

Homes & Property New homes

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Our garden's in the sky

SOME of the tallest towers are being built at **One Nine Elms**, a homes-and-hotel scheme with 436 flats. The first of the two striking buildings is 56-storey City Tower. Much is being made of its dramatic architecture and stunning views plus the five-star hotel services available to residents. But amenities come at a cost – higher service charges. Completion is in 2018. Prices from £795,000. Call Strutt & Parker on 020 7629 7282.

Nine Elms Point, right, a complex of 593 flats, is being built beside the new Nine Elms Northern line Tube station in Wandsworth Road. A new Sainsbury superstore is part of the project. Two-bedroom flats start at £883,000. Call Barratt on 0844 811 4334.

Vauxhall Sky Gardens is rising on a plot opposite the Tube station. The 35-storey tower includes communal gardens on the higher floors, while the design of the "rococo-style" entrance lobby is inspired by historic Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens, from 1729 a centre of art and architecture for 200 years. Two-bedroom flats with interiors by Philippe Starck's Yoo company cost from £980,000. Completion in 2017. Call 020 7437 1000.



NICKNAMED "New South Bank" and even "Hong Kong on Thames", Nine Elms is on the radar of everyone looking for a new central London home or an investment. This once-forlorn industrial strip between Battersea and Vauxhall is rapidly turning into the capital's biggest new neighbourhood, attracting buyers, renters and investors from across London and the globe.

Covering 480 acres, the area between Vauxhall Bridge and Chelsea Bridge, sandwiched by the Thames and Wandsworth Road, is five times the size of Canary Wharf, with a mile and a half of riverfront and up to 30 projects either under way or poised to start.

As the distinctive residential towers shoot up and the neighbourhood takes shape, buyers are becoming more forensic about the design, size and price of the homes on offer, as well as local amenities, and are deciding precisely where they want to live. After all, Nine Elms will be a construction site for at least another 10 years.

The rough masterplan envisages a collection of micro neighbourhoods – high-rise, low-rise, riverside and inland, each with a distinct identity. There's a wide spectrum of homes and prices, and resales are already appearing. It takes about half an hour to walk through the heart of the district, so proximity to one of two new Tube stations coming to the area is likely to be a big factor for many buyers. A railway line, parallel with the river, cuts through it, giving rise to judgments about homes on the "wrong side of the tracks".

Up in the blue: Vauxhall Sky Gardens, a 35-storey tower of 204 flats at Nine Elms with interiors by Yoo and communal gardens on the higher floors



NEW TOWERS OF LONDON

Five times the size of Canary Wharf, with two new Tube stations and a business park, Nine Elms is shooting skywards, discovers **David Spittles**

VAUX POP

Start your home search at the district's eastern end, by M16 headquarters, where a cluster of developments is under construction. This patch, amid Vauxhall's fast-gentrifying streets, is closest to the central London action and likely to appeal to younger buyers working in the City and West End.

Vauxhall Cross, currently a giant traffic swirl, is set to be transformed by a development of the same name: two skyscrapers designed by architects Squire and Partners that will "dovetail" with the bustling transport hub, bringing 291 apartments plus a hotel, offices,

shops and pedestrian-friendly spaces. First phase completions from 2019. Call Knight Frank on 020 7861 5411.

PARK PEOPLE

A linear park linking the river and various developments including the US embassy will be the pedestrian spine of the new district. This "continuous car-free green corridor" will run from Vauxhall Cross to Battersea Power Station. It will be a focal point for recreation, entirely open to the public. The edges of this important community facility will be lined with shops, cafés and restaurants, appealing

Manhattan style: Embassy Gardens streets, right, around the new US embassy, have the solid feel of the Meatpacking District, or the capital's Edwardian mansion blocks



New homes Homes & Property



Transformation: the Vauxhall Cross towers, by Squire and Partners, with 291 flats, a hotel, offices and shops. Call Knight Frank on 020 7861 5411

in the power station itself have sold for premium prices, with studios fetching £800,000. "There are buyers who want to be in the power station and nowhere else," says Kieran Chalker of local estate agent Garton Jones. One of the area's two Northern line stations will be within the 40-acre complex, expected to be a vibrant, 24-hour neighbourhood.

While the born-again power station will open up the waterfront, closed to the public for generations, the back end of the development in Nine Elms Lane is less enticing.

The industrial legacy is still evident here. Battersea Dogs and Cats Home is an incongruous presence, while the land is criss-crossed by railway tracks. Gas holders are being decommissioned for new housing, called **Battersea Gardens**, by developer St James.

Battersea Park East, a scheme by Taylor Wimpey, seeks to enhance the area by transforming derelict railway arches and building 290 homes plus a new primary school, and is perhaps a chance to buy into a hot district at a lower price. To register, call DTZ on 020 3296 2222.

To date, developers have been aggressively marketing homes and raising prices with each new phase. Since 2011, the average value of a home in the Nine Elms zone has jumped from about £800 to £1,400 per square foot, while spectacular river-facing flats are fetching more than £2,000 per square foot.

It is a good idea to compare resales with off-plan prices. Garton Jones has a number of resales priced from £699,000 to £2.9 million. Call 020 7735 1888.

With many more flats becoming available, and property market sentiment changing ahead of next year's general election, it is possible that prices may plateau, at least in the short term.

to families and those seeking to relax and shake off the sweat of the city.

A key section of the park will snake through what is now New Covent Garden Market, a 57-acre industrial estate for London's fruit and vegetable traders. The site will become a new Borough Market-style food quarter with stalls, space for start-up businesses and up to 3,019 homes.

Embassy Gardens, next door, is one of the more advanced projects, a complex of 1,982 homes that will form a horseshoe around the new American embassy. The apartment blocks are more sober and arguably more considered than those at Vauxhall Cross. Built of brick rather than glass and steel, they are of varying height and character, influenced by Manhattan's historic Meatpacking District.

Developer Ballymore has also delivered classy, contemporary-design interiors.

The first residents move in early next year. On-site extras include a spa, yoga studio, library, cinema suite and 24-hour security. Coming later is one of London's biggest Waitrose stores. Show flats are open for viewing ahead of the phase two launch next spring. Call 020 7062 8940.

Behind Embassy Gardens, warehouses formerly owned by fine art auctioneer Christie's are being redeveloped by Bellway into 513 homes, while **Nine Elms Parkside**, currently a Royal Mail depot, has planning consent for 456 homes, sports pitches and a primary school. **Riverlight** has six waterfront pavilions with 813 homes and is well-located for the proposed

new pedestrian bridge across the Thames to Pimlico. Prices from £800,000. Call 020 7870 9620.

POWER PLAY

Awesome Battersea Power Station, close to Chelsea Bridge, will be the district's commercial heart, its town centre. The £8 billion power station redevelopment will provide three and a half million square feet of shops, offices and restaurants, as well as 3,800 homes, the first of which will be ready in 2016.

Two phases of apartments were an instant sell-out and the third phase, a series of dramatic, tumbling, titanium-clad blocks by "starchitect" Frank Gehry, has just been unveiled, with prices starting at £495,000 for a studio and £3.2 million for a four-bedroom townhouse. Call 020 7501 0678. Flats



Window on the world: panoramic view at Vauxhall Sky Gardens (020 7437 1000)

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