



Clockwise from left: a four-bedroom house on St Luke's Street, £9.85m through Knight Frank and Russell Simpson. Its sitting room. The Glebe on the King's Road, price on request. A three-bedroom cottage on Smith Terrace, £3.75m through John D Wood



helped preserve this identity, and is no doubt one of the reasons residents have powerfully resisted the proposed introduction of Crossrail 2. "They don't see the value of Crossrail," says Knight Frank's Pace.

What locals undoubtedly do prize is that the area delivers some of the most covetable assets of modern urban living: security, discretion, greenery and timelessness. Due to a rigorous local planning lobby, additions to the landscape must conform to these core values – even if these are setting world-record prices. At The Glebe (price on request, pictured right), a development of apartments and houses midway down the King's Road that completes this summer, "the houses get back to the ultimate values of life," says architect Philip Gumuchdjian. "Set in their own landscaped gardens, they provide a sense of freedom, with a connection to both the city and nature." In addition, their mansion-like proportions allow buyers to live on the grandest of scales, but in a discreet, contemporary way.

An equally green and pleasant scheme soon to complete is The Sloane Building (from £3.2m through Savills and Knight Frank), where most of the 18 large apartments carved from a 1908 school will provide double-height living space and an outlook onto greenery. "In general, people are looking for low-built and wide and there's very little available," says Becky Fatemi, director of estate agent Rokstone. Which is why new additions to the landscape modelling themselves on these specifications, such as a detached four-bedroom house on St Luke's Street (£9.85m through Knight Frank and Russell Simpson, pictured top left and right), are always welcome.

evident in "studio" houses (a two-bedroom example in Mallord Street, £5.95m through Russell Simpson, is pictured on previous page), the most coveted fronting the Thames on Cheyne Walk, near The Chelsea Arts Club in Old Church Street, founded in 1891 to be "bohemian in character". "You buy in Chelsea for its identity and community. It's very much somewhere to be part of, cosmopolitan but not transient," says Carroll. "I've helped people move here from other parts of London who no longer want to live next to investment properties."

The fact that the more westerly stretches of the road are not well served by Tube or train, has, if anything,

By no means everyone in Chelsea owns property and, just as in its artistic heyday, the area enjoys a thriving rental market. "Rental values are largely comparable to international rents, whereas the price of purchasing can seem prohibitive," says Tom Martin, executive chairman of Martin's Properties, one of the area's foremost landlords. "For the average family house, stamp duty alone is the equivalent of five years' rent." Family houses here let for about £5,000 a week, while those happy with apartment life in sought-after blocks such as interwar Whitelands House will pay from £550 a week.

Bohemian locals remain in short supply but there are definitely signs of a more youthful influx. "As the market has softened, we've seen the return of younger buyers," says Pace. "Prices are at the same level as parts of Shoreditch." And for those with children in tow, the area remains an idyllic place – an urban oasis of village life. ♦ "Mary Quant" at the V&A ([vam.ac.uk](http://vam.ac.uk)) opens on April 6.

#### KING'S OF THE CASTLE

**The Buying Solution**, [thebuyingsolution.co.uk](http://thebuyingsolution.co.uk). **The Glebe**, [theglebe.com](http://theglebe.com). **John D Wood**, [johndwood.co.uk](http://johndwood.co.uk). **Knight Frank**, [knightfrank.com](http://knightfrank.com). **Martin's Properties**, [martin-properties.co.uk](http://martin-properties.co.uk). **Rokstone**, [rokstone.com](http://rokstone.com). **Russell Simpson**, [russellsimpson.co.uk](http://russellsimpson.co.uk). **Savills**, [savills.co.uk](http://savills.co.uk).

1960s



Non-conformist youth scenes add to the street's radical vibe

1970s



Westwood and McLaren's anarchic style: punk takes a swipe at the establishment

1970s



Chrissie Hynde and Sid Vicious take jobs at Westwood's Sex store