



A sense of local history: staff of the Black Cultural Archives in Windrush Square, which was set up in 1981



Hotspot: Electric Avenue provided the title of a 1983 pop song by Eddy Grant



Brixton barnets: Carlos Martin runs Blue Peacock, a unisex hairdresser's in Goldharbour Lane that has been a fixture in the area for more than two years

# Spotlight on Brixton

This thriving south London district has become every young Londoner's dream destination, discovers **Anthea Masey**

THERE are few areas in London whose fortunes have had so many twists and turns as Brixton. From being a smart south London suburb with one of the capital's top shopping streets at the beginning of the 20th century, to the area that became the beating heart of the Windrush generation who came from the Caribbean after the Second World War and a locality troubled by racial tension, crime and gang violence, resulting in major riots in 1981, 1985 and 1995. How things change. Today Brixton is achingly cool, and is shuffling off its battle-hardened reputation. Brixton Village – locals still call it by its original name Granville Arcade – is now a major London tourist attraction. Situated in part of the famous and now listed covered markets, it is a destination reborn with boutiques, restaurants and cafes sharing the space with South American butchers, Caribbean grocers, African stores and English fishmongers.

The nearby shipping-container park Pop Brixton is home to young businesses running cafes, bars and restaurants but its hipsterish vibe has caused some locals, who voice their opinions most vocally on Brixton's colourful message board Urban75, to claim that Brixton's regeneration is sliding into gentrification. Shock horror. The hugely respected architect Michael Squire, head of Squire & Partners, has moved the company in. He is one of the new Brixton's biggest fans, having recently transported his offices from King's Cross to Ferndale Road, where the firm has renovated one of Brixton's lost landmarks, the Bon Marché department store, a stone's throw from the high street.

The Department Store, as he calls his building, has a brand-new glass dome and a restaurant on the ground floor, and although Squire is coy about how much the development has cost, he says the move to Brixton makes sense both financially and socially. "I found King's Cross was becoming increasingly corporate. Here in Brixton there is a community and we are much more engaged in local activities."

One example is the Brixton Design Trail, which runs until Sunday. This is the fourth year Brixton has been part of the London Design Festival, one of only two local design celebrations

Today in Brixton Rightmove has 667 homes to BUY and 547 to RENT

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side. This weekend The Department Store hosts Design Circus, a collaboration between Crafty Fox Market and BRIXI, the quirky design and gift shop in Brixton Market.

Elsewhere in Brixton's town centre the Your New Town Hall project will see the landmark Lambeth building renovated to provide some council services, a council chamber and offices for start-up businesses. Surrounding buildings are being developed to provide new council offices, 194 new homes and ground-floor shops and restaurants.

And next to the Black Cultural Archives in Windrush Square a memorial to the estimated two million African-Caribbean soldiers who fought in both world wars was recently unveiled.

Brixton is four miles from central London with Kennington and the Oval to the north, Camberwell to the east, Streatham to the south and Clapham to the west.

Estate agent Mark Hustwit from Marsh & Parsons, which opened its branch in Brixton last year, says the area is evolving. "It is popular with first-time buyers who like the busy nightlife and the easy commute into central London. We see brothers and sisters and sharers buying together with help from their parents. There is also a strong local market with people progressing from a flat to a house.

Shop/eat until you drop: main picture, Brixton Village, a popular tourist destination with shops and restaurants; above left, Luke Willis and Ezra Townsend at Pop Brixton; above right, Ben Bell, manager of LionVibes Records

Photographs: Daniel Lynch



£985,000 A handsome double-fronted period five-bedroom house in Sulina Road, Brixton, with a very pleasant patio garden. Brooks (020 8769 8000)



£825,000 In Hedderington Road on the Clapham borders is this fully refurbished two-bedroom period terrace house/kinleigh Folkard & Hayward (020 8012 4522)



£649,950 Ramilles Close, Brixton, has a smart and spacious four-bedroom house for sale through Foxtons (020 8012 6723)

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For more about Brixton, visit **homesandproperty.co.uk/brixton**



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### STATS CHECK WHAT HOMES COST

**BUYING IN BRIXTON**  
(Average prices)

- One-bedroom flat £390,000
- Two-bedroom flat £520,000
- Two-bedroom house £631,000
- Three-bedroom house £821,000
- Four-bedroom house £983,000

**RENTING IN BRIXTON**  
(Average rates)

- One-bedroom flat £1,339 a month
- Two-bedroom flat £1,637 a month
- Two-bedroom house £1,984 a month
- Three-bedroom house £2,335 a month
- Four-bedroom house £3,092 a month

Source: Rightmove

FOR MORE, VISIT [homesandproperty.co.uk](http://homesandproperty.co.uk)

- Use our School Checker to find catchment areas and inspection reports for local schools
- The best of Brixton's shops and restaurants
- Local arts, leisure and sport
- All the latest new homes developments

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Moolah! café assistant Lauren Harbord with notes in the Brixton pound currency, which can be spent locally

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## THE PROPERTY SCENE

BRIXTON has mainly mid- to late-Victorian two-, three- and four-storey terrace houses and mansion flats, although there are some earlier Georgian and early-Victorian terraces along Brixton Road and Vassall Road. The most expensive house for sale now is a double-fronted Victorian house in need of renovation in Trent Road, on sale for £1.5 million.

**NEW-BUILD HOMES**  
Taylor Wimpey is building 71 one-, two- and three-bedroom flats, of which 21 are affordable through housing association Paragon at The Edge (the-edgebrixton.co.uk; 020 3897 4811) next to the railway viaduct in the centre of Brixton. The two

blocks are eight storeys tall with commercial space on the ground floor; one-bedroom flats start at £460,000. Sales are off-plan and the development will be ready to move into next summer.

Your **New Town Hall** in Brixton (020 3603 5546) town centre is a joint venture between Lambeth council and developer Muse that will provide new council offices and 194 new homes. Ivor House in Acre Lane is being converted into 26 one- and two-bedroom flats over four floors and there will be 94 affordable and private sale flats in Brook House on Brixton Hill. Expect the launch before the end of the year. A further 74 homes will be built on the site of Olive Morris House in Brixton Hill. Elm Park Gardens (through Pedder,

020 7738 6839) in Brading Road is a development of six four-bedroom terrace houses from £840,000.

There are two small developments, ready to move into, overlooking each other on Goldharbour Lane close to Loughborough Junction station. Noble House (020 7689 1000) has built seven studios, one- and two-bedroom flats; only two-bedroom flats remain and prices start at £475,000. On the other side of the road, developer Woodberry Group is selling nine one-, two- and three-bedroom flats at 215 Goldharbour Lane (Pedder, 020 7738 6839); one-bedroom flats start at £375,000.

**AFFORDABLE HOMES**  
Housing association Metropolitan has launched **South West 9** (020 3535 2555) in Barrington Road, a development of 81 one-, two- and three-bedroom shared ownership flats. One-bedroom flats start at £162,750 for a 35 per cent share in a flat valued at £465,000.

As part of the **Oval Quarter**, the regeneration of the Myatt's Fields North Estate, Southern has one- and two-bedroom flats in **The Wren Building** (0300 555 217) in Eythorne Road; one bedroom flats start at £157,500 for a 35 per cent share in a flat valued at £450,000.

**RENTABLE HOMES**  
Lexadon is a local south London developer which unusually specialises in the private rental market. Its flats currently range from £310 a week for a one-bedroom flat in Weld Works Mews off Brixton Hill to £620 a week for a three-bedroom flat in Brixton Road.

### TRANSPORT

BRIXTON is at the end of the Victoria line, which guarantees a seat in the morning rush hour. There is also a train station with trains to Victoria, which take nine minutes. Nearby Loughborough Junction is on Thameslink, with trains to Blackfriars (in nine minutes), Farringdon (in 14 minutes) and St Pancras (in 18 minutes), although locals complain of overcrowding in the rush hour. Brixton is in Zone 2 and an annual travel card to Zone 1 costs £1,296. There are useful commuter bus routes



running through Brixton with the number 2 to Marylebone via Victoria and Marble Arch, the number 3 to Trafalgar Square, the 59 to King's Cross via Waterloo and Holborn, the 133 to Liverpool Street via London Bridge and the 159 to Marble Arch via Trafalgar Square and Oxford Circus.

### HAVE YOUR SAY: BRIXTON

#### LOCALS TWEET THEIR TIPS

- @barnesy3391 Definitely the @ shrubshutter336 – amazing cocktails and great food! #lovebrixton.
- @DiddySquatts My favourite pub in Brixton is the Duke of Edinburgh – unexpectedly amazing beer garden and jerk chicken
- @Toby\_Nicholson Le Deli Corner and Naughty Piglets are both epic for food. Fierce Grace for yoga...
- @pstep177 It's seafood!
- @GinaFitchett Brixton Beer! Best beer in London!!!

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