



MEGAN TAYLOR

Above: Little Venice, one of four locations for planned new canal-based leisure spaces
Right: from £369,500, apartments at The Brentford Project by Ballymore, a new west London residential quarter beside the Grand Union Canal. Call 020 3797 4875

Canal basins are the new village greens

London's canals are being transformed with new communities and arts and leisure venues.

Anna White reports

CANAL basins are becoming the new "village greens" of London, as these once-industrial sites are transformed into centres for community living. They are the hubs of a network of waterways that crisscrosses London and is woven into the city's historic infrastructure.

Many canal basins fell out of use, becoming inaccessible and often dangerous. "Fifteen years ago there were some canalside developments which were linear apartment blocks built up against the water, only to be enjoyed by those residents," says Christopher Jones of Knight Frank.

"The approach has drastically changed. Homes and offices are being built set back from the canal and

towpath to create new public realm for all to enjoy. That space is now being shared."

Some canal basins have become centres of activity as vast, mixed-use schemes with homes, offices, shops and leisure amenities being created. Aneisha Berridge of Hamptons International says: "There is a shift away from the exclusive gated canalside community to the provision of more affordable, community-based home design, often below the Help to Buy cap."

Next year, Canal & River Trust, which holds the guardianship of 2,000 miles of canals and rivers across England and Wales, celebrates its 200th anniversary with a series of projects to transform dark and



disused locations along Regent's Canal into enclaves of wildlife, sport and learning. With local residents, the Trust plans to create four new leisure spaces, out of an island at Limehouse; a woodland glade in Islington; an abandoned canalside pub garden in Mile End, and Browning's Island in Little Venice.

Though awaiting planning permission, these community-led projects, which will reconnect people with the water, are all part of the widespread regeneration of the canal network across Greater London.

THE GROWING ALLURE OF WATERSIDE LIVING

Home buyers and tenants are drawn to the Thames and London's canal network, prepared to pay a premium for a calming waterside view.

Canal-centred regeneration has sent house prices soaring in formerly run-down Paddington and King's Cross. Average property prices in Paddington have now hit £866,210 — a whopping 42 per cent above the average price of a London home.

There are flats and townhouses for sale at Lyons Place in Little Venice, built by Almacantar, where prices start from £795,000. Visit lyonsplace.co.uk or call 020 7535 3948.

The 7.8-acre former gas works site on Chelsea Creek was the last pocket of Chelsea's industrial waterfront to be converted. Plans for one dominant tower were scrapped, replaced by seven lower residential blocks, to differentiate Chelsea Creek from nearby Imperial Wharf. A total of

1,200 homes will be delivered on completion with 30 per cent classified as affordable. With one block left to go up, there's now a new pontoon and a working lock; the Victorian one was bricked up long ago. The towpath has been opened to walkers, cyclists and joggers and two new bridges link to Imperial Wharf station, explains architect Murray Levinson of Squire & Partners. "It has a unique sense of place," he adds. Apartments are available from £840,000, far below the Chelsea average of £1,255,880. Call 020 3797 8413.

FROM NO-GO AREA TO CANALSIDE COOL

Following the death of industry, towpaths became overgrown, antisocial areas. However, there has been a marked drop in damage to our waterways in recent years.

The number of incidents — most commonly vandalism and graffiti — fell from 800 in 2016/2017 to 635 in 2018/2019 due to the current wave of regeneration, a heritage report from Canal & River Trust reveals.

The towpaths of Regent's Canal that run through King's Cross were "hidden areas known for drugs, crime and prostitution", according to Robert Evans of Argent, the developer behind the overhaul of the district.

His vision was to unlock the heritage waterways and buildings, giving safe passage while keeping some parts of the canal secluded and peaceful. "We wanted to create quiet pockets where people can escape the

Rent > Buy > Sell

Every second
a bee flaps
its wings
230 times

and every second
someone contacts an
estate agent about a
home on Rightmove

rightmove 
find your happy



On the ladder: Nick Ball and Katie Motram at Padcroft

'We love canalside walks'

WHILE renting in Chiswick, Nick Ball and Katie Motram wanted to get on the ladder but stay within west London. Through Help to Buy, the couple bought a two-bedroom apartment in Redrow's **Padcroft** in West Drayton.

"Two of our key requirements were parking and outside space," says Nick, 37. They have a wraparound balcony and the development overlooks the canal. "Katie and I have discovered a fantastic walking route along the canal to the marina," adds Nick.



Above: 1,200 new homes are replacing a former gas works at Chelsea Creek, with 30 per cent classified as affordable. The towpath has been opened to walkers, cyclists and joggers and full-priced flats are available from £840,000. Call 020 3797 8413.

hustle and bustle before turning a corner into an open and sociable spectacle such as Granary Square," he says.

Granary Square is similar in size to Trafalgar Square and has become the heart of new King's Cross, surrounded by bars and restaurants. Where barges once unloaded cargo, children run through the fountains and down the steps to the canal. "It's a piece of theatre in itself," says Evans.

There are homes available at King's Cross in the Grade II-listed converted **Gasholders London** development, starting from £725,000 through Knight Frank (020 3740 5626).

REGENERATION RIPPLES OUT EAST AND WEST

Row upon row of Victorian worker homes were destroyed at Fish Island in Hackney Wick during the Blitz. Light industrial buildings replaced them and artists' studios followed.

Now the 50-acre triangular site, where Hackney Cut meets the Hertford Union Canal and the River Lea, is being transformed into a new community.

It's the next step in the 2012 Olympics-led regeneration of the East End — which would go some way to explaining the huge 143 per cent rise in house prices in the area over the last 10 years. However, homes in this canalside corner of London still sit four per cent below the city's average at £449,920.

The development, **Fish Island Village**, is a joint venture between Hill and Peabody and will comprise 580

new homes with over 50,000sq ft of commercial space designed to appeal to creatives from the tech and fashion sectors. Prices start from £477,500 for a one-bedroom flat.

Meanwhile, of all the capital's canal regeneration projects, the most affordable homes are in outer west London, in West Drayton, Zone 6. The average house price in the small Hillingdon town is £367,610, which is 22 per cent below the London average, according to Aneisha Berridge of Hamptons International. The local council and Transport for London have ploughed £3 million into the dull high street, the canalside and a new bridge over the Grand Union Canal.

There are towpaths that run from Redrow's **Padcroft** development in West Drayton to the marina and a pub on the water.

Twenty-five new apartments have been launched this month with prices starting from £308,000 for a two-bedroom home (redrow.co.uk/padcroft).

Hayes is another town where much is being made of the canal. **Hayes Village**, the Barratt Homes development in Nestles Avenue, will soon open up the south side of the canal to the public, previously shut off as part of the Nestlé factory site.

The scheme will deliver 1,386 new homes, green spaces, parks and play areas, and a 200-metre running track. Prices start from ~~£325,000~~ for a one-bedroom apartment, with two and three-bedroom apartments also available. Call 0330 1277513.



Price boom: property values have soared at King's Cross thanks to canal-centred regeneration, where Granary Square, similar in size to Trafalgar Square, has become the heart of a new quarter

ONLY 5 APARTMENTS REMAINING!

**H — — — — —
— Y — — — — —
— D — — — — —
— R — — — — —
— O — — — — —**

LONDON
made
made by us for you

MAKE US AN OFFER AND MOVE IN FOR CHRISTMAS!*

It's the final countdown, don't miss out on all Hydro has to offer!

- Great investment, with the area already seeing benefits of regeneration
- 8 minute walk to Surrey Quays Station
- 9 minute walk to Greenland Pier†

1, 2 & 3 bedroom apartments from £410,000

Speak to our sales executives to find out more about our exclusive offer today!



PLUS, GET CHRISTMAS ON FAIRVIEW!

Yeoman Street, Surrey Quays, London SE8 5DT
Sales and Marketing Suite & Showhomes open daily from 10am – 5pm

✉ surreyquays.sales@fairview.co.uk ☎ 020 3925 9058

🌐 fairview.co.uk



Fairview
NEW HOMES Ltd.

*Subject to reserving by 24th November and a completion date on or before 12th December. Terms and conditions apply, on selected homes and developments. YOUR HOME MAY BE REPOSSESSED IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON YOUR MORTGAGE. Terms and conditions apply. Applicants should seek independent financial advice, and get information and guidance on applying for a Help to Buy: Equity Loan at www.help2buy.gov.uk. Price and details correct at time of going to press.