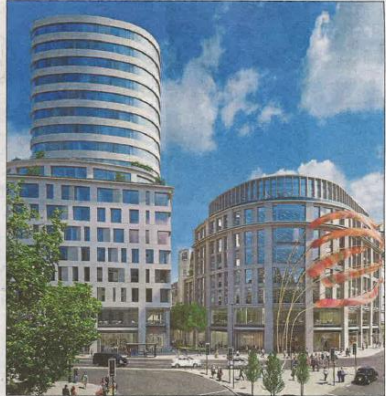




From £2 million: above and below, Beau House in St James's, named for Regency dandy Beau Brummell, apartments with high-end interiors. Call 020 7240 2255



Bookending Oxford Street: Almacantar's Marble Arch Place, with flats, offices, shops and a cinema



£350 million investment: luxury flats at the made-over Centre Point tower block, right, in New Oxford Street

Historic quarter: the Apple Market, Covent Garden, left, at the beating heart of the sweeping West End revamp



From £950,000: flats at The Colyer, former offices in Great Newport Street, Covent Garden

# Revel in central London life as the West End is reborn

THE West End is in the throes of a huge makeover that includes a long-awaited renovation programme. The district stretching from Covent Garden to Marble Arch is recapturing the residential allure it lost to commerce, with £20 billion of improvements. As with so many London areas, Crossrail, scheduled to open next year, has been the major catalyst.

New stations at Tottenham Court Road and Bond Street are sparking a wave of cleanly curated flats along with new offices, shops, pedestrian-friendly plazas and public spaces.

For the first time since the Blitz, the bright lights of Piccadilly Circus have fallen dark. This autumn a £30 million state-of-the-art curved screen will feature live video streaming, with weather reports, sports, news – and one spectacular advertisement at a time.

Historically, the West End was built as a series of palaces, expensive townhouses, theatres and fashionable arcades. The antiseptic fled during the Second World War and returned into a commercial district with relatively few residents. The current revival is encouraged by a demand for Zone 1 living from Londoners keen to enjoy city life, but reluctant to commute.

Depending on the exact location, West End homes can be cheaper than those in central London's more established residential neighbourhoods such as Chelsea and Kensington, starting just below £500,000. The area has always appealed to creatives such as film and fashion executives and young entrepreneurs, who like the lively vibe of this stimulating area. But more surprising, downsizers from the country

A sumptuous £20bn transformation is taking the capital's Zone 1 heart back to residential glory. It's thanks to Crossrail, says **David Spittles**

Thinking of moving to Zone 1? Start your search on **rightmove** find your happy

are moving in for their share of the action promised by theatres and new restaurants. Designer flats are springing up in unlikely pockets, including the Soho backstreets.

**FLATS IN BLUE PLAQUE STREETS** Tour guides point out Great Newport Street and the blue plaque property where artist Juhua Reynolds lived between 1753 and 1761, along with the "policeman's coat rack", a curious relic used in ages past by traffic officers to hang up their capes. The Colyer is a new scheme of 14 flats set behind two



From £7.95 million: The Corinthia Residences, Whitehall Place (020 7861 1740)

handsome Victorian buildings that were offices, John Robertson Architects faced the challenge in this conservation area of creating a spectacular glazed penthouse. The solution was a variation of the traditional Mansard roof, with 12 vertical brise-soleil panels that conceal the glazing from street level. From £500,000 to £3.75 million. Call CRSL on 020 7420 3060.

**Wardour Lofts** comprises four two-bedroom flats carved from a former printworks. These homes recreate a "lived-in" look, with robust but warm, earthy industrial features such as aged

guides, exposed brick walls, reclaimed oak floors and vaulted ceilings. From £2,195,000. Call CRSL (as before).

Coming soon is **Royalalty Mews**, a cobbled retreat tucked away off Dean Street, where an intricate metal art installation heralds the entrance and doubles as a bespoke external stairway to four exquisite flats set behind a cool matt black brick exterior.

**HEIGHT OF FASHION** Former fashionable addresses in St James's are also back in vogue. Inspired by Jeremy Street's tradition of bespoke

British tailoring and fashion brands, **Beau House**, named after Regency dandy Beau Brummell, offers flats with interiors that boast bronze and leather finishes, fine cabrietry and marble. From £2 million. Call 020 7240 2255.

**In Regent Street** The Crown Estate has spent years carefully restoring the precious Neoclassical architecture. Now it is working on the blank side streets directly opposite Haymarket, currently dominated by soccer shops and chain restaurants. The makeover dovetails with a major upgrade of Leicester Square and aims to create smarter shops with apartments above.

The **Courthia Residences** have been created at the top of a deluxe hotel, moments from Trafalgar Square. The auspicious address was once the Ministry of Works. From £7.95 million. Call 020 7861 1740.

Other big local landowners such as Shaftesbury, Derwent, Capco and The Marcors' Company are working with local authority planners to create micro zones of boutique housing and shops. **Bathbone Square**, Fitzrovia, replaces an ugly postal depot and creates a new pedestrian route through the site plus substantial public space.

Its two L-shaped buildings have 142 homes, offices and shops that get with the surrounding network of 18th-century streets. Facebook is opening its European HQ there.

Even Oxford Street, so indelibly linked with shopping, is becoming a place to live. New West End Company, an umbrella group of business and property owners backed by Westminster council, has devised a £1.3 billion masterplan to transform the bustling thoroughfare into a clean, tree-lined,

more pedestrian-friendly boulevard adorned with public art. New "gateways" are planned for Marble Arch, Tottenham Court Road, New Bond Street and Langham Place, and there will be 12 wide street "oases" for alfresco dining and boutique shopping.

Flats are being created above street-level shops. **Park House**, a capsule-like structure opposite Selfridges, includes high-line apartments with their own entrance on quiet North Row in Mayfair. Call Knight Frank on 020 7861 5485.

**Developer Land Securities is working up plans for a £200 million, 90-home scheme** at the opposite end of Oxford Street, where revamped Centre Point, the listed concrete office tower being converted into 82 apartments, will be completed this summer.

Back at the western end of Oxford Street, **Marble Arch Tower** is to be replaced by **Marble Arch Place**, with 54 flats, offices, shops and a new Odeon cinema. Artist Lee Simmons has been commissioned to create an installation for a new civic space. Another 76 flats

and a new petrol station are being built at a linked Edgware Road site.

**S PRUCHUP** is to include The Portman Estate, owner of 180 acres – 69 streets with 650 buildings, four garden squares and more than 1,000 homes – immediately north of Oxford Street. More than £240 million will be invested during the next six years. A scheme at 62 Seymour Street has yielded 10 smart flats and a former police section house has made way for 24 more.

**Boutique developments:** Rathbone Square in Fitzrovia, with flats, offices, shops – and Facebook's new European HQ



**Kilbrook Park Rd, SE3**  
2 bedrooms, hall floor apartment, landscaped communal gardens, off-street parking, EPC D  
Guide £740,950. Share of freehold  
JLL Blackheath, 020 3811 2310

**54 Old Castle Street, E1**  
3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, balcony  
City skyline views, 24hr concierge, EPC B  
Guide £950,000. Leasehold  
JLL City, 020 3733 1411

**Riverside Apartments, N4**  
2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, City & water views south facing balcony, 24hr concierge, EPC C  
Guide £705,500. Leasehold  
JLL Finchbury Park, 020 3504 9928

**Riverlight Quay, SW11**  
2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 10th floor, views to the river, balconies, right to park, EPC B  
Guide £1.1 million. Leasehold  
JLL Nine Elms, 020 3811 2926

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