REAL ESTATE

Chelsea Barracks, the Exclusive Real Estate Development in the Heart of London, Is Rewriting History

In Belgravia, the once cordoned-off royal military base has been transformed into an oasis of luxury living. It has also reinstated over five acres of open green space into the city

By Noni Ware

February 17, 2025

At 52,000 square metres (12.8 acres) Chelsea Barracks is the largest development in Belgravia. Photo: Clive Nichols

Featuring top-notch turnkey residences, a sculpture trail, chic restaurants and even a championship size tennis court, Chelsea Barracks was designed as a mini city in the middle of London.

For over 150 years, a prime piece of London real estate was kept hidden from public view. From behind tall railings, the only sounds that passers-by could hear were commands being shouted by someone in control and heavy boots thumping on the ground. This was Chelsea Barracks – designed by architect George Morgan in 1855 and home to four companies of the British royal guards, who lived on the site until 2007, when the last troops departed.

15 years in the making, Chelsea Barracks' redevelopment is staggered across six phases, each offering a range of luxury living solutions. Photo: Felix Speller

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Today, at 52,000 square metres (12.8 acres), it is the largest development in Belgravia, its transformation masterminded by Qatari Diar, a global leader in luxury real estate, which since 2005 has backed projects pioneering community and sustainability. The company enlisted a small army of its own – award-winning architects, master planners, landscapers, interior designers and museum-worthy artists – to embark on a decade-long effort to redevelop the historic military base as a world-class residential neighbourhood.

Chelsea Barracks has reinstated over five acres of open green space and is dotted with an ever-changing roster of sculptures by world-famous artists. Photo: Jack Hobhouse

"This is the first development of its type in over 100 years, and likely the last," says Richard Oakes, chief sales and marketing officer at Qatari Diar, of the project that has reinstated over five acres of open green space – approximately 40 per cent of the site – in the heart of London. "We set out to design an entirely new neighbourhood that connects seamlessly with Belgravia and is open to all. Celebrating the site's history in

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the master plan and design of the homes was central to our vision."

Qatari Diar enlisted landscape designer Kim Wilkie to design the open spaces. Photo: Clive Nichols

To achieve this, master planners Squire & Partners, architecture firm Dixon Jones and landscape designer Kim Wilkie worked hand-in-hand, developing a new concept for the site, which had survived two World Wars. They made the historic Garrison Chapel the focal point of a layout based on traditional London squares. Next, Qatari Diar brought best-in-class British artisans and makers on board to revisit Georgian design features for a contemporary age, on a scale that influences the wider community.

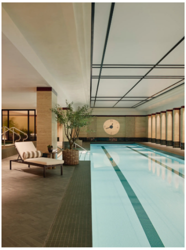
"Expressing a new architectural language that was as graceful and resonant of the location as the distinguished architectural ancestors that surround it was vital to the success of the development, just as much as its modern-day appeal," explains Oakes. From a thoughtful 21st-century interpretation of the traditional Georgian townhouse concept to the restored Grade-II listed railings that line the development and the bespoke public furniture throughout, the attention to craftsmanship is matched by top-of-the-line amenities that ultra-high-net-worth buyers expect, such as valet parking, state-of-the-art security systems, guards and, above all, privacy.

The Garrison Club comprises 51,209 sq. ft. of amenities including a championship-standard tennis court and it can be accessed directly via the underground car park. Photo: Kensington Leverne

A London City Guide for Design Lovers

Even the Garrison Club, a sprawling lifestyle destination featuring a tepidarium and swimming pool alongside a 16-seat cinema, private function rooms and business suites, can be accessed directly via the underground car park. In short, if they don't wish to, residents and their guests don't ever need to venture into the public realm, eye-catching as the development's seven garden squares are (they're dotted with sculpture trails featuring work by the likes of Dale Chihuly, Conrad Shawcross and Anna Gillespie). Plus, there is a 24-hour concierge service, meaning that residents can request anything at any time.

The Garrison Club also features a 16-seat cinema, private function rooms and business suites. Photo: Kensington Leverne


AMP Athletic was appointed to manage the club, to provide residents a world-class approach to fitness. Photo: Kensington Leverne

Privacy and safety aside, today's investors are paying for ease. "There is an increased demand for one-of-a-kind turnkey properties across the ultra-prime residential

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market," says Oakes of why Qatari Diar collaborated with A-list interior designers to design fully decorated residences catering to curated lifestyles. "For example, No 1 Whistler Square, which has been dressed by Brigitta Spinocchia Freund, is billed as the Collector's House. Its interior focuses on the timeless architectural details of a townhouse as the backdrop, supported by rare and collectable art and furniture which was sourced for every space."

The entrance foyer of the Collector's House at Chelsea Barracks, designed Brigitta Spinocchia Freund. Photo: Felix Speller

Spinocchia Freund sourced rare and unique art and design from around the world to furnish this $58million townhouse. Photo: Felix Speller

The cinema room at No 1 Whistler Square. Photo: Felix Speller

Overall, the development has been split into six phases: the first phase, completed in 2019, included the delivery of 64 apartments and three penthouses, as well as a spa and The Campaner restaurant. Phase two saw the completion of 13 townhouses, and phase three includes the launch of the Garrison Suite, the Mews House, Garrison Square and the Chapel, as well as retail spaces.

Phase four will include 97 new residences across three buildings designed by Eric Parry Architects, with prices starting at $4.2 million. The practice has also designed the latest residential address, 1 Five Fields, that's set to launch this year.

The LEED Platinum-certified Chelsea Barracks chimes with the sensibilities of the savvy, new-age investor. Nearby, the Garrison Chapel is home to the King's Foundation, and is used to publicly exhibit elements of the charity's work in a gallery space, with particular emphasis on traditional arts and heritage craft skills. Proximity to chic Sloane Street, Pimlico and Knightsbridge further amps up the neighbourhood's appeal.

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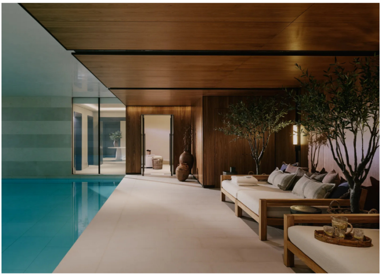
Chelsea Barracks features one-of-a-kind homes by A-list designers. Photo: Kensington Leverne

Dressed apartments within 9 Mulberry Square, by Studio Squire. Photo: Christopher Horwood

The studio worked with a range of British suppliers, across furniture, art and soft furnishings. Photo: Kensington Leverne

"We have future-proofed the residences," asserts Oakes. "We've learned from our fast-evolving world and created a development to stand the test of time for our residents and the wider community."



The swimming pool at the Mulberry Square Townhouse by Albion Nord. Photo: Kensington Leverne

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Designer Brigitta Spinocchia Freund shares her favourite hotspots within walking distance of Chelsea Barracks

La Poule au Pot

A Belgravia institution since the 1960s, this is a quintessential French bistro with timeless charm and a generous helping of nostalgia. It's as close as you can get to Paris without leaving London. *231 Ebury St, SW1*

Saatchi Gallery
My favourite gallery in Chelsea. It excels at showcasing emerging artists, which aligns with what I like to do within my own projects. *Duke of York's HQ, King's Rd, SW3*

John Sandoe Books
I have a weakness for coffee-table books and the selection here never disappoints. The shop itself, with its creaking floors and old-world charm, is as special as the books it sells. *10 Blacklands Terrace, SW3*

88 Gallery
Every object here, whether it's a sculptural chair or a statement table, is a conversation starter. I admire its focus on contemporary designs that feel bold yet liveable – it's a place that always leaves me inspired. *88 Pimlico Rd, SW1*

Vivienne Westwood – World's End
World's End is more than a store – it's where the spirit of London's punk movement lives on. Stepping inside feels like entering Vivienne Westwood's brilliant mind, where rebellion meets artistry in every piece. *430 King's Rd, SW10*

Chelsea Physic Garden
A serene escape tucked away in the heart of Chelsea with winding paths, botanical wonders and calming scents. It's an ideal spot to recharge, whether with a good book or a quiet moment to yourself. *66 Royal Hospital Rd, SW3*

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