it will take over three wings of Somerset House in Strand, WC2, for a dazzling display of the best of international craft, with each participating gallery given its own room for display.

Newcomer Galerie Scene Ouverte from Paris will show furniture and objects as if in a New York loft apartment.

Nearly half the exhibitors come from outside the UK, representing 25 nations. Much of the work has been created for Collect and over a quarter of the galleries are new to the show. They include RAM Galleri from Norway showing metal, ceramic, textiles and jewellery, plus several Asian galleries including the new Lloyd Choi Gallery, Gallery Sko, all from Korea, and The Gallery by SOIL, from Hong Kong.

From the UK, The Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust is celebrating 30 years of giving grants to British-based craftspersons with an exhibition of its scholars’ work that includes intricately coloured ceramics by Alice Walton, organic glass by Kaja Upej, basketry sculpture by Annemarie O’Sullivan and glass artist Edmond Byrne and metalsmith Adi Toch collaborate in Material Dialogues: metal and glass. For Collect Open, the section of the exhibition where makers pursue their own projects. The pair explore the alchemic meeting point of the two materials, their transformation from solid to liquid to solid. Toch and Byrne have discovered a way of making metal and glass compatible so they can be used in the same piece.

For London’s most relaxed commute: Thames Clippers runs hourly services from Riverside Quarter to the West End. Fitness fans can also ride the Wandsworth to Westminster Cycle Superhighway through Battersea and Nine Elms and on into central London.
Crafts | Homes & Property

Above: Left, the Korean art of jogakbo is perfected by Lee So-Ra, represented by the Lloyd Choi Gallery, who designs intricate patchworks using salvaged fabrics. Okra, a natural silk fabric, is dyed using homemade botanical herbs, then dried using rice starch and sewn using Gekki, a traditional Korean hand stitch.

Left: glass artist Edmond Byrne and metalsmith Adi Toch have found a way to mix glass with silver and copper to produce a series of vessels including this Ripple Bowl, crafted in copper and clear glass, priced £2,800.

Right: from Celia Dowson’s Rhossili Collection, Deep Indigo Blue Platter and Bowls, 46cm in diameter, £5,000.

Above: at Collect Open, textile artist Margo Selby presents Vexillum, a series of large mixed-yarn handwoven artworks, each measuring 165cm x 175cm. From £18,000.

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HERE’S a generation of London-based designers more fascinated by history than by our tech-obsessed present. Their studios and homes exude confidence and are cluttered with things previous generations might have bypassed: clashing patterns, unusual colour combinations and whimsical bric-a-brac.

While many people today are on a mission to declutter, these young boho designers happily accumulate stuff. For them the past, with its multiple layers and references, provides endless inspiration.

This flamboyant, uninhibited approach is a hallmark of interior designer Rachel Chudley’s work, as it is of many of her contemporaries, notably her friend, the artist and designer Luke Edward Hall. These young creatives’ inspirations range from the hand-decorated homes of the Bloomsbury Group and the colourful art of David Hockney to Bloomsbury homeware shop Pentreath & Hall, co-owned by architectural designer Ben Pentreath and artist and maker Bridie Hall.

Chudley has given free rein to her taste at her east London home, shared with her actor husband Nico Kaufman. As you step inside through huge glass doors into the cosy but roomy kitchen, trailing ivy cascades from hanging baskets against a wall painted glossy midnight blue. Sumptuously contrasting copper-clad kitchen units span one wall and apricot-coloured, antique fabric embroidered with pheasants drapes the kitchen table. On a wall-mounted, cottage-style dresser, willow pattern plates are jumbled up with champagne coupes and a kitsch cockatoo-shaped teapot.

Chudley’s passion for charmingly old-world interiors was sparked by childhood visits in the Nineties to Highgate House, a characterful hotel in Northamptonshire, run by her ancestor, the British Impressionist painter Fred Mayor (1866-1946): “It had wood-block-printed pineapple-motif wallpaper everywhere. It wasn’t exactly tasteful and that’s been a big inspiration to me.”

Chudley is also a fan of Paul Poiret, the early 20th-century fashion and interior designer: “I love people whose work straddles different disciplines. I also like the work of Eileen Gray and other successful women modernist designers.” Chudley read history of art at London’s Courtauld Institute of Art. She then studied interior design in California and met Nico in the US. Later, with fellow graduate Cassie Beadle, she co-founded a company called Guts for Garters, which displayed art and design in The Cob Gallery in Camden.

Since founding her design studio, clients have included her friend, playwright Polly Stenham, whose striking Bloomsbury home boasts a semicircular pink chesterfield sofa and jade green bathroom, and fashion accessories queen Lulu Guinness. Chudley is currently designing the latter’s new Covent Garden flagship store.

This year, London craft fair Collect, to be held for the first time at Somerset House, from February 27 to March 1, has invited Cox London, designer-makers of bespoke furniture, to create the interior and furniture of the VIP lounge in collaboration with Chudley.
Something good for the street, not just build a dull block of flats,” Their architects, vPPR, reconstructed the ramshackle building, increased its height by 1.5 metres and added a new extension. “It was a massive project and took a year to complete during which we lived in a caravan on site,” recalls Chudley, “We wanted to retain the old building’s original fabric and matched the new bricks with those of the old ones.”

The windows are inspired by those of local light industrial buildings. A skylight in the kitchen above the dark blue wall provides a view of a Fifties brutalist apartment block by Denys Lasdun, best known for his design of the National Theatre on the South Bank. “People say it’s best to avoid dark wall colours as they make rooms look smaller but harmonious paint shades for other rooms. Strong colour and pattern abound in the living room, with Moroccan rugs, yellow curtains made from sari fabric, a leopard-print sofa, a glistening bronze and stone table by Cox London and an ottoman covered with a shaggy hide dyed a shade that Chudley calls “Honey Monster yellow.” Trompe l’oeil wallpaper with a pattern of flaking plaster lines an adjoining corridor with a staircase rising to the main bedroom. There’s a similar sense of layers unpeeled at Chudley’s home. “We’re in Old Bethnal Green Road, where Queen Victoria and Prince Albert built workshops for skilled immigrants specialising in cabinet-making,” she says. “Nice and I spotted a sign advertising a workshop for sale. We sneaked past some doors into a cobbled yard and were confronted by a derelict building. It even had a tree growing out of one wall. It was crazy but we put in an offer. We had to show architects’ drawings proving that we’d do

Architects: vPPR Architects (vppr.co.uk)
Interior designer: Rachel Chudley (rachelchudley.com)
Contractor: archello.com
Bronze and stone-topped Vine Root side table: Cox London (coxlondon.com)
Leopard-print fabric on sofa: Brunschwig & Fils from GP&J Baker (gpjbaker.com)
Velvet on kitchen chairs: metaformes.com
Hand-painted black-and-white chest in the kitchen: Le Gun (legun.co.uk)
Bespoke headboard: Rachel Chudley (as before)
Embroidered pillowcases: Jérôme Faillant-Dumas at The Invisible Collection (theinvisiblecollection.com)
Pendant lights in the kitchen: Pokey Lighting (pokey.com)
Wall sconces: Charlie Porter (tai-london.co.uk)
Hand-painted kitchen lamp shades: Gavin Houghton Interior Design (gavinhoughton.co.uk)
Bath: astonmatthews.co.uk
Linen blind and sari fabric curtains: Lucy Bathurst (nestdesign.co.uk)
Custom-made paints: Donald Kaufman for Rachel Chudley (as before)
Wallpaper with flaking-plaster design: surfaceview.co.uk
Pug sculpture: Cathie Pilkington (cathiepilkington.com)
Do the dirty work now for a spring flourish

Put up with rain and winds, it’s time to do some potting. The secret is to choose the right kind of compost.

When to replace: one of the banes of an urban gardener’s life is having to replace the old compost from their pots, especially when they live several storeys up or have to carry it through a beautifully carpeted sitting room. The great news is that there’s no need to do this. If you have a tree, shrub or long-lived plant growing in a pot, simply remove the top 5cm of compost each year — now is a good time — and replace this with fresh compost. Maybe add a few slow-release fertiliser granules such as Miracle-Gro® Continuous Release Universal Plant Feed, or organic chicken manure pellets (marshalls-seeds.co.uk, £13.99) while you’re at it.

If you have annuals that have died over winter, the compost in the pots will be compacted and full of old roots, but it’s not irredeemable. Tip the pot out on to an old compost bag and remove the dead plant and as many roots as you can. Then crumble the compost with your fingers and put it back in the pot. You’ll probably find the level has dropped considerably. Top up with fresh stuff and a handful of fertiliser pellets and mix together before planting.

SOIL: THE LOWDOWN

If you have a garden, your plants will be healthier and more resistant to drought if you add garden compost when you can. It will not only feed the plants but improve the drainage and soil structure. This is particularly important in London where the soil tends to be soggy clay with added builders’ rubble.

What is garden compost? Not to be confused with potting compost, which you buy in bags from garden centres, garden compost is old plants, prunings, grass cuttings and kitchen peelings thrown in a heap and left to rot down in the corner of your garden. It’s full of nutrients and, wonderfully, absolutely free. When the compost has turned brown and crumbly with the consistency of chocolate cake mix, it’s ready to spread on to your soil in a layer around 5cm thick.

What to buy: the ultimate compost bin for small gardens is the Hotbin Mini® Composter (suttons.co.uk, £149.99) that you can hide behind a shrub and, thanks to its thermal insulation properties, will produce compost in only 90 days. Most compost takes about a year to be usable, so if you have space and patience, the Easy Compost (primrose.co.uk, £34.99) is a great budget option.

No room for a bin? But how do you feed your soil if you don’t have a compost bin? Head to your nearest homestore or garden centre and look for bags of soil improver such as Miracle-Gro Premium Border Booster or good old farmyard manure — don’t worry, it’s rotted down and won’t have seen a cow for a very long time. Mulch the surface of the soil with it and let the worms mix it in.
Twins Will and Ben Samuels will create and make your luxe interior using UK craftsmen in 16 days and even hang the curtains. By Olivia Llewellyn

There is always room for a new idea in this city. Here comes one that hits the spot for busy working Londoners who are hungry for a home makeover at the right price, that can be achieved without having to spend every spare hour and precious weekend sourcing furniture and colour-matching curtains and cushions to your interiors scheme.

William and Ben Samuels are 33 year-old twins with a combined 25 years’ experience building up their small top-end homes development and interiors business, Wilben Developments.

Both married with young families, the brothers have endured all the frustrations of finding quality homeware, from the eye-watering fuss of interior designers to waiting months for deliveries. On the back of this painful learning curve they have launched their new platform, Imbuel, promising to simplify the high-end design process for developers and homeowners alike.

The name is based on “to imbue” — to inspire or permeate with a feeling or quality — a bit precious, perhaps, but never mind. This new interior decorating service could make life easier for all of us.

**THE LOOK IS LUXURY**

They have curated two “Looks” to suit a classic London townhouse or flat, with a modern twist. There is a London Collection and a New York Collection. But you can mix and match. There are no design fees and the prices are competitive — I priced my imaginary package against one of our most popular long-standing middle-market department stores.

Everything is measured and made to order from the online design platform. All the products are handmade by British craftsmen and suppliers and arrive within 16 days. And because nothing comes in from abroad, the footprint is green.

Terrified that you have got the measurements wrong? Fear not, the Imbuel team meets you on site to confirm all details and finalise your order. You do not have to worry about being hopeless at hanging curtains because the curtains and blinds service includes dressing your windows with two layers, sheer and blackout, made as blinds or curtains.

The end result is a luxurious look and the quality of selected craftsmen shines through in the finishing on cushions and carpets; the crafted mirrors and sophisticated designs. If you want to feel the fabric, stroke the chairs and view the woods and metals used, there is a full range of samples in the Imbuel studio in Chelsea.

**SO WHAT DOES IT COST?**

As an example, a handmade package for a large bedroom, including VAT, comes in at £12,200. For that, you get a super king size bed with mattress (lined); scatter cushions and a throw or bedspread; two bedside tables and two table lamps; a large rug; a day bed and throw; a dressing table; a stool; an armchair with scatter cushions and blanket; a chest of drawers; a table lamp and a mirror. It is a perfect look for a new Docklands flat or a modern bedroom makeover in a period home. A piece of outstanding common sense is the offer to measure and make everything to fit your room’s proportions. So many of our homes have awkward corners, curved walls, alcoves and otherwise tricky room shapes that it’s a blessed relief to have furniture that fits and lets you use the space to the best effect.

The word “package” might give the impression that you are getting something without personality but this is overcome by the handcrafted element and the large degree of customer input. The results are both impressive and affordable.

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**It all works perfectly:** let, high-end, pre-designed room furnishings, tailored and bespoke, built to your specification, arrive within 16 days.

**Sleek finishing:** above, sitting room chairs. All products sourced by Imbuel are handmade by British craftsmen.

**Twins William and Ben Samuels**
Anyone who loves design loves Heal’s, in Tottenham Court Road since 1833. But quality, of course, does not always come cheap. Now this famous furnishing firm has a smart, spacious “outlet” store amid the boutiques and cafés of leafy Chiswick, with up to 70 per cent off furniture, lighting and accessories. Specific examples/prices are tricky as stuff “simply flies”, with frequent deliveries. Locals pop in regularly, but you can ring for tip-offs.

⬤ Heal’s Chiswick Outlet Store, 124-126 Chiswick High Road, W4 (020 3150 4043).

⬤ At Carpetright until March 17, with more than 300 stores nationwide, is an exclusively online “double discount sale”. Everything is half price and there’s an extra 20 per cent off beds and some floorings including quality vinyls, carpet, laminates and engineered wood. A carpet that was £44.99 a square metre is now £17.99 a square metre.

⬤ carpetright.co.uk

Habitat’s 25,000sq ft flagship in Tottenham Court Road has a vast basement, a permanent room with ex-display and clearance stuff from across its wide-ranging collections. Currently you’ll find bed linen, rugs and lighting up to 70 per cent off, plus ex-display upholstery and furniture up to half price, ready to take away the same day. The CoraLei oak coffee table is £935 (was £1,959); Fenner three-seater sofa in cobalt blue is £960, down from £1,600, with matching armchair, £597; down from £958, and Paron shelving unit with two-door cabinet is £397.50, down from £796.

⬤ Habitat, 296-299 Tottenham Court Rd, W1 (020 844 69122; habitat.co.uk).

Pooky is the Chelsea brand decorators love for a vast choice of table lamps, with bases and shades sold separately. The warehouse sale is on February 28 and 29 with up to 90 per cent off. Get a shade for a fiver. “We have hundreds of bright, quirky table, wall, floor and pendant lights, lamp shades and mirrors which are ends of line, seconds and samples.”

⬤ Pooky, Andoversford Business Park, near Charlton Kings, Glos, GL54 4HJ (020 7351 3003; pooky.com).

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At the heart of English maritime history, the Royal Borough of Greenwich is these days also home to a family village with a fine choice of Georgian homes in elegant crescents, streets and squares — for those who can afford them. It sits six miles south-east of central London, alongside the Thames, with a busy centre and market, the hilly green spaces of Greenwich Park and one of the country’s architectural masterpieces: Sir Christopher Wren, Nicholas Hawksmoor and Sir John Vanbrugh’s Old Royal Naval College.

Of course, also among its many claims to fame is the Royal Observatory, site of the Prime Meridian line. Part of the Maritime Greenwich Unesco World Heritage Site, with its impressive range of classical buildings, the college was once the Royal Hospital for Seamen, commissioned in 1694 by Queen Mary II. Six years earlier, with her husband King William III from the Dutch House of Orange, Protestant Mary had seized the crown from her Catholic father James II, in the so-called Glorious Revolution.

The hospital was built with the philanthropic aim of providing a home for injured seamen and Mary saw it as “the darling object of her life” though she didn’t live to see it completed. Most of the buildings are now used by the University of Greenwich and Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, but Wren’s Painted Hall tells a story of royal swagger and one-upmanship. The hall reopened last year after a seven-year restoration that saw the ceiling and wall paintings brought back to life in jaw-dropping brightness and detail. Known as Britain’s Sistine Chapel, the paintings are the work of artist Sir James Thornhill (1675-1734) and are one of the most complete examples of British baroque art. Thornhill worked on them for 19 years between 1707 and 1726 and they show how skilfully he navigated the politics of the time and the demands of his political masters.

On the central ceiling William and Mary take pride of place surrounded by the virtues. William is shown stamping on the figures of Tyranny and Arbitrary Power. The emphasis is on the Protestant ascendancy and the defeat of Catholic Louis XIV of France is illustrated with an abandoned papal crown and sceptre and a broken sword decorated with a fleur-de-lys. Two fighting ships on the lower hall ceiling are a reminder of Britain’s growing naval power.

William died in 1702 and was succeeded by his sister-in-law Queen Anne who reigned until her death in 1714. In Thornhill’s story of the early years of the 18th century Anne doesn’t exist; instead it is the arrival of the Hanoverian George I at Greenwich in 1714 that is celebrated. On the walls of the upper hall there is a portrait of George surrounded by his extensive family, a sign to everyone that the Hanoverian succession had been secured.

Greenwich sits with the Isle of Dogs across the river to the north; Charlton and Woolwich to the east; Blackheath to the south and Deptford and New Cross to the west.

Families who can afford this historic town put down firm roots — and put up with the tourists. By Anthea Masey

Today in Greenwich Rightmove has 386 homes to BUY and 261 to RENT

Above: Daniel Gospel, owner of Coffee Cabin in Greenwich South Street

Right: the river is a vital part of Greenwich life, for locals and tourists alike — and a pit stop is always welcome
A THREE-BEDROOM period conversion flat, including one en suite, with dining room, balcony and private garden in Blackheath Hill, SE3.

£900,000

A HANDSOME Victorian five-bedroom house in Coleraine Road, SE3, with off-street parking, a large kitchen/diner and close to good transport links. Through John Payne (020 8012 0740).

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A TWO-BEDROOM flat at Wyndham Apartments, River Gardens Walk, SE10, with magnificent river views, a balcony and communal gym, pool and tennis court. Call Winkworth (020 8012 0785).

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£550,000

WHAT THERE IS TO BUY

EVENING STANDARD WEDNESDAY 19 FEBRUARY 2020

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Property searching

STATS CHECK
What homes cost

BUYING IN GREENWICH
(Average price)
One-bedroom flat £372,000
Two-bedroom flat £590,000
Two-bedroom house £620,000
Three-bedroom house £831,000
Four-bedroom house £1.19 million

RENTING IN GREENWICH
(Average rate)
One-bedroom flat £1,541 a month
Two-bedroom flat £1,870 a month
Two-bedroom house £2,163 a month
Three-bedroom house £3,179 a month
Four-bedroom house £3,976 a month

Source: Rightmove

PROPERTY SCENE
A castle wing, or a modern Peninsula flat

EARLY Victorian villas and terraces are found in the Ashburnham Triangle conservation area between Blackheath Road, Greenwich High Road and Greenwich South Street, in favoured west Greenwich. East Greenwich conservation area has Georgian houses and Ballast Quay, while in the Morden College Estate around Pelton Road are pretty, flat-fronted two-storey Victorian cottages, with Arts and Crafts houses in Trenchard Street. The most unusual home for sale is a four-bedroom wing in listed Vanbrugh Castle in Maze Hill, the house Sir John Vanbrugh designed in Gothic style for himself, on the market for £2.5 million.

Two listed Georgian terrace houses in Gloucester Circus close to the town centre are for sale, one for £2.75 million, the other for £2.7 million.

Two early Victorian three-bedroom, three-storey houses in west Greenwich are for sale, one in Ashburnham Grove for £1.25 million, and the other in Royal Hill for £1.15 million.

Similar houses in east Greenwich are generally cheaper. A three-bedroom house in Vanbrugh Hill is for sale for £895,000 and two-bedroom early Victorian cottages start at around £650,000.

There are also many new-build flats both in Greenwich town centre and on the Peninsula, the most notorious being New Capital Quay, a 992-home development between Greenwich and Deptford where residents recently learned that potentially dangerous cladding will be replaced at no cost to leaseholders. Greenwich council has identified 28 buildings with potentially dangerous cladding, more than any other London borough.

NEW-BUILD HOMES

In west Greenwich Belway is selling 237 flats at The River Gardens in Banning Street of which 41 are lower cost. Only 39 three-bedroom flats remain in the current phase, all ready to move into. Prices start at £690,000, with parking an extra £15,000. Call 020 8331 5524.

In east Greenwich, the former Greenwich District Hospital site in Woolwich Road has been developed as Greenwich Square, with 645 new homes and a new library, leisure centre and GP practice, although the silver cladding was found, post-Grenfell Tower, to be potentially a problem and was replaced. The final phase, Courtyard, a development of 325 homes, is now on sale. Studios start at £355,000 with one-bedroom flats at £407,300, two-bedroom flats at £535,000 and three-bedroom flats at £695,000. Call 020 8858 4625.

SHARED OWNERSHIP

Housing association L&Q is about to launch one-, two- and three-bedroom shared-ownership flats at Courtyard at Greenwich Square. Call 0800 456 9997. Peabody is also on the verge of launching one-, two- and three-bedroom shared-ownership flats, at The River Gardens. Call 020 7021 4842.

RENTING IN GREENWICH

Greenwich is a university town and shared houses are popular with students, who pay from around £650 a month for a room. A five-bedroom Victorian house in Ashburnham Place is available for £3,800 a month, which works out slightly more at £760 a month for a room.

TRANSPORT

GREENWICH town centre is particularly well connected to Canary Wharf and the City. There are Docklands Light Railway services to Canary Wharf from Greenwich and Cutty Sark Maritime Greenwich, plus trains to London Bridge, Blackfriars and Cannon Street from Greenwich and Maze Hill stations. All stations, except Maze Hill, are in Zone 2 and an annual travelcard to Zone 1 costs £1,444. Maze Hill is in Zone 3 and an annual travelcard is £1,696.

For more area guides, visit homesandproperty.co.uk/area-guides
Q: My pushy neighbour is converting his loft which we don’t object to — but he has just served me a notice under the Party Wall Act. The notice says he wants to get his builder to do the initial survey and create a “schedule of condition”. Surely this should be done by someone completely independent, not by one of his cowboy mates?

A: The Party Wall Act has a strict procedure when a building owner is proposing works to a party wall and your neighbour has done the correct thing in serving you notice. As the adjoining owner, you can consent or disagree to the intended works. Where you disagree, or if you are in any doubt, you should either serve a counter-notice indicating this, or do nothing, in which case you are deemed to disagree. You may then either appoint a surveyor to jointly represent you and your neighbour, or each appoint your own surveyor. The surveyor(s) will then try to resolve any disputes and draw up a party wall award which sets out the agreement between you and your neighbour. In most cases the person carrying out the works is required to meet the cost of the surveyor(s). Where you consent to the works and then suffer damage to the property as a consequence of the works, you are still able to make a claim against your neighbour under the Party Wall Act.

Q: My wife and I bought a new-build flat three years ago. In the last six months we have noticed some major cracks developing in one wall. I contacted the solicitor who acted for us to ask for a copy of the warranty or guarantee from the developer but he says there wasn’t one. I was under the impression a warranty was standard?

A: While a developer is not legally required to provide a new home warranty, the vast majority of lenders insist on warranty cover. Therefore, most developers will have a warranty agreement in place so as not to put off anyone buying with a mortgage. It would be unusual for there to be no warranty in place and I suggest you ask your solicitor to send you copies of all the documentation they hold on file so as to be sure there is nothing there. If this yields no results, I suggest contacting the developer directly to ask whether there is a warranty and, if so, who this is with. Even where there is a warranty in place, you may find it difficult to make a successful claim as they include a number of exclusions and financial limits. In addition, the cover will vary depending on what point in the warranty period the damage has occurred. In any case, you should contact your landlord to notify them of the damage as they should be responsible for arranging maintenance of the main structural walls.

These answers can only be a very brief commentary on the issues raised and should not be relied on as legal advice. No liability is accepted for such reliance. If you have similar issues, you should obtain advice from a solicitor.
Robert Soning likes to make an entrance. Believing that first impressions count, the boss of design-led developer Londonewcastle places special importance on the foyer and common parts of the apartment schemes his company builds.

A lobby, he says, should be enticing and set the tone of a development, so he commissions architects to come up with bespoke interior design, while he personally cherry-picks art and furniture to adorn the space, which extends beyond hanging a couple of pictures on the walls or putting a sculpture on a plinth.

Graphics and signage are carefully considered, too, and even the wood veneered mailboxes have to be beautiful.

Chapter House in Covent Garden is his latest creation. It’s warm, intimate and gently theatrical with velvet wool carpets in the lobby, padded-effect walls, chain mail curtains, fabrics in jewel tones and an open-flame fireplace.

“The aim is to give residents a sense of homecoming and reassurance,” he says. “An entrance lobby should be an extension of the apartments, a place where residents can relax, wait for a taxi or read a book, and still feel at home.”

The scheme of 40 apartments in the Seven Dials conservation area puts dramatic contemporary design behind a handsome Victorian red brick façade.

Rather than traditional Mayfair-style luxury, the project has more in common with cutting-edge Clerkenwell homes. In the flats, rich materials are overlaid with exquisite modern factory finishes such as bronze and copper and there is a smart home system controlling motorised blinds and lighting.

Former Vogue fashion journalist Trilbey Gordon has designed the two-bedroom show apartment, which is furnished in a mix of colourful curves and sharp angles that appear to ricochet around the space. Prices start at £995,000. Call 020 7534 1888.

Meanwhile, The Makers in Shoreditch, also by Londonewcastle, has a different design theme. This development has 175 apartments in a 28-storey tower with two-tone concrete and perforated aluminium panels. The inviting Art Deco-style entrance lobby has a terrazzo floor and brass detailing. Residents can use an indoor garden or roof terrace, a gym and a screening room. From £620,000. Call 020 3296 2222.

From £620,000: apartments at The Makers in Shoreditch, right, where the lobby is done in inviting Art Deco style.

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Come fly with me to a new home in Hendon

IT’S ALMOST 10 years since developer St George started building homes on former Hendon Aerodrome in north-west London, Britain’s “cradle of aviation” where the first UK loop-the-loop and parachute descent took place.

The new 25-acre Beaufort Park neighbourhood of 3,231 homes, shops and amenities is now nearing completion. Foxglove House, the latest launch, has apartments, right, overlooking leafy Beaufort Square. Prices from £274,950. Call 020 8003 1273.

This green suburb close to the M1 is where Metro-Land begins. It’s an area of playing fields and parkland only 20 minutes from the City on the Northern line.

AFTER HITTING THE LOCAL BOUTIQUES… it’s home to chill by the tranquillity pool

The penultimate housing project at transformed King’s Cross Central, Cadence, left, strikes the right architectural notes. The distinctive design of the two-tower scheme linked by a central lobby is inspired by the station district’s historic railway arches and vaulted spaces.

With a terracotta façade, the building features a grand colonnade at the base which incorporates a double-height concierge lobby. This “arch-itecture” is repeated with a dramatic semicircular crest at the top of the building, where there are communal roof terraces and a residents’ amenity space. Most flats are either dual- or triple-aspect and some have two balconies. Full-height glazing and ceiling heights of up to 11ft throw in light. A central courtyard with a tranquillity pool is enveloped by the calming curves of arches — and it’s all only moments from the new Coal Drops Yard hub of boutique shops and eateries. Prices start at £585,000. Call 020 3691 3966.