

# Why Marylebone is the star village

## LUXE

**This good-looking neighbourhood has chic restaurants and great architecture, says Liz Rowlinson**

From Charles Dickens to Lord Nelson, the Beatles and Madonna, Marylebone has never been short of famous residents. Yet it was the opening of the Chiltern Firehouse hotel and restaurant in 2013 that really put it on the map for celebrities from both sides of the Pond. Suddenly the gothic former fire station, recreated by the New York hotel magnate André Balazs, became (and still is) the hottest ticket in town.

Yet it is not only Americans buying pads near the Chiltern Firehouse that has propelled this fashionable urban village to outperform competition. The building of luxury developments in the area, with hotel-style concierge services (there are 77 schemes of 1,277 units in the pipeline), has attracted ultra-



The remaining apartments in the 16-storey, modern, art deco-style block Chiltern Place start at £1.95 million

prime buyers, pushing up prices per square foot by 45.6 per cent in the past five years, compared with 27.4 per cent in Mayfair and 22.4 per cent in Notting Hill, according to a report by Beauchamp Estates, an estate agency. Five years ago average prices per square foot in Marylebone were 8.3 per cent lower than the average across prime central London; now they are 7.1 per cent higher.

Helping to attract celebrities to the village, which has a weekly farmers' market and famous addresses that include Harley Street, Baker Street and Manchester Square (home to the Wallace Collection), are the landlords the Howard de Walden Estate and the Portman Estate.

On Marylebone High Street, there are independent boutiques, artisan cafés, juice

bars and one-off restaurants. There's a Ginger Pig butcher, numerous high-end bakers, including Nordic Bakery, Gail's and Daylesford, and a candle maker, Cire Trudon, alongside VV Rouleaux, the renowned ribbons and trimmings shop.

"Marylebone has changed dramatically in the past five years, and the repositioning of its leisure and retail offerings has been a key driver," says Alex Bourne, a director at Beauchamp Estates's new Marylebone office. "Its beautiful period architecture and transport links have always been an attraction — and Crossrail [in 2018] will help — but the new-build dimension has raised its game."

Residential development has largely taken place in four locations: Chiltern Street, Marylebone High Street, the edge of Regent's Park and the Fitzrovia border.

There is only one apartment remaining for sale in the Chilterns, a Frogmore and Galliard development of 44 apartments. The two-bedroom duplex, with a self-contained annexe and ground-floor terrace, is on the market for £5.4

million.

“Properties in the development [from £2.6 million to £24 million] have been popular with downsizers from Hampstead and St John’s Wood, and buyers after a pied-à-terre. Between 30 per cent and 40 per cent have sold to Middle Eastern second-home buyers,” says Ben Sharer, a sales executive at Galliard.

If the on-site gym and wellness amenities are busy, residents can pop next door to the industrial-chic BXR gym, a state-of-the-art boxing-themed gym that has the boxing world heavyweight champion Anthony Joshua on the board.

A discount is also being negotiated for owners at nearby Chiltern Place. The modern, art deco-style, 16-storey block of 55 apartments is hard to miss on the corner of Chiltern Street and Paddington Street Garden, a tranquil little park shaded by trees.

“The location, which is not on the high street, along with the quality of the finish, has helped to attract buyers from Knightsbridge and Belgravia, and it’s been particularly popular with people who regard



**An apartment in The W1 development in the old BBC Radio London HQ**



**Apartments in The W1 on Marylebone High Street start at £4.1million**

London as their second home,” says Lisa Ronson, the commercial director of Ronson Capital Partners, the developer.

The first residents move in next month and remaining apartments start at £1.95 million.

Also due for completion this year are Rathbone Square (142 apartments from Great Portland Estates) and The W1, a boutique development of apartments and townhouses in the old 1930s BBC Radio London headquarters on Marylebone High Street. If you prefer the rich historical detailing and the proportions of a period townhouse, you can get one for about £1,500 a square foot,

according to Christian Lock-Necrews, the head of the local Knight Frank office.

“There aren’t that many townhouses that haven’t been subdivided — the area is 96 per cent apartments — so they get snapped up, especially the larger houses on Wimpole Street, or Bryanston and Montagu squares,” he says. The agency has a six-bedroom Georgian house on Manchester Street for £9.5 million.

For those who prefer lateral living there is a beautifully finished three-bedroom apartment within a Robert Adam building on New Cavendish Street (£7.75 million with Beauchamp Estates).

There are great opportunities for investors in classic mansion blocks too, Bourne says. “In Dorset House, a 1930s portered art-deco block of 200 apartments that is about to have a facelift, prices are £1,000 a square foot. After the refurb they will be £2,000 a square foot.”

Bourne suggests that a large, bright two-bedroom flat on sale here for £1.385 million is the “cheapest decent apartment in Marylebone”. ■