

HOTSPOT HOUNSLOW

Top employers, good transport links and well-priced homes. Rejuvenating Hounslow's the perfect opportunity, finds Cheryl Markosky



Once an important staging post on the Bath Road, Hounslow's on the map again. Next to the biggest airport in the UK and on the Great Western Road leading to London, this well-placed locale's going places.

With Heathrow only seven minutes away, three Tube stations (Hounslow Central, East and West) and a mainline station with trains to Waterloo in less than an hour, airport staff and commuters alike are fans of the town.

As well as employees of Sky and GlaxoSmithKline wanting to live close to their headquarters just up the road, there's also a large influx of IT workers from Asia sub-contracted to big blue-chip companies.

The Mayor of London's granted £18.5 million towards the development of 3,500 new homes in Hounslow's town centre. To add to the mix, the Borough's spending £210 million on the High Street, bringing in new businesses such as Tesco.

"Hounslow is a well-connected area with characterful, historic stately homes, Green Flag-awarded parks and thriving communities," points out Jim Munson, head of marketing at Notting Hill Genesis.

He's selling 900 private and shared ownership homes to professionals and families seeking good value and quality at The Staging Post. "They complement the area around them and are already proving popular with local people."

New kid on the block is Barratt Homes' High Street Quarter, offering shops, restaurants, and Hounslow's first cinema. Owners of 528 one- to three-bedroom flats, from £343,500, also

enjoy the use of communal gardens and a roof terrace.

"It's a game-changer that will attract more investment," declares Matthew Kirkpatrick of Foytons. "A new public square and a Cineworld with the largest Bollywood cinema outside India will transform the town."

Ed McCoy, sales director at Barratt West London, says the company chose Hounslow

High Street as the situation for its scheme because of fantastic transport, council investment, and easy access to parks, schools and churches.

"Hounslow East Tube will be a five-minute walk away and you can be in central London within 35 minutes," he explains.

Education is key, with 96% of Hounslow's schools rated good or outstanding by Ofsted.



HIGH STREET QUARTER FROM £343,500

A new neighbourhood of one- to three-bed homes on a new private square with a cinema, shops, restaurants, residents' roof terrace and underground parking.
www.barratthomes.co.uk



HABITO FROM £335,000

Thirty-eight one- and two-bedroom apartments in this boutique scheme, with German kitchens, Bosch appliances, residents-only gym and three garden sanctuaries.
www.hamptons.co.uk

High Street Quarter is near fine educational establishments, such as Lampton Academy, Spring Grove Primary and Hounslow Heath Junior.

"Having great schools so close to the development is ideal for young families looking to settle in the area," adds Ed.

Buyers are discovering that house prices are reasonable – the 12th lowest in London. However, according to CBRE Residential,

values have risen by 38% over the past five years and are expected to climb a further 12% by 2021.

"It's a good time to purchase a home now, because the market's not racing upwards by 10% every year and mortgage rates are still low," argues Matthew.

He reckons that an entry-level, one-bed flat costs about £200,000 – far less than one in Teddington or Chiswick – while four- to five-bedroom houses range from £400,000 to £600,000.

Cathy Lloyd, sales and customer services director for L&Q's North Region, who's selling homes at The Gateway – the firm's first major venture in west London – concurs that demand is strong for homes that are within many people's means.

"We're launching Help to Buy and shared ownership properties to assist first-time buyers, and perhaps more importantly, working with the community on this and other schemes to create thriving, mixed-tenure neighbourhoods."

Another noteworthy project to alter the face of the district is Habito, which is comprised of 38 one- and two-bedroom apartments priced from £335,000. Habito – Latin for 'to live' – focuses on lifestyle extras that today's buyers require.

"Our ethos is to provide outstanding places to live, and Habito's no exception to this rule," comments Sonny Gowans, founder and managing director at the Unique Property Group.

Of course, Hounslow isn't just about Hounslow Town. The Borough encompasses a big chunk of London's western suburbs, including localities like Osterley, Syon Park, Heston, Brentford, Kew, Chiswick and Turnham Green.

Matthew tips Heston, where the leisure centre's being refurbished and there are plenty of parks. Values are lower in Heston and cash buyers are fighting over low stock levels.

At the other end of the scale, high-end purchasers favour tree-lined roads in good school catchment zones on the Whitton/Hounslow borders, where a four-bedroom detached house costs £600,000, says Townends' Richard Evans.

Bankers and accountants are generally more tempted by the leafy environs of Osterley. Here, a similar three-bedroom home costs at least £460,000, and loftier houses range from £700,000-£1.5 million.

While Osterley, with its eponymous National Trust mansion and park, satisfies a yearning for green spaces, Chiswick slakes a thirst for metropolitan living.



HIGH STREET
£315,000

Good-sized, one-bed flat with open-plan reception, modern kitchen and private winter garden right on the High Street.
www.foxtons.co.uk



THE STAGING POST

FROM £81,250 FOR 25% SHARE OF £325,000

One- to three-bed shared-ownership flats, enveloped by 48 acres of parkland and with views over Lampton Park.
www.nhgsales.com

DID YOU KNOW?

- Hounslow is derived from the 13th-century 'Hund's mound' – the personal name Hund followed by Old English hlaew ('mound' or 'barrow').
- Aviation dates back to the early 1900s when one of London's earliest airfields was on Hounslow Heath, due to its extremely flat terrain.
- Hounslow Heath was once known for highwaymen carrying out high numbers of robberies on the wealthy.
- Hounslow Town was historically part of Middlesex. Since 1965, it became part of the London Borough of Hounslow.
- Hounslow's twinned with Leningradsky District in Krasnodar Krai in Russia.

Christopher Bramwell, head of Savills' Chiswick office, reckons that Chiswick High Road and Turnham Green – crammed with artisan bakeries, cheese shops, and chocolatiers – are on a par with Notting Hill's uber-chic Westbourne Grove.

"But it's not all about boutiques and eateries. You also get significantly more for your money in Chiswick," he announces.

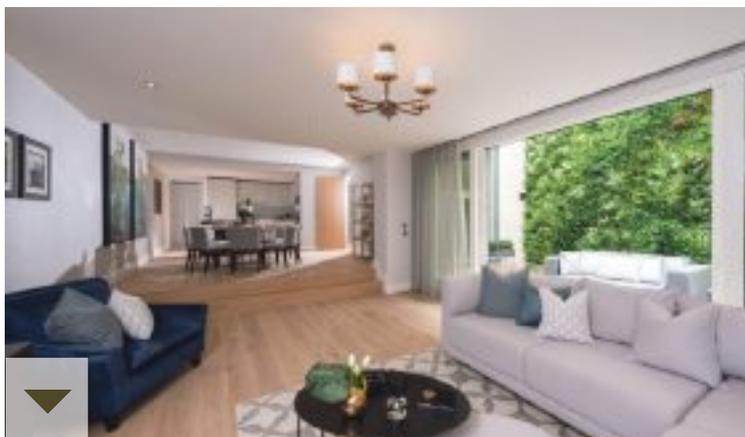
Christopher's purchasers fall into two camps: local upsizing residents, and Notting Hill, Kensington and Holland Park citizens seeking better value further west.

An up-and-coming area where price ceilings are also likely to be broken is undersung Brentford.

"It's one of the few districts along the Thames that hadn't been properly developed, but leading builders like Barratt, St James and Isis Waterside Regeneration are reviving it," Featherstone Leigh's Mani Sheibani explains.

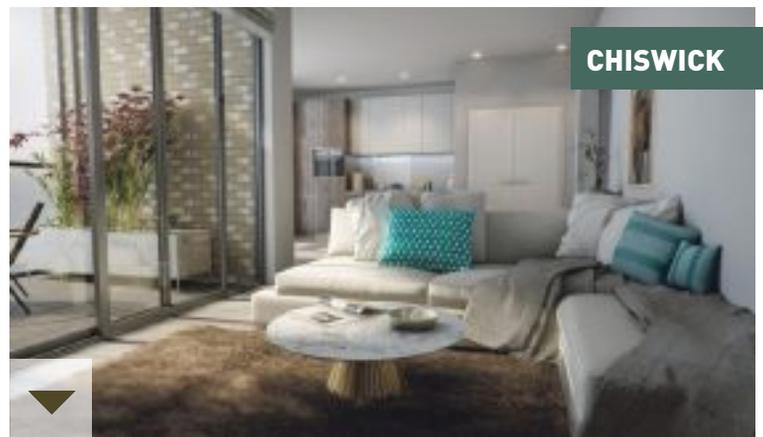
Smart new homes are a draw for investment, so money's being pumped into a sector off Brentford High Road, with a proposed avenue running down to a new riverside square with fountains and trees.

"Anyone sceptical of Brentford five years ago will be kicking themselves today," adds Mani. And anyone once doubtful of Hounslow as a whole will be wishing they'd capitalised on property in this flourishing stretch long ago.



500 CHISWICK HIGH ROAD
£2,450,000

Four-bed family townhouse that comes with a sunken garden with a living wall and spacious patio garden.
www.redrow.co.uk



CHISWICK

THE GATEWAY
FROM £460,000

L&Q's offering of 79 one- to three-bedroom flats with private balconies on Strand on the Green is less than 30 minutes to Waterloo from Kew Bridge Station.
www.thegatewayw4.london