

LONDON

Old on the outside,
new on the inside

Tucked behind the boutique shops and art galleries of Bellevue Road beside Wandsworth Common, wedged between the vernacular Victorian terraced houses common to southwest London, is Charles Baker Place — a cluster of nine new-build homes.

Small developments that blend into long-established neighbourhoods, such as Charles Baker Place, are the perfect antidote to the large-scale regeneration projects that are changing vast swathes of London.

Nick Herrtage, the co-owner of Chester Row, the developer behind the project, says the homes — priced from £1.325 million — appeal to local residents, many of whom are downsizing from larger family homes.

By keeping the façades of some of the original buildings on the site and blending these with new-build brick façades, the small gated development doesn't jar with the traditional homes it sits alongside. Inside there are all the mod cons of new developments, from smart thermostats to media rooms, underfloor heating and Miele kitchen appliances.

Two miles northwest of Charles Baker Place is 15 Abbeville Road, where a small

development of 23 flats by Rocco Homes and Indigo Scott was recently sold by the estate agency Douglas & Gordon. The flats sold in less than six weeks at prices about 20 per cent above the local average. It was a similar story three miles north in Parkgate Road, near Battersea Park, where six apartments sold in Parkgate House in less than 24 hours — the remaining one is on the market with Strutt & Parker for £2.75 million.

The popularity of such developments isn't hard to understand. Mark Dorman, the head of London residential development for Strutt & Parker, says: "The key point about these small developments is that they benefit from the established infrastructure around them: the pub on the corner that has been there for 100 years, the shops, the train station.

"You have all the advantages of buying a new property with the high-spec finishes, warranties and often the security of a gated development that you wouldn't get in a Victorian house, combined with the advantages of living in an established neighbourhood. It is the best of both worlds really," Dorman



Top: a flat in the Old Town Hall Apartments, Bermondsey SE1 (£1.25 million, Urban Spaces). **Above right:** flats in Charles Baker Place, Wandsworth SW17, start at £1.325 million (Rymer Irens and Knight Frank). **Above left:** the Artisan development in Tottenham Court Road

says. "Comparatively, regeneration projects such as Nine Elms, King's Cross or Greenwich Peninsula will take years to settle in."

Small developments are as prevalent in prime central London as they are in the suburbs. Artisan is a collection of 13 apartments by Dukelease Properties on the corner of Goodge Street and Tottenham Court Road, in the heart of the West End — prices start at £1 million. The same developer has

also launched Beau House, seven apartments produced in partnership with the architect Oliver Burns, on Jermyn Street in St James's, with prices starting at £2 million.

Richard Klein, a partner at Knight Frank, says: "With the number of large-scale residential schemes in London, small, niche developments are attracting buyers who want to live in prime central London, in an established neighbourhood with real character.

"One London village that has seen significant improvements, driven by the Howard De Walden Estate, is Marylebone — one of the capital's best addresses. It retains a genuine village feel with beautiful garden squares, such as Montagu and Bryanston, charming Georgian and Victorian period property, and a host of eclectic food shops and restaurants," Klein says.

"Located among the established Marylebone streetscape, what makes the area so desirable is its collection of best-in-class boutique developments. In an area where new homes have been in short supply, schemes such as Ronson Capital Partners' Chiltern Place have created a new offering at an extremely high standard and specification."

Dorman says that private landowners who have held on to small warehouses, garages and factories are realising that land values and planning laws will enable them to sell at a good price, especially if they have planning permission for boutique developments — projects they can sell to local developers who will design in keeping with the community.

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