

THE ONLY WAY IS UP

Once sidelined by its more affluent neighbours, Fitzrovia has become a destination in its own right. Jonathan Hudson of Hudsons Property explains why the area is the place to be

Back in March Fitzrovia topped a list of the best ten places to live in the Capital, according to a survey by *The Sunday Times*. The accolade might have been unexpected to the occasional passer-by, but it certainly didn't come as a surprise to the area's residents and business owners, like Jonathan Hudson who founded Hudsons Property in Fitzrovia in 2002. Back then the area was already on the up. Tucked away discreetly from the hustle and bustle of Tottenham Court Road, the district's burgeoning independent scene and sense of community spirit made it a popular destination for those in the know.



Today however, the secret is out and the once relatively quiet and unassuming enclave is the place to be – especially if you're a chef. Charlotte Street has welcomed an influx of foodie hotspots from a number of celebrated names, such as chef-of-the-moment Ollie Dabbous and *Saturday Kitchen* regular Jun Tanaka. As things continue to heat up in the culinary stakes, other sectors are also putting down roots in Fitzrovia; from multinational companies to small start-ups.

"As an area, you're right at the epicentre of what's happening," Hudson explains. "You can walk to Soho and Covent Garden for the theatres and excitement; you've got Marylebone on your doorstep; and the British Museum and cultural hotspots in King's Cross are nearby too.

"Charlotte Street is the hub; it's where it's all happening. There are Michelin-starred restaurants, new residential developments, and global companies such as Google and Facebook are moving in as well," he adds. "It's created such a buzz about the area; everyone wants to be here."

The imminent arrival of Crossrail, which is scheduled to open on Tottenham Court Road in 2018, will further future-proof Fitzrovia's appeal. "People used to say: 'If you can't afford Marylebone, have you thought about Fitzrovia?'" Whereas now Fitzrovia is holding its own as an area and is very close on Marylebone's heels in terms of property values."

A number of new residential developments aim to meet this increasing demand for contemporary, urban living. The first phase of one such boutique scheme, Artisan by Dukelease, has recently been completed on the corner of Goodge Street and Tottenham Court Road, where Hudsons Property is currently marketing 13 luxury one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments and penthouses. The development's sensitive design blends classic Georgian architectural details with bespoke curved glass staircases, sleek Italian kitchens and

sophisticated open-plan spaces to offer the best in modern living.

"The lettings market here has always been popular, particularly with overseas students, but the sales market is equally as strong. Buyers are definitely looking for value for money and because of that they will generally consider a few different areas," Hudson says. "Those who would traditionally have looked in Marylebone are now considering Fitzrovia too. The true value of Crossrail hasn't been seen yet, so there has never been a better time to invest in the area." As well as young professionals hoping to snap up apartments in the new developments, Asian buyers are also looking to make savvy investments: "Fitzrovia is such a buzzword in Asia," Hudson adds.

Together with Marylebone, Bloomsbury, Soho and Covent Garden, Fitzrovia is an area of expertise for Hudsons Property. It's this tailored approach that Jonathan credits as differentiating his business from other agencies. "Our specialism is the West End; we have a long-established team, which makes us an outstanding collective font of local knowledge. It also means that there's a familiar face to return to, whether you dealt with one of our agents last year or ten years' ago, which is comforting and reassuring for our clients. We pride ourselves on keeping people up to date with regular feedback on how their property is fairsing, too."

Outside the office, the team's recent fundraising efforts have contributed to a community garden at the Fitzrovia Centre and the mural restoration on Tottenham Court Road. Jonathan also recently completed a BT Tower Climb on behalf of Great Ormond Street Hospital. He and his team are looking at more fund raising exploits over the coming year. One thing's for sure: with such a proactive community thriving in the area, it'll take a lot to knock Fitzrovia off the top spot. ■

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OPPOSITE
JONATHAN HUDSON
OF HUDSONS
PROPERTY AT ONE
OF THE PENTHOUSE
APARTMENTS
AT ARTISAN BY
DUKELEASE
PHOTO CREDIT:
SARIEL JANSEN

PROPERTY PRICES IN THE AREA

AREA	AVE PRICE IN LAST 12 MONTHS	INCREASE %	INCREASE £	AVE TIME ON MARKET	AVE RENT
Marylebone	£1,490,065	+5.82%	£81,905	123 days	£4,473 pcm
Fitzrovia	£1,085,516	+1.35%	£14,489	135 days	£3,575 pcm

SOURCE: ZOOPLA