



GENTLEMEN ONLY Clockwise from top left: St James's Palace's gatehouse; the portico of Boodle's members' club in days gone by; Piccadilly Arcade



#14 ST JAMES'S STREET

With The Ritz and Fortnum & Mason on your doorstep, this is the perfect place for a West End Christmas, writes **Fiona Brandhorst**
 Photography: Ben Peter Catchpole



GREAT LONDON COUNCIL
 SIR ROBERT WALPOLE
 1676-1745
 Prime Minister
 and his son
 HORACE WALPOLE
 1717-1797
 Connoisseur and
 Man of Letters
 lived here

St James's Street is the principle artery of the West End neighbourhood that takes its name. In the City of Westminster, it starts at the southern edge of Mayfair at Piccadilly, just down from The Ritz and ends opposite the gatehouse of St James's palace at Pall Mall.

At first glance

The imposing street still has a predominantly commercial feel,

with some of the highest rents in London driven by demand for offices from the hedgefunds, asset managers and galleries located there. However, this is set to change as the area is undergoing a residential revival, reclaiming its historic reputation as one of London's most exclusive addresses. The Crown Estate, which owns nearly 50 per cent of the buildings in the St James's area, is investing £500m in upgrading its

commercial portfolio and doubling its residential offering.

St James's Street's buildings are an eclectic mix of Georgian stucco façades, contemporary properties and Victorian red brick, built in a "scattered fashion", according to architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner's observations. Jermyn Street, a centre of men's fashion since the 16th century, home to Turnbull & Asser, Thomas Pink and Harvie and Hudson, among

others, leads off to the north-east. St James's Street has its own bespoke shops, many displaying their royal warrants from hatters Lock & Co, established in 1676, and Lobb bootmakers to groomers and perfumers Truefitt & Hill, gun maker William Evans and Fraser the luxury yacht builder. Wine merchants Berry Bros & Rudd have a 317-year history in the street.

Small side streets on its western side lead to prime properties

PHOTOGRAPH: JORN LAY/HISTORIC ENGLAND; MARK EVANS; PUPP/PHOTOFESTY; ILLUSTRATION: SASKIA MARJOR



ROYAL CRAFTSMEN Clockwise from left: Ai Weiwei's exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts (from 19 September-13 December); The Carlton Club; artisan chocsomaker Paxton & Whitfield holds the royal warrant



overlooking Green Park, Catherine Wheel Yard opens onto a rare collection of mews properties, while Blue Ball Yard still has its original stables, built in 1742, now part of The Stafford hotel.

Charles Lloyd, head of Savills Mayfair and St James's, says: "St James's Street has fewer dwellings than its neighbours and residents are drawn here for the refined and genteel atmosphere. It is a little more old school than Mayfair."

Why iconic?

St James's was still fields in 1660, except for the royal palace of St James's, which was built by Henry VIII in the 1530s, notes historian Melanie Backe-Hansen. "It began with Henry Jermyn, 1st Earl of Saint Albans, and a good friend of Charles II, who planned the building of St James's Square. By the 1680s, it had been completed, along with a new church of St James's by Sir Christopher Wren."

The area is famous for its private gentlemen's clubs and St James's Street is home to three of London's best-known. The Conservatives' Carlton Club is at number 69; Brooks's (60), was built in 1777 in the Palladian style by the wine merchant and money lender William Brooks, and Boodle's (28), was founded in 1762. On Pall Mall is the Royal Automobile Club and the Institute of Directors. The In & Out Club is on St James's Square.

London's most iconic hotels are on the doorstep, from the glitzy decadence of The Ritz, overlooking Green Park, to the discreet five-star luxury on offer at the St James's Hotel and The Cavendish. Fortnum & Mason, on Piccadilly, is London's most famous grocer.

St James's is synonymous with gentlemen's clothing and the statue of Beau Brummell, the Regency dandy and fashion leader, in Jermyn Street stands proudly

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LOCAL INSTITUTIONS From left: Davy's wine bar in Crown Passage, Pall Mall; Gloucester Venison at Le Caprice

opposite the Piccadilly Arcade. Notable residents have included at least four prime ministers: Churchill, Pitt, Gladstone and Stanley. Napoleon III, Nancy Astor and Sir Isaac Newton are also recognised by the numerous blue plaques in the surrounding streets.

TS Eliot wrote a poem about Bustopher Jones, the St James's Street cat, a parody of an Edwardian gentleman of leisure who, due to his constant lurching at the various clubs, is a remarkable "25 pounder".

On the market

St James's Street is beginning to rival Mount Street in Mayfair, says Jenna Buck from Knight Frank.

"We are seeing best-in-class stock achieve in excess of £3,500 per sq ft. The Penthouse at 73 St James's Street holds the record for the highest price paid per sq ft in St James's. The area's beautiful architecture and quintessentially British feel tends to attract British residents, however, its history is a magnet for Russian and American buyers, drawn to the grandeur of London's oldest district."

Stock is a rarity, with many of the tall 19th century townhouses converted into lateral flats and pieds à terre. James Barker of Foxtons says: "Prices in St James's are achieving more than £2,000 per sq ft." A four-bedroom pent-

house in St James's Street with panoramic views is available at a guide price of £9.75m through Sotheby's International Realty.

There's a renewed interest in St James's as an understated and discreet residential area. Ashley Coleman at Carter Jonas notes that residents rarely move away, creating low stock and high demand for property for sale. "Deals are typically secured off-market. St James's is currently experiencing growth; two recent off-market transactions were in excess of super-prime Mayfair prices."

Raphael Fitoussi from Sotheby's International Realty agrees. "We are selling a penthouse in a very

exclusive building off-market.

We've seen strong price growth in the last couple of years and we expect this to continue. Up until recently the area only really attracted British buyers, due to its strong English roots, now we're seeing interest from Indian and Russian buyers, too."

Rachel Thompson from The Buying Solution has seen an increase in the number of specific client requests to be on or close to Jermyn Street.

Three new developments will set a new residential high for the area. St James's House is a collection of eight one- to four-bedroom apartments within the Grade II



RED BRICK PALACE From left: St James's Palace, in Pall Mall, was finished in 1536; the East India Club, in St James's Square, was founded in the mid-19th century

listed building overlooking the gates to St James's Palace. Launched next spring by Strutt & Parker, prices are on application.

Carter Jonas is selling Beau House on Jermyn Street, developed by Dukelease and comprising seven one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments, including a 4,000 sq ft penthouse. Prices start from £2m, with completions in early 2016.

Savills has just launched Bennet House, a redevelopment of a period building by Lord Sagar and interior designer Kelly Hoppen, comprising four lateral apartments and one duplex penthouse with a roof terrace. Prices from £8m.

Restaurants and bars

There's no shortage of tradition, with the Caviar House & Prunier at the top of St James's Street, serving Persian caviar since 1932. Le Caprice in Arlington Street has been a favourite with celebrities and royals for 30 years, while The Wolseley, on Piccadilly, draws a similar clientele. The Rivoli Bar at the Ritz is famous for its cocktails. Franco's is another longstanding eatery in Jermyn Street and is now joined by Angela Hartnett's Café Murano and Hakkasan's Sake No Hana, for sushi on St James's Street.

Christmas Shopping

St James's offers a magical shopping experience for festive presents

WINE AND DINE From top:

The Rivoli Bar in The Ritz; a dish from Café Murano; Dukes Hotel; General Charles de Gaulle at the Free French headquarters at Carlton Gardens in 1943

from the many fine food and clothing outlets. The Piccadilly and Burlington Arcades are dressed for the season. Carol services are held at St James's Church and there is a Christmas market every year in St James's Square.

Transport

The nearest Tube station is Green Park, which takes you west on the Piccadilly line or north on the Jubilee and Victoria lines. Buses head east and west along Piccadilly. ■



CHANGING VALUES

Since 2005 there have been 60 properties sold on St James's Street, St James's Square and Jermyn Street. Properties sold in the last 12 months have achieved an average of £2,168 per sq ft. The most expensive property sold was a three-bedroom, 3,000+ sq ft penthouse flat, which sold in September 2014 for £10.675m, which was the highest recorded price per sq ft, at £3,481.

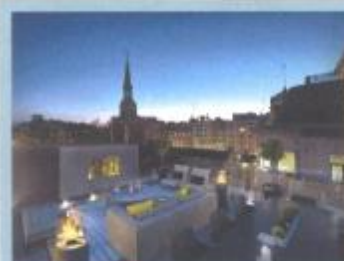
PRICE PER SQ FT FOR A ONE-BEDROOM APARTMENT:

2015 £1,840
2007 £1,142

Data supplied by LonRes

ON THE MARKET

For sale in the area



JERMYN STREET FROM £2M

Beau House is a redevelopment by designer Oliver Burns, comprising seven apartments. Agents: carterjonas.co.uk; cbre.co.uk



ARLINGTON STREET £17.5M

Opposite the Ritz Hotel this Grade II listed apartment has four high-ceilinged bedrooms. Agent: foxtons.co.uk



ST JAMES'S STREET £9.75M

A four-bedroom, four-bathroom penthouse within walking distance of Green Park station. Agent: sothebysrealty.com