

# NOT JUST A HOME BUT A LIFESTYLE

Camden's latest homes offer quality design in an edgy location that appeals to rich and poor, media types and pop stars. By **David Spittles**

**C**AMDEN TOWN is one of the few places in London where bohemian prosperity and urban edginess happily co-exist. If Amy Winehouse, one of many famous

locals, personifies the pop star-meets-punky subculture side of the area, **The Henson**, a new apartment scheme alongside colourful Camden Lock, with 4,000 sq ft penthouses and giant roof gardens, is evidence of the neighbourhood's growing status among serious fashionistas.

The building is named after Jim Henson, the creator of the Muppets, whose former factory and printing works is being redeveloped into a mixed-use community of 46 canal-side homes and loft offices for creative businesses.

As well being on the doorstep of Camden's lively market area, The Henson has a "back door" on to leafy Primrose Hill, where the gentrified avenues of town houses and summit offering spectacular views appeal to the likes of broadcaster Joan Bakewell.

"Camden's incredibly diverse, everyone from rich bankers to destitute writers and drop-outs with spiky pink hair," says Edward Robinson, manager of Foxtons estate agency. "It's an accepting place."

The Henson's two penthouses will be ready next summer and are already attracting curiosity visits from celebrity singers and media entrepreneurs, while the rest of the apartments – priced from £500,000 – will appeal to design-savvy buyers on middling budgets who like the

Camden vibe. That, at least, is the expectation of boutique developer Londonewcastle.

"We're in the lifestyle business as much as property development," says Robert Soning, chief executive. "Most of our buyers work in fashion, film, theatre, music, web design or the City. They are prepared to pay a little extra for quality design because their home is an important expression of who they are."

The development, in Oval Road, has 24-hour concierge, valet parking, bicycle pool and private courtyard gardens. Visit [www.thehenson.co.uk](http://www.thehenson.co.uk) or call estate agent Pilcher Hershman on 020 7399 8600 to register.

For many years the canal, its linked industry and the area's close proximity to King's Cross and St Pancras, were drawbacks for Camden Town. But canal-side regeneration has prettified the area, while the Eurostar terminal has put Paris barely two hours away.

A fire last year devastated one of

Camden's six canal-side markets. It has since had a makeover, along with the historic Stables Market. But some indignant stallholders and traders complain of higher rents and fear the loss of Camden's quirky, alternative retail scene.

Camden council has approved a wider development brief with property company Chelsfield for the creation of **Canal Lock Village**. A new covered market with rooftop pavilions linked by walkways will have 130 new homes. The council has also agreed a £1.5 million overhaul of Camden High Street, while there are plans for new flats above a revamp of Camden Town Tube station.

Resales at **The Ice Works** and **The Lockhouse** developments, facing The Henson on the opposite side of the canal, are brisk, says Foxtons. One-bedroom flats cost from about £400,000, rising to about £800,000 for three-bedroom apartments.

On the corner of Jamestown Road and Arlington Road, where a hostel once stood, the 32-flat **Glass Building**, designed by Piers Gough, has raised the tone of the area. Online estate agent Halfapercen.com is advertising a two-bedroom flat priced at £499,000, which seems a good price for 1,515 sq ft of space plus covered parking and portage. **Gilbey House**, a former bottling plant,



has 76 flats and is also sought-after.

Prices at **Kings Apartments**, a new scheme at the southern end of Camden High Street, start at £325,000 and rise to £750,000. Call 020 7424 6009. Notting Hill Housing has unveiled 22 apartments in a quieter pocket between Mornington Crescent Tube station and Regent's Park. Called **Park Village East**, the eye-catching building has a shimmering, circular form and includes penthouse-style flats with roof terraces. Prices from £299,950. all 020 3320 8220.



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**Local lady:** singer Amy Winehouse is a totem of Camden's edgy subculture



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**All quiet on the waterfront:** busy Camden Lock stills offer places to relax and revive

