

**ON THE FENCE** Below: You are spoilt for choice when it comes to places to eat on Charlotte Street. Ollie Dabbous' Barnyard restaurant serves up hearty British fare



## ICONIC STREETS

# #20 CHARLOTTE STREET

More genteel than its neighbour Soho, Fitzrovia has been home to the Bohemian set since the 1920s and today has become a go-to hub for the capital's media industries, says **Zoe Dare Hall**

Photographs by Ben Peter Catchpole



**THE BEAT GOES ON** Above: Now an apartment building, The Scala concert hall featured in The Beatles' 1964 film *Hard Day's Night*; The Charlotte Street Hotel opened in 2000 and has interiors by Kit Kemp



**N**amed after a queen and home to London's 20th century bohemians, Charlotte Street is now coming into its own as a 'destination' location where the art, advertising, film and fashion worlds meet to work and play.

### At first glance

Tucked away in Fitzrovia behind Tottenham Court Road and Oxford Street, Charlotte Street provides respite from the crowds,

traffic and city mayhem – and never more so, as Crossrail takes shape in the depths below.

By lunchtime, Charlotte Street's pavement tables are busy. Facebook has taken over the office space at Great Portland Estates' Rathbone Square, while Derwent is redeveloping Saatchi & Saatchi's old offices at 80 Charlotte Street and Estée Lauder has made 1 Fitzroy Place their new HQ.

By evening, it's time for round two – a hub for after-work



“It’s a small street with a big pedigree and is a good stepping stone for those who work in the East End”

**STREET LIFE** Clockwise from above: Looking north up Charlotte Street towards the BT Tower; eat fresh at the Charlotte Street hotel; the ‘ventilation bug’ adorns an office building in Howland Street

socialising in its restaurants, the boutique Charlotte Street Hotel or the Fitzroy Tavern – the pub that’s believed to have given Fitzrovia its name. The pub itself was named after Charles Fitzroy, who first developed nearby Fitzroy Square for the upper classes in the 1750s.

“It’s a small street with a big pedigree,” says Rachel Thompson at Knight Frank’s The Buying Solution. “It’s often filled with film and TV celebrities who use the cinema at the Charlotte Street Hotel for private screenings. I’ve had a couple of clients who have moved from Notting Hill to Fitzrovia. It’s also a good stepping

stone for those who work in the East End or enjoy the art scene in the area without living right in the throng of it,” says Thompson.

Meanwhile, Charles Cutting, sales manager for Foxtons Marylebone, thinks Fitzrovia is becoming ever more like his local patch. “It’s drawing closer to becoming the new Marylebone.”

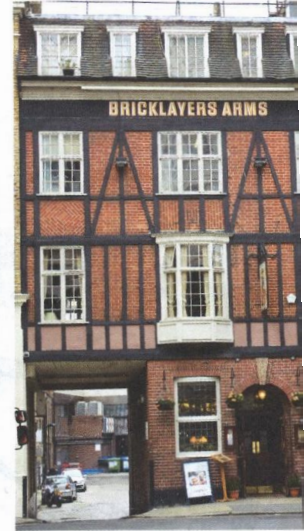
That vibrancy is becoming stronger as Fitzrovia is home to “the biggest construction pipeline in London”, says Cutting. The street’s 18th and 19th century buildings are joined by new-build schemes such as Rathbone Square, where Savills is selling properties from £995,000



ILLUSTRATIONS: SANNA MANDER PHOTOGRAPHS: ALAMY / GLOBE PHOTOS / ZUMA PRESS



**KERB APPEAL** Left: One of London's best-known French restaurants sits next to a contemporary art gallery Below: media favourite the Bricklayers Arms



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to £3.2m, and Fitzroy Place – a mixed-use transformation of the old Middlesex Hospital site, with properties up to £4.99m.

Such development is turning Fitzrovia into a place you'd want to live. This is most definitely a street – and area – on the up. The new-build schemes, with their residents' gyms and concierge services, are bringing "a new breed of property" to Fitzrovia, says Nick Poppe, associate at Savills Marylebone. Buyers are spotting potential in this well-located but under-valued area.

"The average price for a one-bedroom flat in Fitzrovia is around £650,000, while a two-bedroom apartment averages closer to £1.2 million. The more fashionable new builds also come at a premium," says Charles Cutting.

Crossrail – taking travellers to Canary Wharf in 12 minutes and Heathrow in 28 – will add further value, with JLL forecasting a 42 per cent uplift in prices between 2014-2020, and the £1bn regeneration of Tottenham Court Road and east end of Oxford Street, all adding an attractive sheen to

Charlotte Street's doorstep.

"It's a different kind of neighbourhood to Marylebone or Mayfair. It has a younger and more creative vibe akin to its neighbour Soho without being as busy," says Lindsey Webb of the Savills-owned buying agency Prime Purchase. "Prime bolt holes, hotel rooms and restaurant tables will be likely be in high demand from 2017."

There is little for sale currently on Charlotte Street, but two-bedroom conversion flats in nearby streets go for £1.1m-£1.9m.

New developments nearby include Dukelease's Artisan, with 13 boutique apartments for sale straddling Tottenham Court Road and Goodle Street.

### Why iconic

Charlotte Street first emerged as a residential address in 1763 and was christened in honour of Queen Charlotte after her marriage to King George III. One of its first landmarks was The Scala, which was built in 1772 as the King's Concert Rooms and a magnet for high society. It became

## On the market

For sale in the area



### CLEVELAND STREET £2.69M

Housed behind the original façade of a Victorian public house is this two-bedroom duplex apartment, featuring a basement spa.  
Agent: [knightfrank.co.uk](http://knightfrank.co.uk)



### BOURLET CLOSE £2.375M

At the end of a quiet cobble street this two-bedroom freehold house is set over three floors and features flexible living spaces.  
Agent: [lurotbrand.co.uk](http://lurotbrand.co.uk)



### GOODLE STREET £900PW

Featuring its own private passenger lift, this double-aspect two-bedroom flat has recently been refurbished to a high standard.  
Agent: [kfh.co.uk](http://kfh.co.uk)



**STREET SCENE** Clockwise from above: Tap Coffee on Rathbone Place; a CGI illustrates the proposed gardens at Great Portland Estates' Rathbone Square development; Colville Place borders Charlotte Street



the Prince of Wales Theatre and then flourished as a cinema when it was rebuilt in 1904. The Scala enjoyed another stint as a theatre – and starred in The Beatles' film, *A Hard Day's Night* – before it was demolished in 1969. Today a block of flats sits in its place.

As one of London's main German-speaking quarters, the street was nicknamed *Charlottenstrasse*. The street's notable residents included Sass's Academy, the art school founded by Henry Sass in the early 19th century to train artists seeking to enter the Royal Academy. Names including John Millais, Dante Gabriel Rossetti (who also lived in the street with his poet sister Christina Rossetti) and William Powell Frith received their early training there. Thackeray was also once a student and caricatured the school in his novel *The Newcomes*. Various other artists made Charlotte Street their home, including John Constable, who died at No. 76 in 1837.

From the 1920s to the 1950s, the Fitzroy Tavern became famous as the hang-out for artists, writers, intellectuals and bohemians including Dylan Thomas, Lawrence Durrell and George Orwell. And after the Second World War, new communities moved in, including

Greeks and Italians followed by Nepalese and Bengalis.

### Eating and drinking

Small cafés, delis and independent restaurants remain: L'Etoile, a French bistro on Charlotte Street which has been there since 1896, is said to have been T S Eliot's favourite restaurant and the place where writers Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis launched a literary magazine in 1914. Black Sheep Coffee, which opened in 2013, attracts the local creatives.

But the big names are starting to take over. "High-end restaurants such as Hakkasan, Lima and Dabbous bring a Michelin-starred flavour to the area, and with three excellent hotels in a small patch – the Sanderson kicked it all off in the 2000s, the Charlotte Street Hotel and The London Edition – there is now a taste for every wallet," says Lindsey Webb.

It's becoming a foodie destination – add Michelin-starred chef Jason Atherton's Berners Tavern, The Lucky Pig Cocktail Bar and Dickie Fitz, an Aussie-French fusion restaurant, to the list.

Fino is one of London's best tapas restaurants and the Charlotte Street hotel includes The Oscar Bar & Restaurant, whether it's

afternoon tea or cocktails you're after. On neighbouring Percy Street, Elysee is the oldest Greek restaurant in London.

### Local attractions

This is a burgeoning area for experimentation. Lazarides on neighbouring Rathbone Place is a cool multi-storey art gallery set in a Georgian townhouse owned by Steve Lazarides, Banksy's former agent. Specialising in street art, his roster of creatives includes 3D, JR and Invader.

The New Diorama Theatre, half a mile away, promotes up and coming talent. Or for a museum with a difference, try the Grant Museum of Zoology, whose vast collection of everything from dodo bones to Tasmanian tiger skeletons is open to the public. **■**

### CHANGING VALUES

Properties sold since 2015 have achieved an average of £1,844 per sq ft. New development has led to significant increases in values. The most expensive property sold was a three-bedroom penthouse which fetched £4.845m in May 2016. A three bedroom flat sold in April 2016 for £2,003 per sq ft.

**A TWO-BEDROOM FLAT SOLD FOR:**  
**2006 £550K**  
**2013 £950K**

Data provided by LonRes