

INSIDE TODAY

HERITAGE

Bids in

Auctioning off an Astor art collection page 5



ADVICE

How can a garden boost the value of my house? page 6



LONDON

Charlie Chaplin's childhood home is on the market page 7



Property



Developers are doing it for the kids

Building child-friendly homes is increasingly important in today's cities, a new report says. Liz Rowlinson takes a look at what's on offer

MARK WILKINSON
ENGLAND

WINTER PROMOTION
TO FIND OUT MORE, CALL 01380 850 007

Experience the world's finest handmade furniture. Kitchens, dining rooms, bedrooms and more rooms. www.mw.co.uk

COVER STORY



TIME FOR ADVENTURE
Ian and Jurgena Biggin with son Noah, left, bought at Cane Hill Park for its green spaces and play areas; the Landmark Pinnacle, cover, aims to bring the classic London square indoors

Wrestling the iPad out of your child's hands is always a challenge – particularly when there are no playgrounds or trees nearby to tempt the more intrepid youngsters.

It's a hot topic for many parents. As children today spend more time watching television, playing computer games and tinkering on phones than previous generations, there's a growing concern about the developmental problems that can be caused by lack of stimuli from the outside environment. Bear Grylls, the adventurer and television presenter, has spoken of the need to strike a balance between "Minecraft and bushcraft", while in August, Facebook's co-founder Mark Zuckerberg published a heartfelt letter to his newborn child: "The world can be a serious place. That's why it's important to make time to go outside and play."

The tech titan's call to discover a "magical" childhood outdoors is at odds with not just his digital media empire but also a society in which more people now live in cities than in the countryside. With a fast-growing urbanised population and shrinking homes, how can we reconcile this need for families to enjoy outside space?

Property developers increasingly have children and families in mind when designing their new homes. "We feel very strongly that today's children do not get the same life that we had and in a crowded city it's difficult to create outdoor space," says Rami Atallah of Chalgrove Properties, the developer behind the Landmark Pinnacle in the Isle of Dogs, east London. The 75-floor tower is designed to bring the "classic London square" indoors, with a lush

garden on the 27th floor that has a specially regulated environment to nurture plants and trees not normally found inside to create the feeling of being outside. "It's a space where children can build tepees, play hide and seek and navigate the space as if they were in a park, and where their parents can chat as they watch over them," Atallah adds. The 725 homes in the building, which also has a rooftop garden, are priced from £425,000.

Building child-friendly homes is vital if cities want to remain competitive, according to a report published this week by Arup, the urban planning consultancy. As well as air pollution, traffic and crime, it blames high-rise living for restricting children's independence and ability to play, and calls on developers and civic leaders to introduce pedestrianised "play" streets, intergenerational spaces such as urban gardens and open-air swimming pools, better traffic controls and wild outdoor spaces.

"We have to ask ourselves, are we building homes to suit people's needs?" says James Fenner of Silk Road, a property marketing company. "Along with good Wi-Fi, parking and a facility to accept deliveries, we've found that people looking for an apartment prioritised a communal garden. More people were keen on integrating nature in the home than integrating technology."

Some housebuilders are a step ahead when it comes to incorporating child-friendly green spaces in their schemes. Lendlease is prioritising outdoor areas for under-sevens in its developments in London, Manchester and York. In

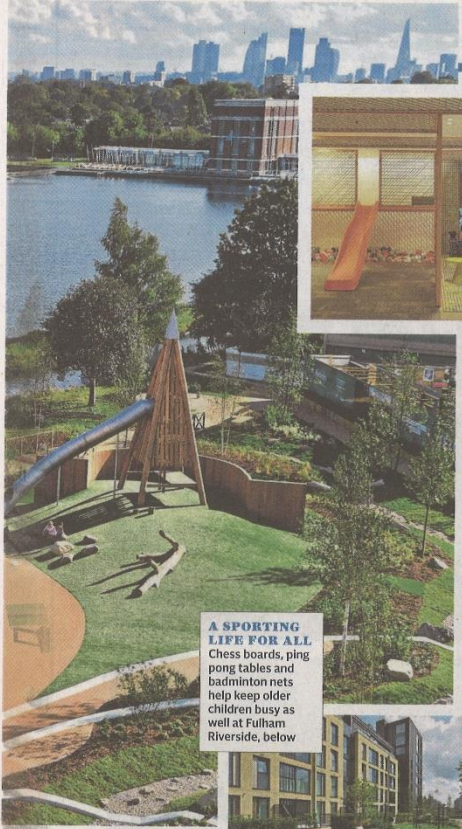
THE GREAT OUTDOORS
Spring Park at Woodberry Down, main, is open to the local community; the 110 homes at Cambium are built around an 'urban meadow' with play areas, below



its Cambium scheme in Southfields, south-west London, 65 townhouses and 55 flats are centred around an urban meadow featuring an eco-play area – think ropes and timber rather than a bright plastic climbing frame – with logs to climb on and an oak tree believed to have been planted by the celebrated gardener Capability Brown. Half of the houses, which start from £1.5million for three bedrooms, have been bought by families,

says Richard Cook, head of residential at Lendlease. "It's essential that we recognise that families are moving back into cities at an accelerated pace and that we build homes that facilitate children's play."

Other developments with outdoor play areas for children include St James's Fitzroy Gate in Old Isleworth, west London, which has a wooden climbing area and a wild flower field, with homes available from £14.4mil-



RAINY DAY HIDEAWAY
Lincoln Square, left, has a 758 sq ft playroom split into different zones by rope screens



Riverside development in south-west London. Prices start from £3.25 million.

Other housebuilders have gone for something a little more imaginative. Over in south-east London, Telford Homes' Bermondsey Works development, which has one of the longest rooftop terraces in London, offers a fun space with grass-covered seats, swivel chairs, Telford-style mounds and telescopic speaking tubes sprouting out of the ground. Three-bedroom homes cost from £655,000.

The need for child-friendly spaces is not limited to city centres. At Cane Hill Park, a joint venture by Barratt and David Wilson Homes on the edge of the North Downs in Coulsdon, near the Surrey border, the play area has balancing beams, log features, rope climbing frames and a "trim trail" obstacle course.

This was a big draw for Ian and Jurgena Biggin, who bought a three-bedroom townhouse in July. "We moved here from a flat with no garden in nearby Chess so the big, attractive green areas were very important to us in bringing up a young child," says Ian, 44. "Our 13-year-old son uses the running trail while our two-year-old, Noah, uses the playground. Their cousins, aged between five and 12, come over and they can all play together in a safe, friendly environment, along with our neighbours' children." Prices start from £584,995 for three bedrooms.

Family-friendly environments outside the inner cities are also provided

by Berkeley Homes in schemes such as Royal Wells Park in Tunbridge Wells, where prices start from £715,000, and Ryewood in Sevenoaks, where £545,000 will buy a three-bedroom home. "Having green open spaces in close proximity is a top priority for buyers, especially those with young children," says Karrina Ohi, sales and marketing director at Berkeley. At Royal Wells Park, she adds, children are always drawn to the timber play area.

Building child-friendly spaces that are not restricted to residents of the development can boost parents' views of the neighbourhood and help children make friends in the area, too. At its Woodberry Down scheme in north London, Berkeley is building Spring Park. The first of four parks for the local community, it will have 4.5 acres of open space overlooking the West Reservoir, including a play area.

Of course, it's not always practical to send the children outside to play. A few developments now offer eye-catching

CHANCE TO GO WILD

St James' Fitzroy Gate, below, has a wooden climbing area and a meadow full of wild flowers



indoor play areas for those rainy days. At Capco's Lillie Square in Earl's Court, south-west London, where prices start from £775,000, residents of the 808 homes have access to a children's playroom with fun furniture and a range of toys and games. Alternatively at Lincoln Square, a five-star development by Lotha UK in central London's Holborn, where homes are available from £990,000, there's a 758 sq ft play room. Designed by award-winning designer Patricia Urquiola, it is a vibrant space separated into different zones by unusual rope screens. There's a slide and ballpit section for younger children, a table tennis area, and for the inevitable moment of parental weakness, a television and video games area, too.

A SPORTING LIFE FOR ALL

Chess boards, ping pong tables and badminton nets help keep older children busy as well at Fulham Riverside, below

lion. There's also Prospect East from L&Q, which pits itself as a "new urban community" in east London's Stratford. Its child-friendly spaces have jumping logs, a climbing wall and table tennis, with prices from £789,950. And it's not just about building play areas for young kids; to appeal to older children and encourage intergenerational play, Barratt has included badminton nets, ping pong tables and chess boards among its two acres of outside space at its Fulham

'The world can be a serious place. That's why it's important to play'



THE WEEKLY ROUND UP

Selected snippets from the world of property



Sweet: a city forged with sugar

TAKE ME DOWN TO GINGERBREAD CITY

With windows made of sugar, cornicing delicately spun out of icing and pillars made of candy cane, this city is far tastier than the real world.

Major architecture firms have turned their expertise from glass and steel to biscuits and chocolate. An imaginary London has been remade in gingerbread, complete with a castle, university, landscaping and roads. The buildings light up and one even has roof tiles made from edible paper.

It is open until December 22 at the Museum of Architecture in South Kensington, London.

LIVE IN THE CHILDHOOD HOME OF 'THE TRAMP'

Charlie Chaplin, left, spent part of his early life in a house in Kennington, south London, which is now for sale.

He is believed to have lived there for a year, between 1898 and 1899, in dire poverty with his mother and brother. Aged seven, he was sent



to the workhouse, and later his mother went to a mental asylum. The house and area has changed completely since.

On the market for £975,000 with Dexters, the property has two reception rooms, two bedrooms, a small courtyard, and planning permission to create a large kitchen/dining room.

REGULATION CHANGES LEAD TO CAPITAL ASSETS

Indian buyers are pouring into central London's lethargic high-end property market after a change to how much money they can take out of their home country.

Buying agency Black Brick said that 13 per cent of sales it has done this year have been



Prime: Mayfair is popular

to Indian buyers, up from 2.6 per cent in 2015-16.

Separate research by Cluttons found that between August 2016 and July 2017, Indian buyers accounted for 22 per cent of the sales in prime central London, up from five per cent in 2012.

This is partly due to changes in the Reserve Bank of India's regulations of how much money can be taken out of the country. The so-called liberal remittance scheme was adjusted in 2015, meaning that a family of four can take out \$1 million (£748,000), while previously it was only \$400,000.