

**Local favourite:**

The Robin Craft Café in Sheen Lane, for coffee and pastries with a Thai and Vietnamese twist, served using crockery handmade by the family owners

PHOTOGRAPHS: ALAMY, DANIEL LYNCH



## A £1.25bn scheme brings a new village to Mortlake

The historic 22-acre Mortlake Brewery site is to be transformed into a new community. **Ruth Bloomfield** reports

**T**HE label "London village" is bandied around a little too freely these days. However, Mortlake, with its pretty cottages, traditional riverside pubs and spacious village green, is the real thing.

Set on the south side of the Thames facing Chiswick, Mortlake is a leafy, lovely option favoured by families who are looking for a third way between urban and rural life, right at the finishing post of the Boat Race.

"It is very much a young family market," says Kate Cooper, department head of Knight Frank in Barnes.

"They come for the really great schools, the open space and the lovely walks along the river."

The average price of a home in SW14, which covers Mortlake and neighbouring Sheen, stands at a hefty £868,000 according to the latest figures from Rightmove.

A typical semi-detached house costs just over £1.2 million, while a terrace house will set you back

almost £1 million. A flat will cost £435,000. Prices across the postcode have been flat over the past two years, but are up from an average of £445,000 in 2008, the lowest point in the downturn.

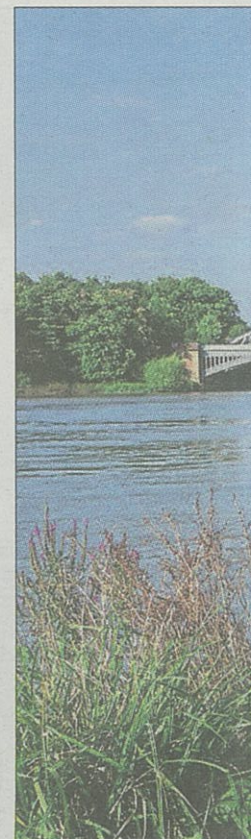
This year, however, Cooper has noticed a change. On January 15 buyers started to view a house on Shalstone Road. Traditionally streets like this on the west side of Mortlake, close to the traffic-clogged A205, are less popular than those towards Barnes. But the four-bedroom terrace home proved a hit. Some 20 viewings and 10 days later a sale was agreed, at the asking price of £1.1 million.

"We have certainly seen a huge improvement in buyer activity and confidence," adds Cooper.

Coupled with a lack of stock to choose from, she now expects to see "a little bit of a bounce in values".

As Cooper suggests, parents beat a path to Mortlake from areas such as Fulham and Putney for its fabulous schools. St Mary Magdalen's Catholic

**Down by the riverside:** on the doorstep for Mortlake residents are Sheen and also Barnes, where you can enjoy a drink and the view at The White Hart, above



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Residents lounge and cinema room expected late 2020 and subject to development progress. Photography of Williamson Heights.

## There's something brewing in Mortlake

**RICHMOND COUNCIL** has granted planning permission for a 22-acre waterfront village on the site of the old Mortlake Brewery. The £1.25 billion scheme will be masterplanned by prize-winning architects Squire and Partners as a hub for the whole area. It will be the biggest building project in Mortlake since the Mortlake Brewery opened way back in 1487.

For well over 500 years Mortlake was not just a pretty residential suburb, it was also the heartland of London's brewing industry.

The Mortlake Brewery is said to have been founded to supply the thirsty court of King Henry VII, which was based at the long-since lost Richmond Palace, at Sheen.

Over the centuries that followed the brewery grew larger and even in the 19th century, was expanding. Many of the pretty Victorian cottages you can buy today were built to house brewery workers. The brewery was bought by Watneys in 1889, renamed the Stag Brewery, and continued producing beer until 2015.

**There will be more than 800 homes in the new village, some in the maltings, the monumental waterfront warehouse where barley was once soaked and then dried to produce the**

malt, a vital component of beer-making. As well as private flats, there will be shops, bars and restaurants, set out on a traditional high street and by the river. There are plans for a secondary school, assisted living homes and a care home, plus offices, a boutique hotel, a three-screen cinema and a rowing club.

The Thames Path will be opened up, giving the public access to a stretch of the river which has been off-limits for centuries.

Guy Duckworth, director of Dartmouth Capital Advisers, which is building the scheme on behalf of the Singapore-listed developer City Developments Limited, believes the new village will be lively and vibrant, with people going to and from work and school, and popping out to see a movie or grab a drink.

"There has been a huge wall around the site for years," he says. "We are taking the wall away and opening up the whole site for the first time."

Designs for the new buildings have been inspired by warehouses originally on the site and also by the mansion blocks that line the river around Hammersmith.

"Rather than doing another building which could be in Hong Kong or Singapore, we have buildings which draw on the local language," says



**A new riverside village:** more than 800 homes and a wealth of amenities are envisaged on the Stag Brewery site at Mortlake, the residential pocket between Kew and Barnes on the Thames





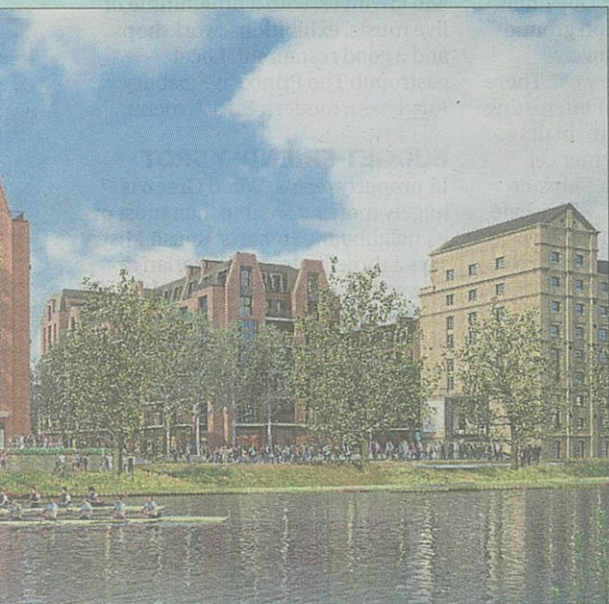
Primary School, Thomson House School, Barnes Primary and East Sheen Primary School all get top marks from Ofsted. Meanwhile, Richmond Park Academy, for older pupils, gets a "good" from the schools watchdog.

Mortlake is also an excellent location for commuters, with trains to Waterloo taking just under half an hour. An annual season ticket costs £1,400.

For green space, as well as the village green there are the wilds of Richmond Park just to the south, Kew Gardens to the west and the London

Wetland Centre at Barnes to the east. Mortlake High Street, with nondescript modern apartments and a few basic shops, is not one of the area's strong points. But there are some pretty cafés and independent shops — and on occasion, a mobile cheesemonger — along Sheen Lane, while on the borders with Barnes, there is Rick Stein's London outpost overlooking the river.

"Mortlake High Street is not the real hub of the area," says Cooper. "People tend to pop over to Barnes or to Sheen instead, but they are both on your doorstep."



architect Michael Squire. The homes themselves are a mix of flats and houses and will be spacious, mostly double aspect, and with carefully aligned views of the green space on the site through large windows.

Perhaps the biggest seal of approval comes from a source close to the architects. "It is one of the few places I have designed where my wife has said she would quite like to live," says Squire, whose current projects also include Chelsea Barracks and the redevelopment of New Scotland Yard. Prices for homes at the brewery have

not yet been set but this kind of generosity of scale won't come cheap. Two-bedroom flats at **Boat Race House**, a much smaller development just along the river, are currently on sale priced from £975,000.

Around one in five of the properties at the Stag Brewery will be lower cost and aimed at buyers and renters struggling to find a London home.

Detailed planning permission from Richmond council will have to address local concerns about traffic, pollution and overdevelopment.

**Guy Duckworth believes Mortlake can take an influx of new residents**, who he points out will be moving in over a period of seven or eight years rather than all at once.

The developer has had to make multimillion-pound contributions to Richmond council for upgrades to local services, including health and transport, and Duckworth describes the density of the project as "fairly gentle".

London Mayor Sadiq Khan will now give the project the once-over before work can begin. He is likely to request more affordable housing and fewer car parking spaces.

The build is scheduled to take seven to 10 years and the first homes are expected to go on sale in 2024.



**£1.3 million:** a four-bedroom terrace family house, right, in Second Avenue, Mortlake. Through Chestertons (020 8012 3885)

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