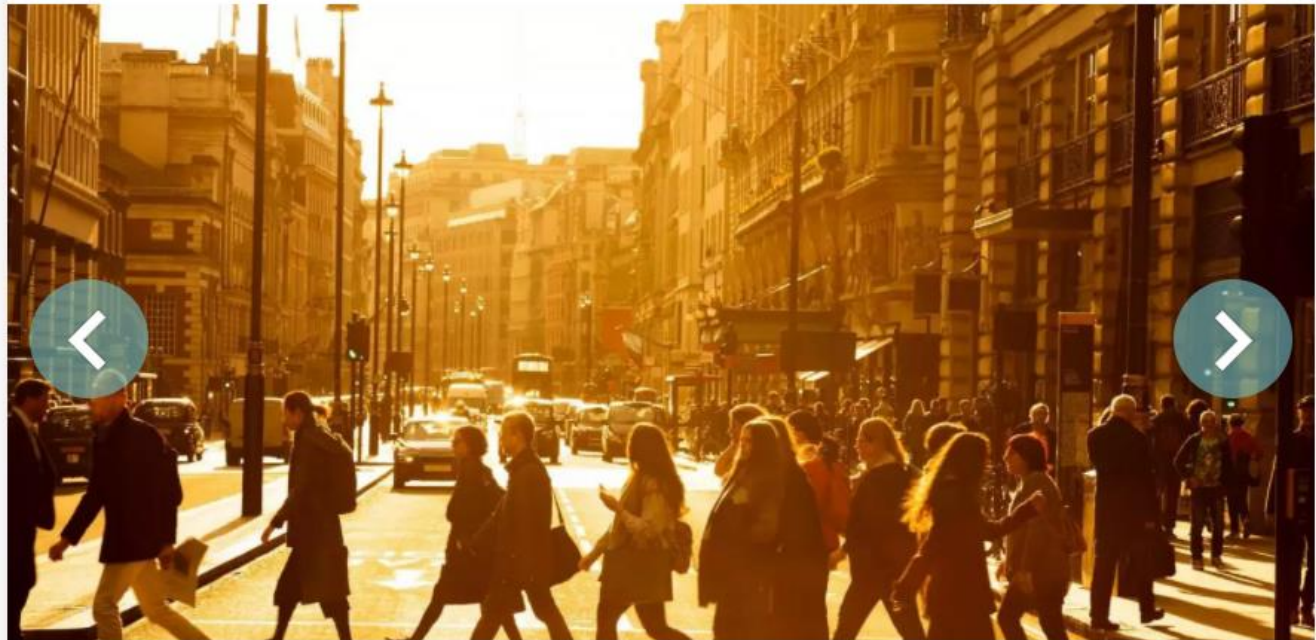


The dream London commute: where to find new-build homes within walking distance of key business districts

Most Londoners dream of living within walking distance of their work. Buying a home will cost more, but there are still relatively good-value parts of Zone 2 within a 30-minute walk of London's main employment districts.

DAVID SPITTLES | 2 hours ago | 0 comments

 Take a look at London's new developments



Ever-rising rail fares, delayed trains, traffic jams, the congestion charge and Tube strikes are enough to make anyone want to give up the daily commute. That's why buying a home close to your office could prove the best investment you'll ever make.

Increasingly, Londoners are choosing to live within walking distance of their work. [Property](#) may cost you more, but the return is a better quality of life, a big saving in travel costs and more free time. Oh, and you'll get fitter, too.

“There's been a marked social shift since the heyday of the suburbs when breadwinners took the train in and were home before six,” says Tom Rundall, partner at property consultant Knight Frank.

[London's](#) long working hours culture has coincided with a return to city living and the emergence of buzzing new business districts in areas beyond the Square Mile and West End.

It's a lifestyle thing. Many young Londoners want a better work-life balance, preferring a home and amenities close to the office, and this is causing property ripples in those places.

CANARY WHARF FOR £475K

Shoreditch is Europe's leading digital district. King's Cross, Paddington and London Bridge are fast-growing commercial zones. [Holborn](#) has become "Legal-land", and creative clusters have formed in Clerkenwell, Camden, Southwark and Shepherd's Bush and are spreading to cheaper pockets of the capital such as Hackney Wick, Deptford and Kensal Green.

It pays to be aware of big corporate moves, because of the boost to property values they bring.

[Canary Wharf](#), already a global banking hub, is becoming an east London offshoot of Whitehall, starting with the relocation there this year of 5,700 civil servants, with more to follow.

Yet you can still buy into this area for a reasonable price with the prospect of future gains. Flats at Landmark Pinnacle, a smart new development moments from the Docklands office towers, cost from £475,000. Call 020 3905 6826.






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Oil company Shell is centralising all its UK operations to Waterloo, where a redevelopment of its Shell Centre complex has yielded far more workspace, plus 877 homes, currently priced from £2,145,000. Call 020 7001 3600.

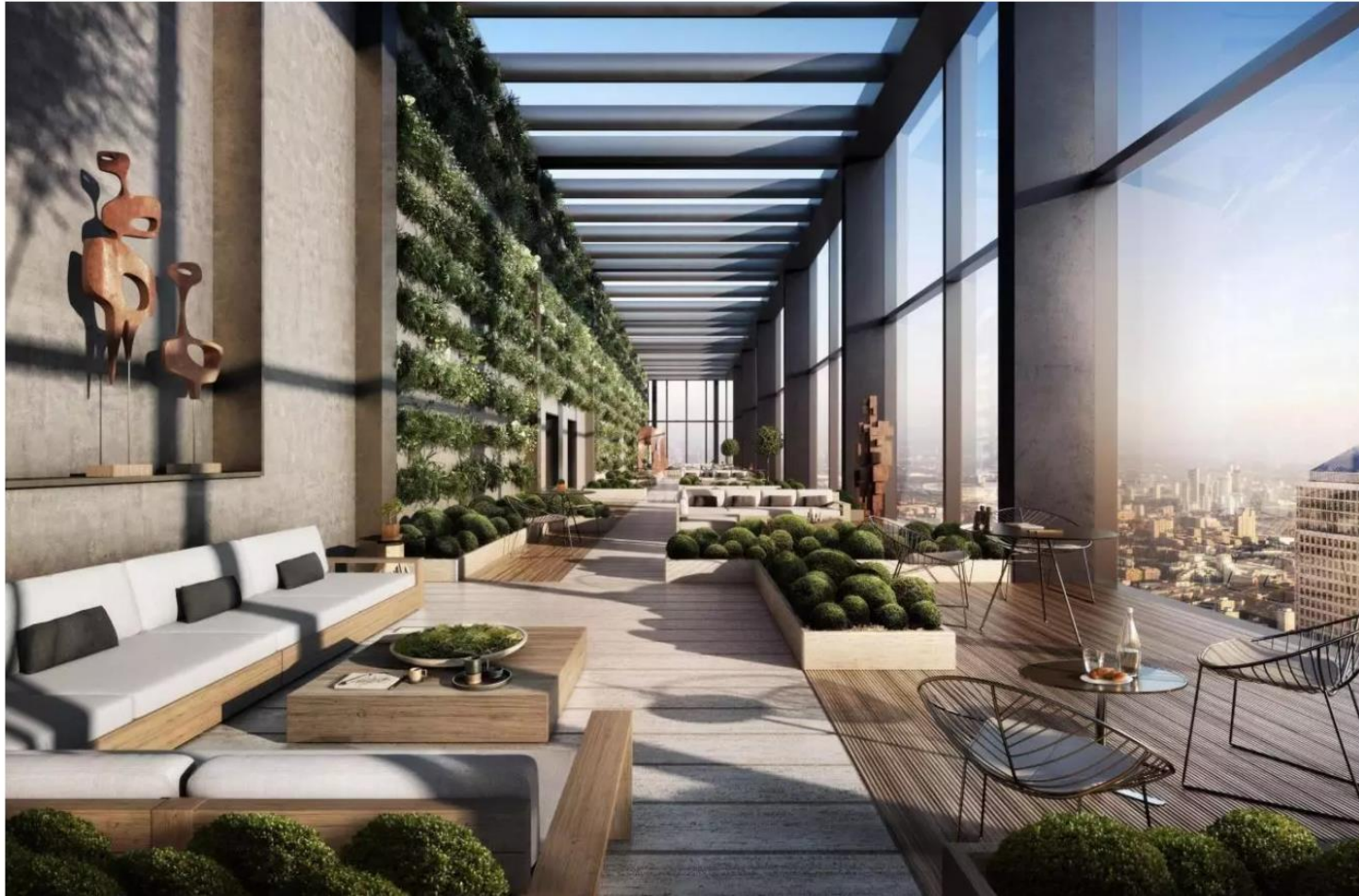
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TECH GIANTS LEAD THE WAY

Apple's decision to set up a European HQ at Battersea Power Station is a game changer for the new Nine Elms riverside district, where more than 30,000 people will live and work.

This and other rejuvenated areas such as Victoria and White City, where Imperial College is building a Harvard-style campus, are not sterile office districts but proper neighbourhoods, with shops and leisure venues, bars and restaurants.



14/24 Landmark Pinnacle, Canary Wharf

Landmark Pinnacle is a smart new development just moments from Canary Wharf.

📷 Take a look at London's new developments



15/24 Landmark Pinnacle, Canary Wharf

Flats at Landmark Pinnacle start at £475,000.
Call 020 3905 6826.

Other tech giants are reshaping the property map. Google is expanding by 3,000 staff its European HQ at King's Cross, while Facebook, Snap and Instagram have relocated to Fitzrovia.

King's Cross is one of the lower-priced Zone 1 districts. Though it is relative, for a new two-bedroom flat costs just under £1 million. Argent, developer of the new King's Cross Central business district, says at the outset one of the key regeneration concepts was a "live-work-play triangle" integrating homes, offices and leisure in one place.

It has been so successful that town planners across the globe use it as a model for urban renewal projects. Other developers are riding on the coat tails of Argent, building homes in once-unkempt corners just to the north. King's Cross Quarter in Pentonville Road has 118 flats from £978,000. Call Regal Homes on 020 7328 7171.

In lively Caledonian Road, N7, a good-looking scheme of 150 flats, London Square Caledonian Road, has prices starting at £699,999. Call the developer on 0333 666 0109.

STRIDE OUT FOR 30 MINUTES



From £649,950: two-bedroom flats with balconies and communal gardens at Corio, Bermondsey (01883 787 120) (Skyline)

While a home in Zone 1 is beyond the budget of most buyers, there are still relatively good-value parts of Zone 2 within a 30-minute walk of London's main employment districts.

Zone 2 starts at the car congestion charge boundary and stretches to Acton in the west, Archway in the north, Poplar in the east and Brixton in the south. Many of the areas have average prices below £500,000.

Start your search just outside the congestion charge zone and explore Whitechapel, Shadwell, Haggerston, Bethnal Green, [Lambeth](#), Camberwell, [Kilburn](#), Kennington, Rotherhithe, Stockwell, New Cross and Nunhead.

Hackney's heartland has the advantage of being equidistant to the Square Mile and Canary Wharf, with canal paths providing a car-free conduit for those who jog or walk to work. The district also has a flourishing live-work sector that creates a unique character. WeWork, now London's biggest provider of co-working office spaces, has made a beeline for this area.

A former industrial zone bordering London Fields has been turned into a hipster haven of designer homes and workspaces, ateliers, a craft beer premises, vinyl music shop, artisan bakery and Nordic café selling the latest healthy snacks.

Monohaus mixes 47 flats with extensive commercial space including a POPfit dance and fitness studio, to provide a new "lifestyle hub" where the boundaries of home and work are blurred. The building's stark black-and-white architecture suits the plot, while a central glazed atrium acts as a communal courtyard, with seating and shops alongside the residents' entrance. Loft-style flats with full-height windows and polished concrete floors cost from £585,000. Call 020 7043 8888.

CENTRAL AND SMARTENING UP

South of the river in Bermondsey, away from the expensive Shad Thames warehouse enclave, the district's gritty council estates have kept a lid on property prices. But scruffier pockets are smartening up, especially either side of a long railway viaduct with hundreds of refurbished arches running from London Bridge to Deptford, which cuts through the area.

Maltby Street Market is flourishing and expanding down the tracks, bringing a once-unpromising, off-pitch address in from the cold. Buyers are waking up and smelling the coffee.

Corio, a clean-cut scheme of 167 flats in Grange Walk fits nicely into this neighbourhood. On the site of a former tannery that made Royal Maundy purses and government despatch Boxes, the building's warm brick façade evokes the area's traditional warehouses, while flats have generous-sized recessed balconies overlooking communal gardens. Two-bedroom flats cost from £649,950. Call 01883 787 120.

LOCATIONS FOR A GOOD WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Oval has struggled to establish an identity beyond the famous cricket ground, but regeneration is rippling out from neighbouring Vauxhall and helping to give the area some shape.

It's a no-frills district of unpretentious mansion blocks and council flats that are being joined by swish new-build apartments. Even the local gasworks is earmarked for up 1,250 **new homes** by developer Berkeley Group.

Keybridge, with 273 homes at the edge of the neighbourhood, replaces a bulldozed BT telephone exchange and comprises four buildings including a 37-storey tower, plus an acre of open space, a public square and gardens. Two-bedroom apartments are priced from £865,000. Call 020 3553 7086.

LAMBETH'S A NO-BRAINER

Fashion consultant Lois Morgan, 37, had been renting in north London and wanted to get on the property ladder in Hampstead but found it far too expensive, so widened her search area. "I was struck by how central the riverside districts on the south side of the Thames are," she says.

"I work in Victoria so Lambeth was a no-brainer and it made sense to buy because the mortgage costs are roughly the same as renting. My flat near Stockwell station cost £550,000 and it takes me about 25 minutes to get to work."

Across the river from Vauxhall, Pimlico boasts the cheapest homes in central London's prized SW1 postcode.

The area bears a superficial resemblance to Belgravia, though it has never been as smart, with its character influenced by the hustle and bustle of Victoria station and the sprawling Churchill Gardens council estate. But it has some handsome stucco-fronted terraces and a few small luxury developments such as Ebury Place, 47 apartments priced from £799,000. Call 020 3319 3521.



SW1: Pimlico has a few handsome terraces and small luxury developments such as Ebury Place, with flats from £799,000

THE PIMLICO GRID

A small scheme of apartments has been unveiled in Hugh Street, part of the “Pimlico grid” of wide avenues. Prices from £500,000. Call Hamptons International on 020 3451 1544.

These days, Kilburn's rough reputation is undeserved. Much more cosmopolitan than it used to be, the Zone 2 area, up the road from Marble Arch, straddles the three boroughs of Brent, Westminster and Camden and is criss-crossed by railway lines. Most people judge the area by the traffic-clogged High Road and its bustling shopping parade. However, this is the main artery of Kilburn, not its heart.

Check out Kilburn Quarter, an ongoing council estate regeneration bringing 2,600 new homes to a patch just north of Maida Vale. Call Network Homes on 020 3846 8500. ■