

Meet the new Victorians



£310,000-£700,000: No 15 Sundridge Avenue, Bromley, is one of a row of red-brick terraced Victorian villas. The house has been redeveloped by Morgan Restoration and split into apartments of up to 2,500sq ft in size. The interiors have a loft-like feel and luxurious touches include underfloor heating. Call 01322 866800



£273,995-£500,000: Holly Brook is a small development of houses in Worcester Park. Barratt is offering to landscape the front and rear gardens and provide a two per cent mortgage fixed for two years. Call 020 8337 7776



From £1.225 million: the interior of one of four Victorian-style villas in Lonsdale Road, Barnes. The houses are up to 2,637sq ft in size, are set over three floors and have an integral garage. Call Thirstone on 01932 350900

Traditional period style with modern, open-plan interiors — new-build “Victorian” homes offer the best of both worlds, says **David Spittles**

VICTORIAN reigns in London. Period homes are a family favourite but as the property market cools, Victorian houses are performing best, according to estate agents across the capital. It's to do with the quest for value for money. In many parts of London, it's still possible to buy big Victorian houses for between £350,000 and £500,000.

Aspiring young couples, even singles, are passing over new developments and concluding that older houses in nearby streets are much better value.

In Deptford, for example, three-bedroom Victorian houses sell for less than £250,000, about the same price as small two-bedroom flats at local fashionable developments such as OneSE8.

“It could be because features such as private gardens, garages and generous storage space are being dropped from developers' specifications,” says Stephen Ludlow of estate agent Ludlow Thompson.

There may be something more to it than this. A recent Mori poll for CABE (the Government's Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) showed that one in five people would prefer to live in a Victorian terrace, while only two per cent wish to live in a modern loft apartment, and none whatsoever in a tower block.

Ludlow Thompson's hunch is that there's fresh market demand for new-build Victorian houses and smart developers will respond accordingly. In fact, it's already happening.

Barnes is known for its leafy gentrified terraces. In Lonsdale Road, Thirstone is building four Victorian-style villas and two semis to match the surrounding architecture.

Kate Gordon, Thirstone's marketing director, calls the design a “reinterpretation of a traditional Victorian home”. Though people love period detail, they want modern, relaxed interiors with bright, open-plan living spaces, en-suite facilities and the latest security systems. The houses are up to 2,637sq ft and set over three floors. Large open-plan kitchens act as family

rooms (with American-style fridges) and incorporate a conservatory leading to a manageable garden. Moreover, whereas most neighbouring properties have off-street parking at best, these houses have an integral garage. Prices start at £1.225 million. Call 01932 350900.

Holly Brook is a small development of houses in the south London suburb of Worcester Park. Barratt is offering to landscape the front and rear gardens and provide a two per cent mortgage fixed for two years. Prices start at £273,995 and rise to more than £500,000. Call 020 8337 7776.

New Victorian-style town houses proved a

‘One in five people would prefer to live in a Victorian terrace, while only two per cent wish to live in a modern loft apartment’

hit at Royal Arsenal, the former armaments factory in Woolwich. The 40 homes were snapped up when sold off-plan a year ago and some are now reappearing on the market.

Berkeley is redeveloping the estate and converting the numerous listed buildings into about 1,000 flats. This makes the houses a rare commodity, according to Greenwich estate agent Oliver Bond (020 8858 9393). They are set among the heritage buildings, have off-street parking and overlook a landscaped park. Prices start at £299,950.

A wealthy buyer looking for the genuine article may be tempted by Octagon House, a former Victorian school standing in the grounds of the old King's College in Chelsea. The site is being redeveloped by Northacre, and there are plans to turn Octagon House into a single residence. The asking price is £4 million. Call 020 7376 7000.

When sensitively done, Victorian conversions can make terrific modern homes. Sundridge Avenue, Bromley, comprises an unbroken row of eight detached red-brick Victorian villas. One of the properties, which fell into disrepair and was badly fire-damaged in the 1990s, was rescued by specialist developer Morgan Restoration.

The impressive exterior has been retained, while the interior has been completely rebuilt and split into “outsized” apartments of up to 2,500sq ft. Internally, the homes have a loft-like, modern feel and come with creature comforts such as under-floor heating. Prices range from £310,000 to £700,000. Call 01322 866800.

Such is the fashion for statement modern design that it comes as a surprise to find a prominent site in central London returning to its architectural roots. The Corner in Notting Hill, is a turreted Victorian building being redeveloped into 36 new homes, with 40,000sq ft of retail space at ground level that helps create a 19th century street scene. Here, too, the interiors are contemporary. Parking is underground. Prices are from £600,000 to £2 million; call 020 7792 0022.

ARARE opportunity has arisen to acquire a Victorian shell in a prime West End location and convert it into a spectacular modern home. Armitage Hall forms part of the former RNIB headquarters in Great Portland Street, W1. The hall has 20ft high ceilings, huge windows, its own street-level entrance and comes with two parking spaces.

“There's potential to create a unique 4,500sq ft home, with large mezzanine levels and voids,” says James Davies of Hamptons International. Architects' plans for a modern interior are in place. The rest of the building is being redeveloped into offices and apartments. Call 020 7824 8822.

Auctions are a good place to start if you are a gentrifier with modest means. Firms such as Andrews & Robertson and FPD Savills regularly sell unmodernised or dilapidated Victorian homes.

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