

ON A MISSION
Nickie Aiken on her
bid to cut crime

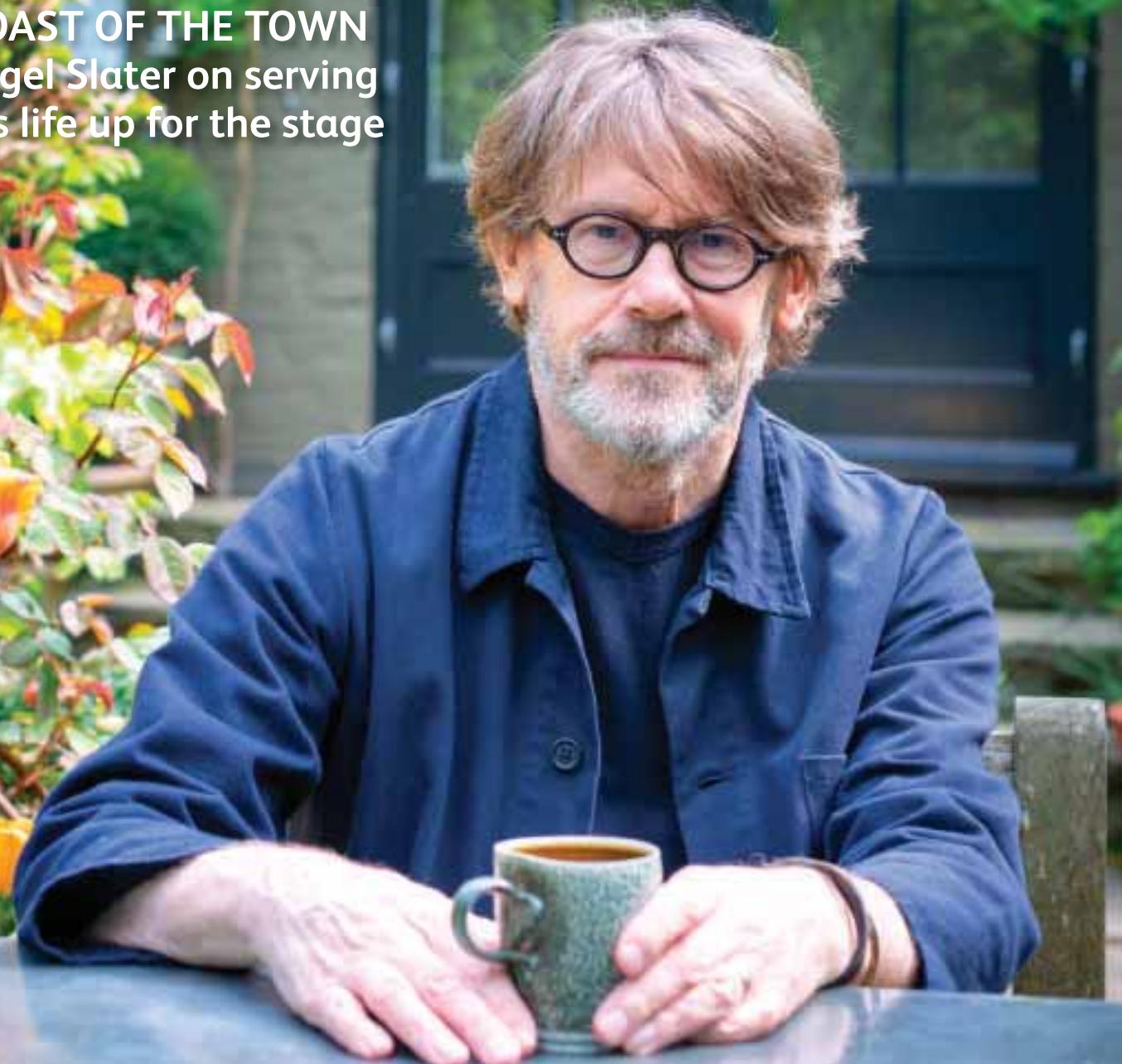
PLAYBOY STYLE
Meet Imran Khan's
hairdresser

HOT BUYS
What to wear
this summer

Victoria

LONDON STARTS HERE

TOAST OF THE TOWN
Nigel Slater on serving
his life up for the stage





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Summer

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Photo: Piers Foley

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victoria
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AMONGST MANY MORE



▲ The flair and comfort of French cooking has arrived in Victoria with the opening of stylish cafe and restaurant Chez Antoinette.

Run by Aurelia Delclos with her husband, the site is located in the new Buckingham Green development between Victoria and St James's Park.

The former designer named the all-day offering – her second in London – after her grandmother. Artful pastries, homemade soup and daily specials reflect her heritage, having grown up in Lyon, famously dubbed the French food capital.

22 Palmer Street

From a new French restaurant on Palmer Street to the former base of spy agency GCHQ unveiled, here's our round-up of all the latest news from Victoria



The secret base for spy agency GCHQ has been officially unmasked as a dreary looking office block opposite St James's Park Tube station.

The site on Palmer Street housed the intelligence service from 1953, with the agency lifting the lid on its home after moving out.

GCHQ director Jeremy Fleming said: "After 66 years we look back on a history full of amazing intelligence, world-leading innovation, and the ingenious people who passed through those secret doors."

▲ Celebrated champagne house Laurent-Perrier will donate £1 from every glass of fizz sold from masterclasses at this year's Taste of London to two Victoria-based charities.

The Passage charity and The Hotel School, in association with The Goring, will receive the donation to help those who have fallen on hard times get back on their feet with employment in the hospitality sector.

Taste of London runs from June 19-23 in Regent's Park. Masterclass tickets cost £20 each. Visit london.tastefestivals.com



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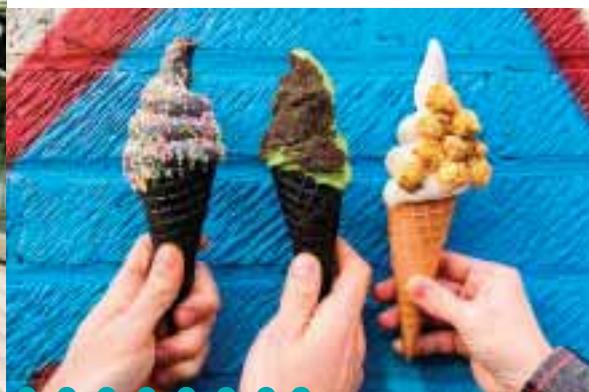
**THE OTHER
GIN
PALACE**
© OTHER PALACE



A new rooftop bar serving British-made beers and a summer spritz menu has opened at Market Hall Victoria.

Overlooking Victoria Station, it seats 150 and is currently hosting ice cream dessert bar Soft Serve Society as a six-month pop-up.

Meanwhile at St Ermin's Hotel, a slice of the south of France arrives for the summer months with the launch of a Provençal rosé terrace in partnership with Château La Gordonne. Guests can also enjoy a selection of Provençal-themed dishes from the kitchen, made using produce from the hotel's rooftop garden.



Brining, fermenting and soaking are the name of the game at a new restaurant in Victoria.

The Soak is the new bar, lounge and kitchen offering at the Grosvenor Hotel in a space previously occupied by Chinese restaurant the Grand Imperial.

The all-day venue serves a dinner menu with offerings split into “jars, cured and pickled”, “plants and garden” and “preserved”.

Dishes include wood pigeon with pearl barley koji and fermented mooli and slow-cooked lamb belly fritters with black garlic mayonnaise.

101 Buckingham Palace Road



Know your Queen of Puddings? Then a sous chef role at Buckingham Palace might be for you.

The royal household has advertised for a full-time role in a “unique and stimulating work environment” with 33 days’ holiday and the option of “live-in accommodation with meals provided”. Training in classic French cuisine is essential.

What's on



GAME, SET, MATCH

If you haven't been lucky enough to score tickets for this year's Wimbledon championships, you can still enjoy the games in a great atmosphere in two prime locations in Victoria.

Eccleston Yards will host a big screen with all the top matches, deck chairs, strawberries and cream and Pimm's.

Meanwhile there's a tropical twist to the match screenings at Cardinal Place this year, with deck chairs for sun worshippers or a bright yellow canopy if it rains as the roof garden is transformed for the 2019 Colour My Summer campaign, to be launched on June 20.

Wimbledon screenings will run from July 1-14

Summer events

Wimbledon screenings, the Victoria Football Cup and an exhibition celebrating 200 years since Queen Victoria's birth are all coming to SW1 this summer

FOOTBALL CUP RETURNS

This summer, businesses from across Victoria and Westminster will be putting their best feet forward in a bid to win this year's Victoria Football Cup.

The two-week tournament will see teams from Victoria battle those from Westminster to be crowned champions, in a competition organised by the Victoria and Victoria Westminster BIDs.

The hotly-contested competition will run from June 10-20, with five-aside teams playing two matches each after work at the Queen Mother Sports Centre on Vauxhall Bridge Road.

RARE RENDITIONS

A celebration of the music of lesser known British composers takes place in St John's Smith Square in June, with world-renowned soprano Helena Dix taking centre stage.

Conductor John Gibbons will lead the Ealing Symphony Orchestra for the British Music Society's 40th anniversary concert on June 22.

The society has been at the forefront of a revival of interest in British composers whose music fell from fashion in the post-war era of modernism. Works by Arnold Bax and Hamilton Harty will be among those performed.

Tickets cost £15. Book at sjss.org.uk or ring 020 7222 1061





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SCREEN UNDER THE STARS

Fancy a night out under the stars with some classic movies for company? Luna Cinema returns to Westminster Abbey Gardens for three nights in August with a trio of all-time favourite flicks.

Enjoy *A Star is Born* on August 13, *Some Like It Hot* on August 14 and *Shakespeare in Love* on August 15.

Screenings take place in the Dean's Yard, where food and a bar will be available. Doors open at 7pm and films start at 8.30pm.

Visit thelunacinema.com to book



BEHIND PALACE WALLS

A new exhibition celebrating the 200th anniversary of the birth of Queen Victoria opens at Buckingham Palace this July.

Queen Victoria's Palace will tell the story of how the young monarch transformed the palace from a private house into a working royal residence.

Together with Prince Albert, she made Buckingham Palace a rallying point for the nation, a powerful symbol of the British monarchy and a family home for their nine children.

The exhibition runs from July 20 to September 29. Entry costs £25 for adults and £14 for children. Visit rct.uk to book



VICTORIAN VIBES



Get your glad rags on for a two-day summer garden party in June to celebrate 200 years since Queen Victoria's birth, hosted by the Victoria BID.

The traditional British garden party was invented by the queen, so what better way to mark her anniversary than with afternoon tea served by local hotels?

A Victorian bandstand, live music, a Pimm's tricycle, Victorian funfair games and a teacup horticultural workshop will also feature.

The event takes place from June 6-7 in Lower Grosvenor Gardens

NEW EVENING MENU

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of small plates
from 3rd June



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**As the stage
adaptation of Nigel
Slater's memoir *Toast*
arrives at The Other
Palace theatre, the
renowned food writer
tells us why reliving his
childhood has proved
an emotional process**

BY CORRIE BOND-FRENCH



Arctic roll, Angel Delight, Fray Bentos and burnt toast might not feature in everyone's roll-call of Proustian recollections, but for Nigel Slater they are the stuff of authentic nostalgia; memories richer than any ragu that unlock his childhood and bleak adolescence.

Cookery writer Nigel is, of course, a culinary icon these days. He has penned cookery books and newspaper columns for well over 20 years and has presented several television series, endearing himself to his legion of fans with inspiring musings and carefully researched recipes of robust, simple deliciousness, while garnering more awards than you could shake a cinnamon stick at.

His autobiography, *Toast: The Story of a Boy's Hunger*, was also an award-winning effort. It tells the story of how food provided solace in escaping the misery of his childhood after his mother's death when he was only nine years old (and just after they had had an argument). The young Nigel, already a keen cook, had to contend with a lack of love from his father and a war of attrition with his new stepmother – the family's former cleaner and a brilliant cook – with battle

Matters of taste

Left: Nigel Slater
Below left: *Toast* the play
Photos: Piers Foley

lines drawn amid the frothy peaks of the lemon meringue pies she excelled at.

Initially made into a BBC film, *Toast* has now been adapted for the stage, where it is currently wowing audiences as a multisensory experience at Victoria's The Other Palace theatre until August. It is a richly evocative memoir brought to life by the scent of toast and the crunch of walnut whips, as Nigel's 1960s suburban childhood is played out on stage.

Many years have now passed since *Toast* was written and Nigel, an affirmed workaholic, confesses that while he has little time to reflect on his achievements, he is still thrilled by the ongoing success and adaptations of his memoir.

"Barely a day goes by without thinking how lucky I am. I wish I had more time to reflect on that really but I'm busy, almost ridiculously so, and I'm grateful for that. I never honestly think about my achievements though. I just do what I do and will carry on for as long as I can. But I am thrilled with how *Toast*, the little book about my childhood, has worked so well, becoming both a film and a stage play. It seems to have touched people in many different ways."

Nigel says the process of writing *Toast* all those years ago was, ultimately, hugely beneficial for him, and he would urge anyone going through a tough time to write.

"It never occurred to me that writing *Toast* would be cathartic. But, yes, it was. The story was there already. All I did was to put it down on paper. It was only when the book was out that I realised how much good it had done. How much better I felt about getting everything off my chest.

"If I could offer one word of advice to any young person going through a tough time it is to put pen to paper. Even if it is just a few notes. Things become clearer when you see them in black and white and it might help them to see a way through it. To see that nothing is permanent and situations can and probably will change for the better. Writing your story down makes you realise you own it, and that you really can change your own destiny."

As time has passed, Nigel admits his feelings have mellowed towards his late stepmother. "I don't regret sharing the story. I do feel differently about my stepmother though. I hadn't taken

on board how difficult it was for her to leave her family, including two of her daughters, and start a new life with my father. She was very brave and I realised that only recently. It is a courageous thing to leave your situation however bad it might be. I didn't give my stepmother enough credit for that."

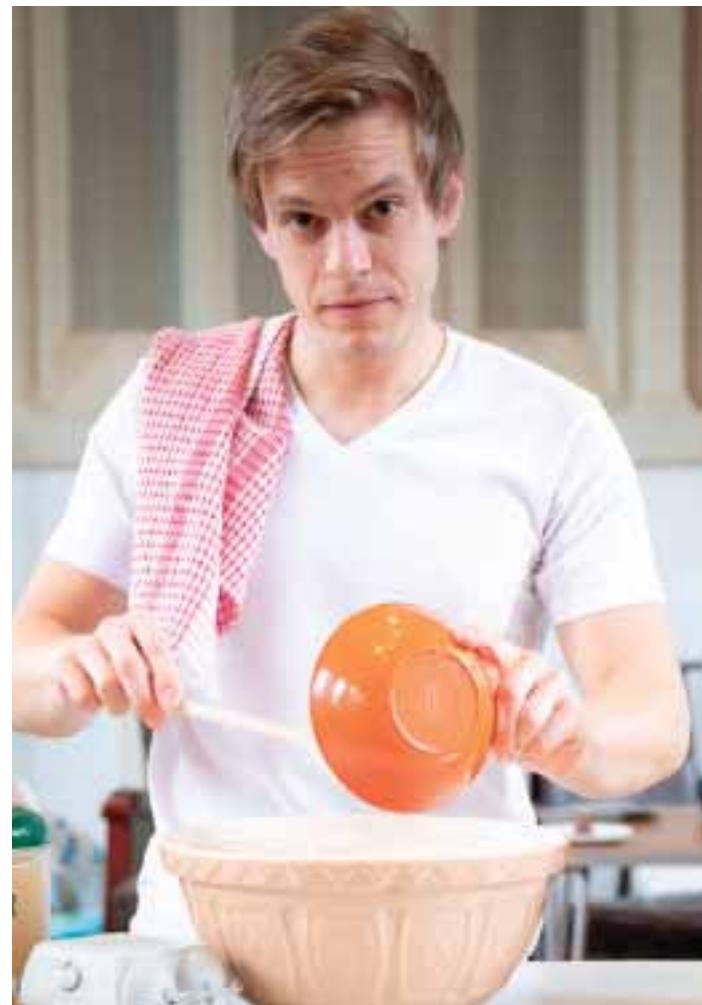
And he confesses that he can still be moved when he sees his memoirs acted out on stage: "I don't really think of them portraying me. I do think of the young Nigel as someone else but then suddenly there will be a line that makes me jump. Something that takes me off back to an event in my childhood that was particularly emotional or traumatic and then I relive it."

When it comes to the day job, Nigel is still positive and grateful that he's been able to carve a career out of cooking and writing. "Joyous, if disciplined, is exactly how I would describe it," he says. "I always wanted to cook and to write and am very lucky to be able to do both for a living but yes, it requires a certain discipline. Deadlines, whether for my weekly *Observer* column or biannually for my books are strict. My entire life revolves around them. They provide a structure which holds everything in place.

"I will never forget the day my first book *Real Fast Food* arrived at home. I couldn't quite believe it was real. I still have that very first copy, the one my publisher biked over to me, though it is in a pretty battered state now. To be honest, the excitement continues to this day. Each new book feels just as exciting as the first. And that slight feeling of disbelief. Did I actually do this?"

And times have clearly changed beyond recognition since the post-ration backdrop to Nigel's youth. "This is a very good time to be

"I feel differently about my stepmother. She was very brave and I didn't give her enough credit"



Giles Cooper as Nigel Slater in *Toast* Photo: Piers Foley

writing about food. Everyone is so open to new ideas now – well, at least most of us are. There is a constant hunger for new thinking, a different approach to a classic or an easier way to make something. I do think we have relaxed about eating and cooking, which is a good thing. There is a certain energy, open-mindedness and enthusiasm that didn't exist when I was younger.

"Inspiration comes in a whole host of guises. Often it is the tiniest little thing that gives you an idea. But it is mostly down to constant curiosity and appetite. I am almost permanently hungry. Not in a gluttonous way – far from it – but I want to taste everything. I'd hate to get to the end of my life and realise I had missed something delicious. We are only here once."

So what would Nigel's last meal be? It's reassuringly simple: "If I had to cook my own last dish it would probably be damson crumble. I'd like to think however old I get I would still be able to manage a dish of crumble."

Toast is at The Other Palace theatre, 12 Palace Street, until August 3. Visit lwtheatres.co.uk/toast or call 020 7087 7900

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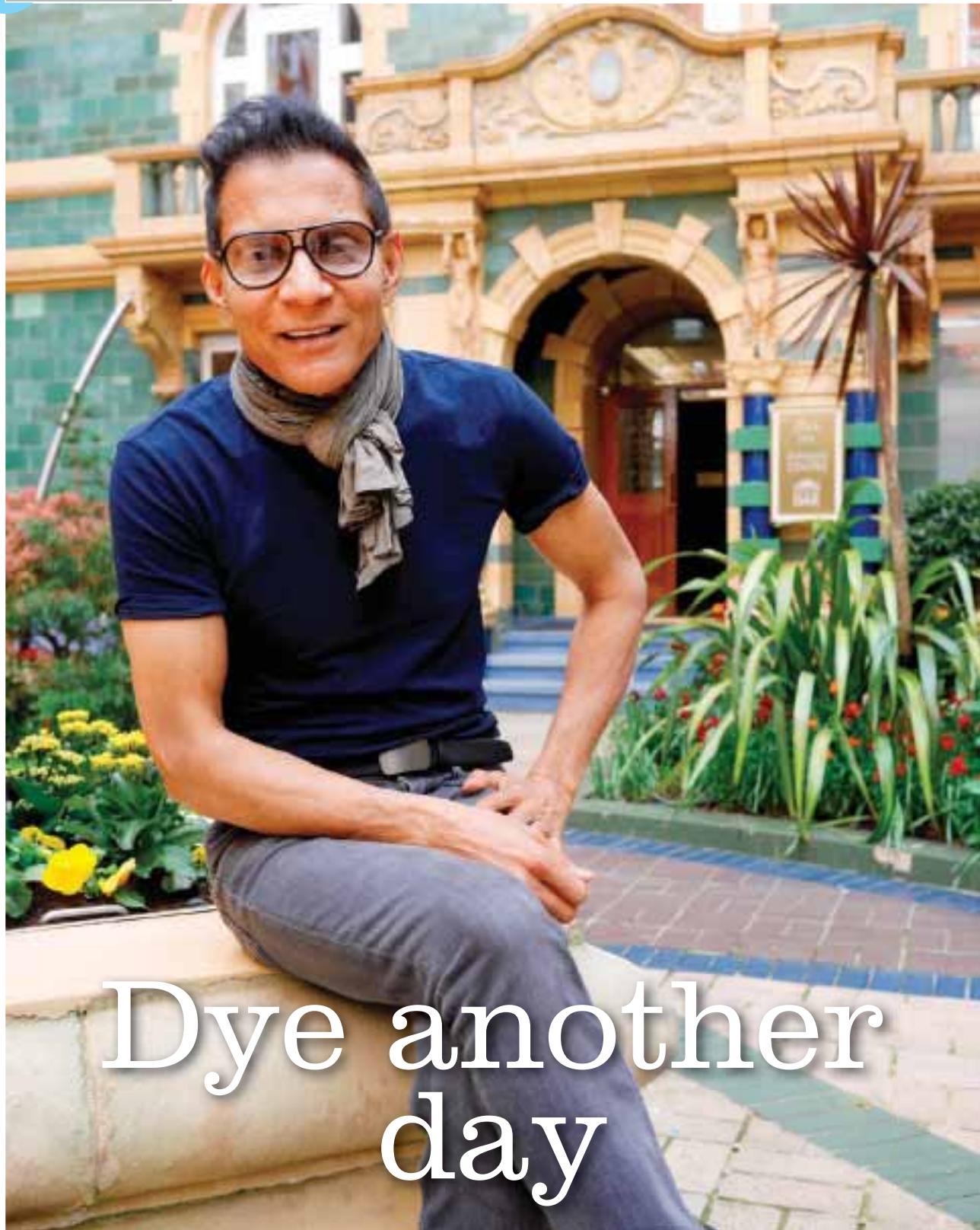
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Dye another day

From the playboy locks of Imran Khan to the short style of Bond girl Fiona Fullerton, Dar Barot has enjoyed a career trimming the tresses of the A-list

BY CORRIE BOND-FRENCH

Dar Barot in the courtyard of St James' Court, a Taj Hotel, in Victoria. Photograph: Reyhaan Day

Hair, according to Phoebe Waller-Bridge's creation, Fleabag, "is everything" – and there's no denying that for many, perhaps increasingly so in this Instagram age, a good hair day is a great day.

It's attached to you, it's affected by the weather, it changes constantly and can be tricky to control. It can be the bane of your life until you find the right hairdresser, and it can define you – just ask Jennifer Aniston or Hillary Clinton. It wasn't for nothing that the late George Michael once flew his hairdresser sister over to the States on Concorde as a matter of urgency when he was having a bad hair day on a shoot. Hair is personal.

Dar Barot knows this better than most. Now working from the secluded opulence of St James' Court, A Taj Hotel – Hair by Dar occupies an unassuming spot of the courtyard – Dar has nigh-on four decades of expertise flowing through his fingertips.

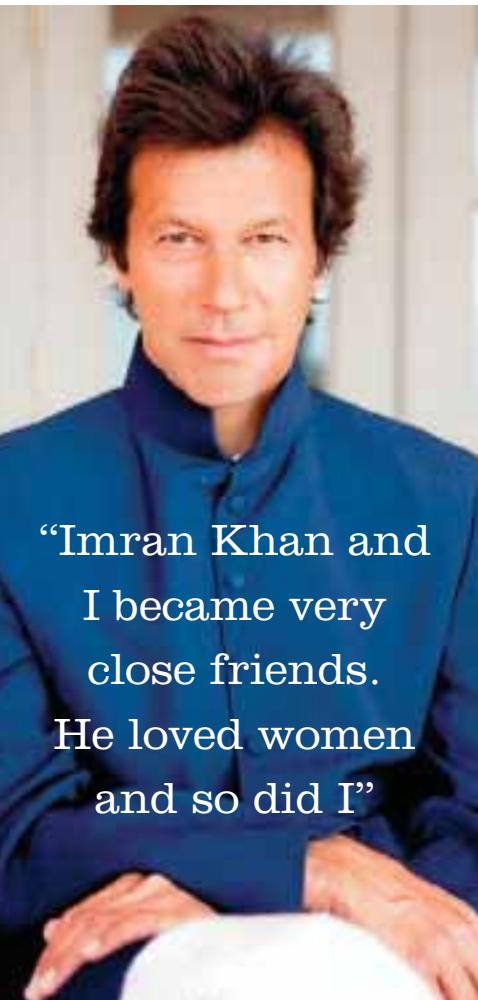
Since the late 1970s and through the decade of experimental exuberance that was the 1980s, Dar has tended to the tresses of a glittering constellation of stars, including rock royalty such as Paul McCartney and Mick Jagger, a bevy of Bond girl beauties such as Fiona Fullerton and Maud Adams and a host of sporting greats.

It was Dar who gave Fiona the short style that highlighted cheekbones you could cut a cigar on, and Dar who gave cricketing legend and now Pakistan's political leader Imran Khan his playboy locks, including on his wedding day to Jemima Khan.

From Bollywood stars including Aishwarya Rai and Eighties pop stars such as Samantha Fox to *X Factor* judge and Pussycat Doll Nicole Scherzinger and also Simon Cowell, Dar has seen it all, and he thrives on it still. To Dar, hair, and getting to befriend his clients, is still a joy, and he takes a holistic approach to his work.

"I still feel so creative – even after all of these years there's always something new," he says. "I look at the whole of the person to see what would look best and see the hair as the crown in a way."

Even now, Dar is creating groundbreaking new methods of cutting hair, including the V cut, a method he devised that enables women with long hair to maintain



"Imran Khan and I became very close friends. He loved women and so did I"

BELOW: Fiona Fullerton and Roger Moore in Bond film *A View to a Kill*, 1985



the length while still having layers that instantly lift the face.

When I meet Dar at the salon, a client pops in to book and raves about how perfect he made her wedding day. Dar tells me about another client who flies over from Germany every couple of months just to have her hair done. She runs a university and now insists that she is perceived differently.

So Dar still has an international fanbase, and although his good friend and former business partner Imran Khan has been a tad busy of late to pop into the salon from Pakistan, Dar has maintained many friendships with clients in India and is an expert in Asian hair.

It's a far cry from when he first arrived in the UK in the 1970s and lived in Swindon. Interested in fashion, long-haired and dressing up à la T Rex and David Bowie, he and his girlfriend Gillian moved to the capital, where Gillian suggested he try hairdressing because he was good at doing her hair.

In a short space of time, Dar was training and working at Vidal Sassoon – "I can cut those bobs in my sleep!" – before he went freelance as one of the first photo-shoot hairdressers. Soon, his editorial work led to video work for the likes of Spandau Ballet and Boy George, and he and Imran, by now great friends, ventured into business with a salon in Marylebone.

"Imran and I became very close friends. He loved women and so did I. He said to me, 'We should open a salon'; he was my sleeping partner. I'm a creator and he was a cricketer, we didn't really know what we were doing. But it was all over the papers. Patrick Lichfield did the launch pictures for free, it went into *Vogue*, *Harper's*, *Tatler*, highlighting the salon. It won awards, but it didn't really work. After a couple of years, the guy who funded it ran away with all of our money. Before that I was flying high and I lost a little bit of confidence, I had nobody to advise me."

But Dar picked himself up and has continued his passion. He is still fascinated and inspired by hair and how he can make people feel good about it. He opened the salon at St James' Court a couple of years ago, and is thrilled with it. "I love creating and I love meeting people and connecting them," he says. "This is what makes me happy."

*Readers who quote "Vic mag" will receive a haircut and style, which usually costs £140, for £100.
51 Buckingham Gate, hairbydar.com*



ABOVE: Dar Barot in his Victoria salon

AWARD-WINNING INDIAN BRAND JIVA has launched its first spa in Europe at Victoria's St James' Court hotel.

The collaboration between the Taj hotel's heritage brand Jiva and British lifestyle brand Temple Spa allows guests to choose between ancient Indian healing rituals and an advanced derma-science driven approach.

Sleek and stylish, the subterranean space includes a vitality pool, steam room and sauna. There are signature treatments, body wraps made with Indian spices, body scrubs, Bhutanese baths and Ayurvedic therapies.

Meanwhile Temple Spa treatments include a Red Carpet Miracle Facial and a 30-minute Power Breakfast Express Facial.

The spa is open to hotel guests and the public. Email jiva.london@tajhotels.com to book



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78 VICTORIA STREET

MEN'S EDIT



Hugo Boss

Classic grey chinos are an investment that will see you from spring right through to the early autumn. £129

78 VICTORIA STREET



Jones Bootmaker

An innovative suede shoe with a great colourway of grey and blue, which you can wear with jeans or chinos. £99

84 VICTORIA STREET



The North Face

You can't go wrong with a simple polo top. This one comes in a wide range of colours, but our favourite is the storm blue. £40

28 PALACE STREET

Victoria resident Natalie de Silva is an image consultant and founder of Iconic Belgravia, who qualified as a personal stylist from the London College of Fashion. She picks out her summer essentials

Accessorize

If you want to try out a new trend and add a pop of colour to your outfit, then have a look at this versatile citrus scarf. You can tie it round your neck, over a ponytail or knot it on your handbag. £15

17 CARDINAL PLACE



Clarks

Clarks have the comfiest selection of sandals in a wide range of colours, widths and heel sizes, and it's where I buy mine for the summer. These stylish yellow mini wedges are going on my wish list. £55

149 VICTORIA STREET



WOMEN'S EDIT



Hobbs

A perennial favourite, gingham is all over the high street again this year. This monochrome shift dress is sure to be an investment piece that you'll pull out of the wardrobe year after year and it's one that won't date. £129

3 CATHEDRAL WALK



Accessorize

Who doesn't love a fruity little handbag? This one has lovely embroidered detailing, a great clasp and it's big enough to fit your essentials plus a water bottle on those hot days. £35

17 CARDINAL PLACE



Polk

The Polk Assist, £179, with Google Assistant support and Chromecast will be a gadget-loving father's dream.

**HI-FI CONFIDENTIAL, 32
BUCKINGHAM PALACE ROAD**

Raymond Weil

The Beatles watch, £1,195, is one for all the dads obsessed with the *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* album. The first Raymond Weil to use a vegan leather strap, it is limited to just 3,000 pieces.

**GOLDSMITHS, 90 VICTORIA
STREET**



Father time

As Father's Day approaches, we round up the best gifts to buy in Victoria

BY SOPHIA CHARALAMBOUS



Tailor Made London

Think bold for the summer season with this classic tie, made by the trendiest tailors in town. £110

15D ECCLESTON PLACE



M&S

Summertime is barbecue time, so make your dad really happy with this BergHOFF ceramic model, £269

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Hush Hush Chefs

Filo pastry quiches and pies take centre stage at new independent artisan bakers Hush Hush Chefs.

The brand has opened its first and only retail space in Victoria's Nova development, serving the likes of kale, ricotta and feta quiche and chorizo and roasted peppers pie.

SIR SIMON MILTON SQUARE



Ole & Steen

Popular Danish bakery Ole & Steen has opened a new site in Eccleston Yards.

The 70-seat cafe is the brand's 10th in London and its second branch in Victoria. Fans will be relieved to see the much-loved cinnamon social slice is still on the menu.

1 ECCLESTON PLACE



Conrad London St James

Conrad London St James has launched a gin afternoon tea with the City of London Distillery.

The gin-infused sweet treats and cocktails include a Square Mile gin with lemon and pink grapefruit tart with rosemary meringue; and a Six Bells gin with elderflower jelly, honey cake and pear mousse delice.

**FROM £35 PER PERSON.
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Island Poké

Grab-and-go Island Poké has launched in Victoria, offering poké bowls including ahi tuna shoyu and salmon in a yuzu dressing.

Although known for its fast takeaway offering, the Victoria Street store – its seventh site in London – also has space for 12 diners to sit in.

137 VICTORIA STREET

AIRBNB LETTINGS

A LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

commercial hire as short-term temporary accommodation for paying visitors is inconsistent with a lease covenant for exclusively residential use so leaseholders hosting guests via Airbnb could find themselves in breach of their lease.

In the case of *Bermondsey Exchange Freeholders Limited v Ninos Kournetto (as Trustee in Bankruptcy of Kevin Geoghegan Conway)* [2018], appeal court judges agreed that a leaseholder was in breach of his lease 'for use of the flat for occupation by transient short-term paying occupants engaged through Airbnb style platforms' and continued an injunction which prevented him from letting out his flat through on-line portals such as Airbnb.

Noise, nuisance and security issues resulting from the short term lets can also give rise to a breach of lease and potentially cause an issue with neighbours who might ask the landlord to act. Using a flat as Airbnb style accommodation may also be a breach of the owner's lease with regard to planning controls, and could possibly invalidate insurance policies relating to the property or breach the terms of any mortgage on the property.

If you are considering letting out your property through Airbnb style websites, leaseholders would be well advised firstly to check the terms of their lease to avoid the risk of a breach of lease claim and all its consequences.

The trend for leaseholders to rent out their homes to paying guests via Airbnb style websites is growing and yet leaseholders are often unaware that doing so could put them in breach of their lease and at risk of court proceedings being brought against them by their landlord.

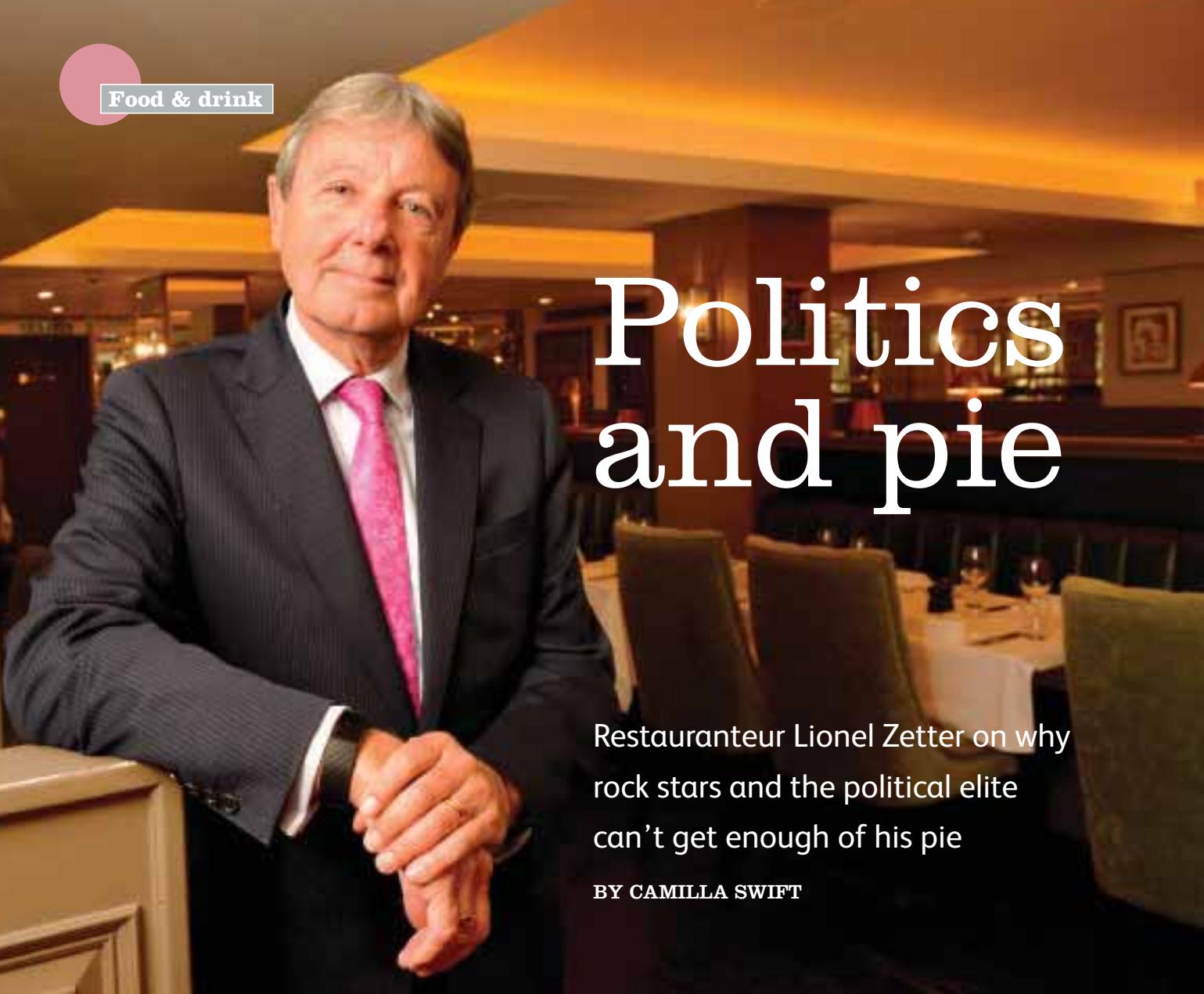
Residential flat leases usually contain a clause which restricts the use of the property as a private residence or prohibits the carrying on of a business at the property. Using the flat for



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Politics and pie

Restaurateur Lionel Zetter on why rock stars and the political elite can't get enough of his pie

BY CAMILLA SWIFT

Tucked away in a quiet corner of SW1, Shepherd's of Westminster on Marsham Street is famous as a hangout of politicians, plotters and journalists – and for the fact it was once owned by Michael Caine.

Since 2014, however, it has been in the hands of Lionel Zetter, who until then had spent most of his life in the political world. Having previously worked in parliament, for the Conservative Party, as a political consultant and in local politics, he now describes himself as an “entrepreneur, restaurateur, bon viveur and provocateur”.

Lionel hasn’t given up on politics entirely however. He now operates as an independent public affairs consultant, meaning that he can devote as much – or as little – time to his restaurant as he sees fit. The reality, though, is that it takes up more hours than he could ever have anticipated. “It is much harder work than I expected,” he says. “People in the trade warned

me and I said, ‘Yes, I understand but I’m going to do it anyway’. But it’s every bit as tough as they said, and the restaurant industry is a tough trade. It’s been a learning curve; an experience.”

But why Shepherd’s, and why now? “When my wife and I first moved to London, we used to live upstairs, in the flats above. So I have a certain amount of affection for the place.

“In those days, this restaurant was called Locketts, and as we do now they looked after the residents very well. When I saw the place sadly empty and up for sale, it was an opportunity firstly to invest, but also to help out.”

Shepherd’s prides itself on being classically English – but “not traditional”, says Lionel. “It’s not roast beef and Yorkshire pudding. It’s more Dover sole and steaks, and of course shepherd’s pie.”

Perhaps the latter shouldn’t be a surprise, given the name. “Our chef featured on the

Discovery Channel at the end of last year talking about how he prepares shepherd's pie," says Lionel. "Of course they're all fairly similar but he has his own methodology, and we now get Americans coming in saying, 'I saw your chef on Discovery, I want to try your famous shepherd's pie.' It's extremely popular and never leaves the menu."

Tourists are something of a recent addition to the customer base. In order to make a success of Shepherd's, Lionel realised he needed to reach out to clientele beyond those working in the area. "I realised when we were looking at reviving the place that if we just relied on Westminster, it simply wouldn't work. Westminster only sits about 35 weeks a year, and you can't just send everyone packing and close up for the rest of the year." So he expanded the clientele, building up a strong customer base among people who live nearby, and promoting it in the local hotels. "There's not much footfall round here, so we have to work hard to get tourists to visit," he explains.

Tourists, locals, and celebrities aside (Guns N' Roses pop in every time they're in London, I'm told, while Cilla Black was a regular and Tom Jones has also eaten here), politics – and politicians – still rule the roost.

One corner is still referred to as "Archer's corner" after the novelist and former politician. There are quiet booths and tables for hushed conversations and two private rooms where the walls are decorated with vintage cartoons on loan from the Political Cartoon Gallery.

As well as having a classically English menu, all the ingredients ("apart from a few spices") are from the British Isles, whether that's fish, game or vegetables. The menu is updated weekly, with daily specials. The wine list is something of a sticking point when it comes to keeping things local, though. "We do have a strong English wine list", Lionel says, "but the wine list is obviously a bit more extensive."

"It's not roast beef and Yorkshire pudding. It's more Dover sole and steaks, and of course shepherd's pie"



Many of the locals are only there during the week, and as a result the restaurant isn't open at weekends. However, things are changing in the area. "When I first started working in Westminster there was the Army & Navy store [now House of Fraser]," says Lionel. "That was all. There was nothing else."

Now though, with the vast regeneration of Victoria in recent years, things are very different. "The increased footfall in Victoria certainly hasn't done us any harm," Lionel says. "We do like to think we are part of the Westminster scene, but if we can tap into what's happening in Victoria, that's great. I think that like King's Cross, it's one of the most exciting areas of London at the moment."

Marsham Court

Promotion



With 64 luxury apartments and a prestigious architecture award to its name, new development Buckingham Green is making a bold first impression

Luxury rental apartments fit for a queen



Buckingham Green, a RIBA London 2019 Award winning mixed-use development by London & Oriental, is now complete, offering 64 luxurious apartments to rent via JLL.

Situated within a 16-storey tower between Victoria and St James's, the one, two, three and four-bedroom apartments are located on the fifth to 15th floors offering striking views across London – some with views of Buckingham Palace. Each apartment is carefully designed with residents' comfort as the primary consideration. The furnishing, by renowned interior designer TH2, has been inspired by the nature and beauty of the changing seasons reflected in adjacent St James's Park. Each apartment has either a spring, summer, autumn or winter palette, creating a synergy between the natural beauty of the historic park nearby and the environment inside.

Additional benefits include 24-hour security and concierge services, the convenience of basement car

parking and extensive cycle storage provision.

Craftsmanship is central to Buckingham Green's character, with each building incorporating the highest quality materials from around the world. These include hand-made red bricks from Charnwood in Leicestershire; statuario marble from Carrara in Italy, grey savannah marble from Turkey and the complex curved aluminium trellis created by world class fabricators in Switzerland.

Mark Connell, partner at London & Oriental, said: "The significant transformation has been achieved through the team's insight and thoughtful determination to deliver a vibrant new heart for this historic and significant location. We've invested in outstanding architecture and public realm design, and the result is an exceptionally high-quality development for both residents and the public to enjoy."

Lucy Morton, head of residential agency at JLL, comments: "It's fantastic to see the development taking shape – the mix of residential, office and retail is helping to create a destination in its own right. It's testament to London & Oriental's vision and the quality of the design that they are attracting both renowned business names and new and exciting brands here. The combination of retail, office employees and tenants occupying the residential apartments will really help to bring a sense of community and vibrancy to the development, creating an engaging space where people naturally want to gather."

There are a range of apartments available to rent with prices starting from £750 per week.

For further information, please call

Lucy Morton on +44(0)20 7306 1631 or visit jll.co.uk/buckinghamgreen.



We've invested in outstanding architecture and public realm design, and the result is an exceptionally high-quality development for both residents and the public to enjoy."

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Watching over Westminster

Meet the kickboxing council leader who moved to London, a city she was once scared of, for love.

Nickie Aiken, William Hague's former PR officer, on cutting crime and setting out her vision

BY CORRIE BOND-FRENCH

When I meet Nickie Aiken, leader of Westminster Council, it's evident that she's a woman spinning many plates. Her breezy can-do approach barely conceals a steely desire to achieve success for her beloved ward and borough.

She's just put her lippy on for the photos, she tells me as we cross in the corridor. They're done in the blink of an eye and the next thing I know I'm sitting in her office with a cup of tea and a sense that clocks tick louder and faster here in the council's newly refurbished Victoria Street offices.

It is now more than 20 years since Cardiff-born Nickie – who kickboxes every Friday morning – joined the Conservative Party at Exeter university as a 19-year-old student and went on to work with William Hague in the Welsh Conservative Party press office before moving to Pimlico.

"I thought London was a scary place, so it's bizarre really that I'm now having to run the centre of it," she laughs, adding: "I moved to London for love, because I met my boyfriend who then became my husband when he worked at the Conservative central office and I was in Cardiff. The only way the relationship was going to blossom was if I moved to London."

It's safe to say that love blossomed in more ways than one. Nickie settled happily into Pimlico, working full time as a press officer for Bradford & Bingley, while her interest and experience in Conservative politics developed.

She stood for local election when heavily pregnant with her second child. "I'd always thought I may want to be an MP one day and many, many of my friends and contemporaries are now in the House of Commons, but I decided to choose the local government route instead," she says. "Many of my colleagues have done both but I think having my daughter in 2004, I wanted to show her that women can succeed in public office."

"It wasn't part of the plan. She was two and I was seven months pregnant when I got elected, so that was interesting – a bit of a juggle!"



Elected as leader in 2016, Nickie spearheaded groundbreaking strategies and programmes in her time as councillor, tackling gangs and domestic abuse against a backdrop of diminished funding. "I'm not going to deny that we've had to make massive savings," she says. "But I fully believe that it doesn't always have to be about money, it has to be about outcomes and people. I think I've always seen this kind of work as safeguarding, child safeguarding. I'm convinced that the vast majority of our children are brilliant and those who fall into the wrong paths have to be given a helping hand to get them out, and they have to be seen as young people and children."

"We've all been teenagers and we've all made stupid mistakes. In this climate and situation the choices some young people can make can lead to serious problems, as we're seeing with the issue of knife crime."

Nickie believes the solution lies in tackling the "causes of the main social issues" and the benefits for all will follow.

A fierce advocate for partnership working within local government, she is keen to address the concerns raised in her ward surgeries.

Rough sleeping, she says, is an issue that always rears its head. "The big game changer



“I love Victoria and Pimlico for the sense of community. It’s everybody from my window cleaner to an earl, and everything in between”

over the past year or so – and it's across the board, across all socioeconomic households – is the lack of police on the street,” she says. “That is the one single issue that people have noticed. There is definitely a lack of police presence.

“We've had major issues of antisocial behaviour, drug taking, drug dealing across this part of the south... but we're working with the police now. I set up the Integrated Street Engagement Unit last year to really tackle the begging and the drug dealing.”

While there remains issues to address, Nickie says she has relished seeing the area's radical transformation over the past 15 years. “I love Victoria and Pimlico because there's a huge sense of community. That's what I love about Pimlico; it's everybody from my window cleaner to an earl, and everything in between

“People always think in central London nobody knows each other, but, I've always known a lot of people.

“I think particularly once you've had children – and I've had a lot of people say ‘oh I'd never bring up children in central London’ – central London is a brilliant place to bring up children because everything is on your doorstep.

“We've got outstanding parks, we've got brilliant schools, everything is easy to get to and I love the sense of community.

“I think it's an absolute joy to live in this area and I can't ever see myself leaving. I have got a lot of neighbours who are in their eighties who've lived here for 30,40,50 years.”

As more and more people recognise the value of living in the neighbourhood, Nickie is taking proactive steps to accommodate the growing numbers.

“We've got this massive house building programme, we're building 2000 new affordable homes, we're well on target, we're doing that within the next four years to make sure that families can stay in this area,” she says.

“We all know what house prices are doing at the moment so people's children can't stay, so we've started the largest council home building programme for a generation.”

What is your earliest travel memory?

Going to Paris. I went with my father's secretary and a friend of hers and it was very exciting; I'd never really been abroad before. I just remember being absolutely fascinated by the public urinals in the streets – they were all rather elegant-looking!

What style of traveller are you?

I'm more of a nature lover than a city-break kind of person. Looking at museums is not really me. The one city I do love to visit is New York. My daughter used to live over there so I must have gone 100 times. Every time I go I stay somewhere different.

My favourite place of all is Africa. I've travelled there a lot. I went on my honeymoon to the Masai Mara, in a tented lodge, which was just wonderful. The last time I went was last summer – a friend of mine has got a sensational old Kenyan house with a roof made of palm leaves.

What's your most adventurous travel memory?

Before I got married I went on a walking safari in Kenya, and we were somewhere we really weren't meant to be. We camped by the Mara River, and in the middle of the night some hippos came up on the shore. Some natives had this dugout canoe, and four of us got in and paddled through the hippos – it was incredibly stupid, and incredibly dangerous. We asked what to do if a hippo

snapped at us, and they said, "Sit very still." I told them, "With the best will in the world, if a hippo is approaching this canoe, I don't think we'll be still – we're going to jump up and scream!"

There's a strong royal connection to Africa as well...

Prince Harry goes to Botswana a lot, and took Meghan there on their first romantic trip. Her engagement ring has a bit of diamond from that area. Kenya is where William proposed to Kate.

What have been your most memorable trips as a royal journalist?

The first royal trip I ever did was with the Queen and Prince Philip to Jordan. The rose-red city of Petra was just amazing. It's usually full of people dwelling in caves with washing hanging outside, and for us the Jordanian government cleared it completely. It was so beautiful to be there. Then I went and did an interview with Queen Noor in Aqaba, and King Hussein took me out in his speedboat in the Gulf of Aqaba with his children.

I went to Japan with Charles and Diana. We went to see sumo wrestling in Tokyo, and then went to explore Kyoto. Charles and Diana were as fascinated as we all were. And the Japanese people went absolutely crazy for Diana. They were just squealing whenever they saw her.

I also could never forget going to Egypt, where I rode on this beautiful Arab horse through the desert to the Pyramids – not right up beside

FROM LEFT: Havana in Cuba; with a Saudi prince in Riyadh as a guest of Prince Khalid during Prince Charles' visit; Dunes hotel in Oman; the Masai Mara





them, but very close. I'm sure you wouldn't be able to do that now. Those royal trips were very good fun.

Would you spend time with the royals themselves?

They would always throw a cocktail party and the royals would mix with the travelling journalists. They would all be very polite. I think Charles was the most engaging to speak to. And obviously it was amazing being able to talk to the Queen.

What has been your biggest culture shock?

I suppose the biggest surprise was when I went to Saudi Arabia, with a royal tour. We flew to Riyadh on the king's plane as guests of Prince Khalid, which was amazing. We all wore these nylon robes. The plane had bedrooms and sitting rooms and us journalists at the back, and it was very comfortable. That was just extraordinary.

What is your favourite hotel?

Earlier this year I went to Oman, and stayed in a hotel called Dunes, which is a tented camp in the middle of these huge, amazing sand dunes, just three quarters of an hour from Muscat airport.

Where do you still want to visit?

I'd love to go to Cuba. I've just been looking at reports of Charles and Camilla's trip there, and it just looks amazing. I also have a real desire to go on one of those Ice Tracks ships into the Arctic. I've always been completely fascinated by it.

A royally good time



Ingrid Seward, Victoria resident and editor of *Majesty* magazine, talks travelling with the royal family and escaping hungry hippos in a canoe

BY ALEX BRIAND

CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT: Lysbeth Fox; Robert De Niro and Nobu Matsuhisa; the Rail House Cafe



Lysbeth Fox

Managing director, Fox PR
7Grosvenor Gardens

Clients include: Velaa Private Island in the Maldives and private jet company Jetcraft

“When I’m travelling, I look for a trip that can encourage me to be present throughout. It needs to offer engaging experiences, which mean I’m not thinking about what’s going on at home, or at work, or in the world. I need to feel completely there, and to have an enriching and bonding experience with the people I’m travelling with.

I decided to set up Fox PR because, having worked in the travel industry for over 15 years,

I felt that no one was really taking a creative-consumer approach. I believe that people look organically through media, at different aspects, so we try to bring in that lifestyle angle.

We first made a connection with Nobu Hotels [run by chef Nobu Matsuhisa and Robert De Niro] because we did a phenomenal job in launching Nobu Hotel Ibiza Bay, and got global recognition. The group saw what we achieved and wanted us to do that for all of their hotels.

More recently, I’m most proud of some pro bono work we’ve done for the youth empowerment charity, WE. My team did an amazing job, getting over six million impressions within 24 hours globally. What I loved about it was it took them out of their comfort zone, from this luxury lifestyle and travel arena into event organisation, and they did it with aplomb.

We’re based in Grosvenor Gardens. The area is so well-connected, transport-wise. I like the green spaces, and the abundance of places to eat and drink, to meet press, to meet clients, to meet contacts in the area.

I frequent the Rail House Cafe quite a lot and I’ve just started to go to Aster as well for business meetings. The food and decor are very nice and I like the ambience as well, the fact that I can actually talk. In a lot of other places you can’t have a conversation.

We have an office dog named Cookie so we like the accessibility to Green Park to take him for a walk. He’s named, naturally, after Captain Cook.”

The jet set

Hotel openings with Robert De Niro, the major fire that saw guests evacuated and why good staff remain priceless – meet three Victoria-based tastemakers from the world of luxury travel

BY ALEX BRIAND

BELOW: Ronald Homsy
BELOW RIGHT: pizza from Oliveto



Ronald Homsy

CEO of Utopian Hotel Collection

25 Eccleston Place

Clients include: Le Grand Bellevue, Gstaad and The Chedi Andermatt

“The most important thing to me when I stay in a hotel is the staff. They can make or break the trip. Someone can spend millions on a property but the right people, with the right mindset, is crucial.

In 2014, myself and my two partners were having a discussion about new trends in travel, and what was happening, and realised that things were changing dramatically.

We all studied hotel management together in the 1990s, and we had wanted to do something back then but we were too young. Each one of us went his own way, and came back after 20 years with his own experience in the world of travel.

Travellers today are looking for something experiential and very authentic. They want to come back with new knowledge, a way of seeing things. We also understand from a B2B side what problems hotels might be having, and the solutions they need. It's the combination of those that made us found the company. Here we are in 2019 with 39 properties – 36 in Europe and three in the Middle East.

One of our new hotels is Brach, designed by Philippe Starck, in the 16th arrondissement of Paris. You really feel like a local rather than a tourist. It has a rooftop with a beautiful view of the Eiffel Tower, and a garden growing all kinds of vegetables for use in the restaurant downstairs.

Our offices are on Eccleston Place. The whole area is very interesting, buzzing and cosmopolitan. We go to two restaurants frequently – Santini on Ebury Street and a beautiful pizzeria called Oliveto on Elizabeth Street. We always get a warm welcome. Once again, it's the people that keep us coming back.”



BELOW: Amanda Hyndman; the Mandarin Oriental



Amanda Hyndman

Victoria resident and general manager of the Mandarin Oriental, Knightsbridge

Clients include: Dame Helen Mirren and Morgan Freeman

Our renovation started in September 2016 and took almost two years, and then there was the [fire on June 6]. It's been a very long journey, but the hotel's looking beautiful.

I was in the street working with the fire brigade, and the Salvation Army came up and asked if I was OK. Shops like Harrods and Harvey Nichols sent food for the guests and staff. The day afterwards we had the doormen outside the hotel because so many people came to ask, 'Is everybody safe?' There's a real community feeling.

We decided to thank everyone for their kindness, and while the renovations took place, we donated 40,000 hours of community work to London to help those less privileged than ourselves. The hotel staff were being paid in full, so we thought that it would be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to donate our working hours to those in need.

We worked with charity The Felix Project collecting unwanted food and redistributing it, and at The Passage at Westminster Cathedral, helping to bring homeless people into the workplace, training them in hotel skills. We ran I think almost 60 Oxfam shops across London.

I'm immensely proud of the staff; it was very moving. You see the best of people in the very worst of times. Everybody pulled together and having been through something like that, we're more united and motivated than ever.

We were all elated to see the hotel reopen.

We've added two new penthouses on the roof, with absolutely breathtaking views the length of Hyde Park. We restored the ballroom, in which the Queen learnt to dance, and had the gold leaf reinstated.

I chose to live in Victoria because it's in the middle of everything. It's equidistant between Hyde Park and Battersea Park, you've got amazing areas like Elizabeth Street and Motcomb Street – to me it's the perfect hub.

I think London is the greatest city in the world, there's so much diversity, so much energy. It keeps reinventing itself; it picks itself back up from setbacks, and that's what we're doing at the moment.

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Talking trade

The Federation of Small Businesses represents the interests of 8,500 members in London alone, lobbying on issues from business rates to Brexit

BY HELEN BLOW

Employers in London tackling the frustrations and uncertainties of Brexit are receiving staunch support from campaigners at the Westminster-based Federation of Small Businesses.

Lobbyists have been flooded with enquiries from members concerned about how Britain's exit from the European Union is going to affect their business – and the current impasse is increasing their anxieties, according to the FSB's Matthew Jaffa.

As senior external affairs manager for London, Matthew sees first-hand what effects the obstructions and indecisions surrounding Brexit are having on members of the organisation.

"We are inundated with members telling us their concerns over Brexit and we are trying to make the process as small business-friendly as we can," he says.

"We are supporting them, speaking to ministers, channelling the need to find a way to get through this impasse to get some kind of certainty, so that parliamentarians come to a decision and we can just move on."

"Our members are worried about the uncertainty of it all. When we surveyed them a while back there was a large majority who were not prepared for a no deal and now they don't know whether they're coming or going."

Unravelling the intricacies surrounding the Brexit issue, however, is just one part of the role offered by the national organisation, which is marking its 45th anniversary this year.

The FSB represents businesses that have fewer than 50 employees, and that currently makes up an incredible 99.3 per cent of all private sector businesses in the country.

With 8,500 members in London alone, the FSB offers a wide range of benefits, from lobbying





“Despite all the uncertainties surrounding Brexit, we want to show that London and the UK is open for business”

Matthew Jaffa

parliament and councils to securing funding to providing legal and tax advice and running courses to help businesses keep up to date with current technologies and regulations.

“Our job is to support our members in London, providing a platform for them to engage and network with other businesses, and lobby on their behalf,” says Matthew, who has worked for the London branch for 13 years.

“We attempt to effect change to support their needs, because everyone needs a voice. They tell us what issues they have – business rates, freezing the VAT threshold, securing funding from government, Brexit – and we’re there to fight for their interests on their behalf.”

Open to micro and small businesses, the FSB offers a suite of benefits, including a free legal advice line that is open 24/7, tax investigation protection, health and safety advice and a range of events, including the Celebrating Small Business awards. Perhaps one of its most important jobs is to lobby national government on behalf of its members so their voices are heard as one, rather than as individuals.

“We were set up in 1974 to lobby on the issue of national insurance contributions, following a letter published in the *Guardian* and a

demonstration that marched from Blackpool to London,” Matthew says.

Since then, branches have been set up across the UK. And while the FSB’s headquarters – and its spiritual home – remains in Blackpool, the Westminster office is also home to its national chairman and its policy advocacy chair.

“Big issues for us in the London office include campaigning for the reform of business rates, something that is extremely important for our members because of the high cost of being in business in London,” Matthew says.

“Likewise issues of commercial property, particularly in Victoria and Westminster where it is so expensive. There is a mismatch between landlords and tenants and we are concerned with building a better relationship between them.”

Another important item on the London agenda harks back to Brexit. “Despite all the uncertainties surrounding Brexit, we want to show that London and the UK is open for business, and so we are campaigning for the government to give the green light to key infrastructure projects such as Heathrow’s third runway and completion of the Crossrail project.”

To find out more about the FSB or to join, visit www.fsb.org.uk or ring 0808 2020 888



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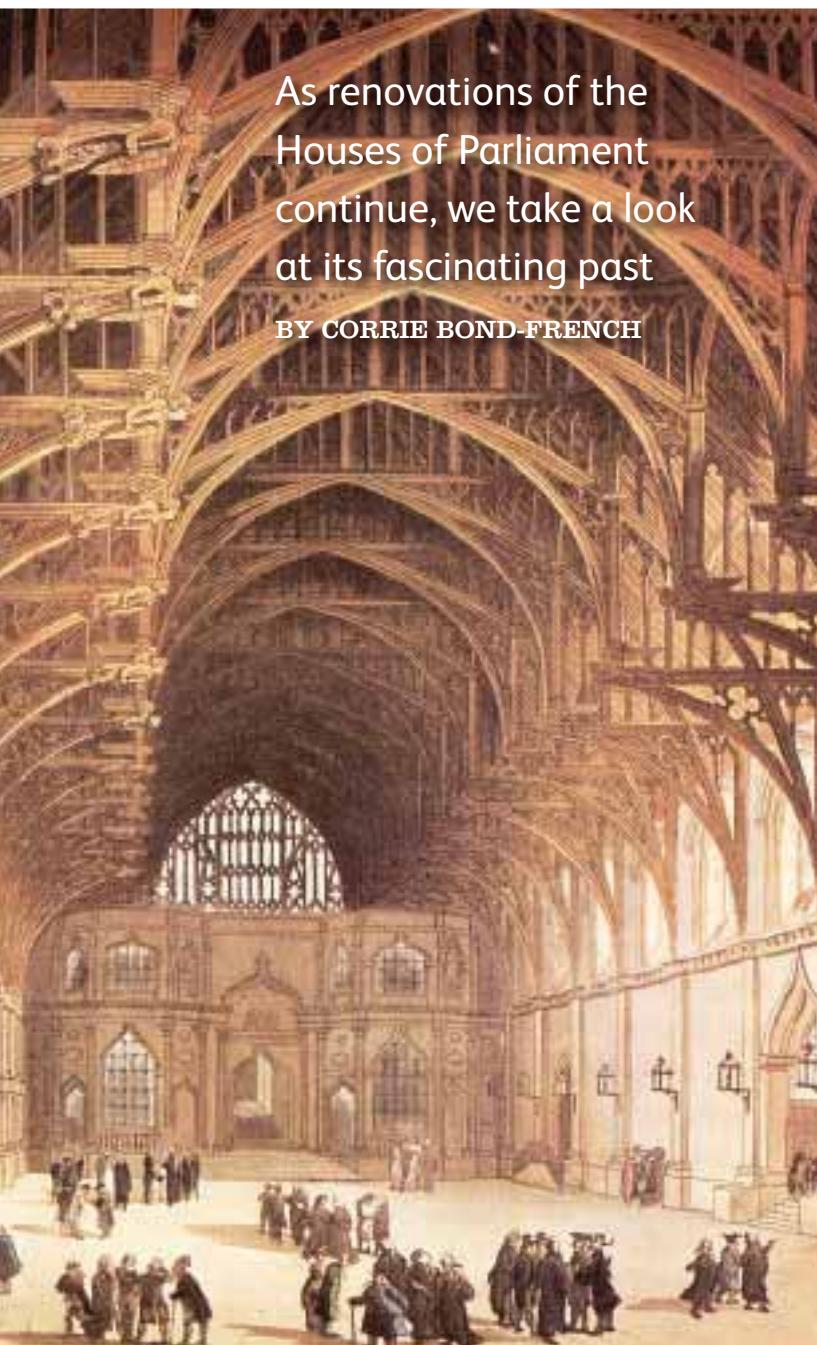
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Seat of power and pomp

As renovations of the Houses of Parliament continue, we take a look at its fascinating past

BY CORRIE BOND-FRENCH



Westminster Hall in 1808

Now clad in scaffolding as a £4 billion, six-year renovation continues, the Houses of Parliament – permanently on screens across the globe as Britain's political woes are played out – remain as iconic as their neighbour Westminster Abbey as the seat of power and pomp in the United Kingdom.

The work is the first major renovation to be undertaken since the current building was completed in 1870 after architects Augustus Pugin and Charles Barry were commissioned to rebuild it following the devastating fire of 1834, in which the historic buildings of Westminster succumbed to the flames.

In October 16, 1834, visitors to the old House of Lords commented on the heat and smoke rising through the floor, but officials checked with workmen, insisted all was fine and continued to lock up the premises as normal. Just an hour later, fire had taken hold throughout.

Hundreds, including MPs and lords, took to the water pumps, while soldiers kept crowds of thousands back. Artist JMW Turner, among others, painted the scene as the drama continued, but it was only when the tide rose on the Thames in the early hours of the morning that London's fire service's floating engine was able to bring the flames under control.

The destruction was devastating. The biggest conflagration in the capital since the Great Fire of London in 1666 (and predating the Blitz by more than a century) destroyed the converted St Stephen's Chapel – the meeting place of the House of Commons – the Lords Chamber, the Painted Chamber where Cromwell and others had signed Charles I's death warrant and the official residences of the Speaker and the Clerk of the House of Commons.

The magnificent Westminster Hall had been saved by heroic fire-fighting efforts and a change of wind direction during the night, as had the Jewel Tower, the Undercroft chapel, the cloisters



and the Chapter House of St Stephen's and Westminster Hall.

It transpired that the fire had been caused by the clerk of works deciding to dispose of two cartloads of tally sticks – part of an obsolete medieval accounting system that hadn't been used by the Exchequer in more than a decade – by burning them in two heating stoves in the basement of the House of Lords. It was hailed by then prime minister Lord Melbourne as “one of the greatest instances of stupidity on record”.

Few countries can boast such an historic and densely developed powerbase within such a small area. In the middle ages, the old Palace of Westminster was not only the main royal

residence in London, but also the home of the law courts (held in Westminster Hall) and the site of various government departments.

The story of Westminster as a powerbase stretches back to the early 11th century when Canute the Great built his royal residence on the north side of the Thames. Successive monarchs would continue these development endeavours: Edward the Confessor built Westminster Abbey; William the Conqueror began a new palace which his son, William Rufus, would continue, including Westminster Hall, started in 1097. In 1270 Henry III constructed new buildings for the Exchequer, the Court of Common Pleas, the Court of King's Bench and the Court of Chancery. By 1245 the king's throne itself was in place in the palace, signifying the epicentre of royal administration.

Edward I summoned the first English representative assembly, the Model Parliament, in Westminster in 1295, sitting in either the Painted Chamber or the White Chamber. By 1332 the burgesses and citizens met to represent the commons, separately from the barons. By 1377 the two bodies were entirely detached.

Westminster became fixed as the location of parliament in the late 14th century. The lords had sat in the palace previously, but it was only with the abandonment of the building by Henry VIII for the Palace of Whitehall in 1512 – and then the Reformation – that the commons found a permanent home when Henry's son Edward VI gave them St Stephen's Chapel.



Over the following centuries, during civil war and new forms of government, the palace was altered and adapted. As Master of the King's Works, Sir Christopher Wren removed windows and added viewing galleries for the public to watch the Commons in action. With so much wood panelling and windows removed, MPs were pitted. Even Gladstone commented on the poor facilities. MP William Cobbett asked, "Why are 658 of us crammed into a space that allows each of us no more than a foot-and-a-half square?"

By the 1830s, the writing was on the wood-panelled walls; the buildings were a tinder box. The new 1,100-room Houses of Parliament were completed by 1870, but the Grade-I-listed corridors of power have continued to require constant maintenance and care ever since.

ABOVE: Houses of Parliament
LEFT: JMW Turner, *The Burning of the Houses of Lords and Commons*, October 16, 1834
BELOW: English Civil War woodcut



Democracy through time

MAGNA CARTA

Signed by King John in 1215, the charter's security clause provided the first step in removing power from single central authority, and consolidated judicial rights including habeas corpus. It is the foundation of the country's unwritten constitution.

FIRST SPEAKER OF HOUSE OF COMMONS APPOINTED

In 1376 John de la Mare was appointed by the Commons to approach the king with complaints about taxation. He was imprisoned, and the Commons then created the position of Speaker as representative.

CIVIL WAR

Parliament executed the monarch Charles I for treason and removed the monarchy, to then reinstate it in diluted form with his son Charles II, leading to the constitutional monarchy that we have today.

THE BILL OF RIGHTS

William of Orange's arrival from Holland to usurp James II led to the creation of the Bill of Rights, constitutionally preventing absolute rule by monarchs.

THE REFORM ACT 1832

Landowning males had votes since 1432, but disparity in constituency sizes was problematic. The Reform Act increased enfranchisement to more than a million men who rented property above a certain value. In 1837 a second act enfranchised all male householders.

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE ACT

Suffragettes and suffragists took action to highlight the cause of votes for women. The 1918 act removed property restrictions from male voters and allowed women over 30 but with property restrictions to vote and to stand for election. In 1928 restrictions on women were lifted.

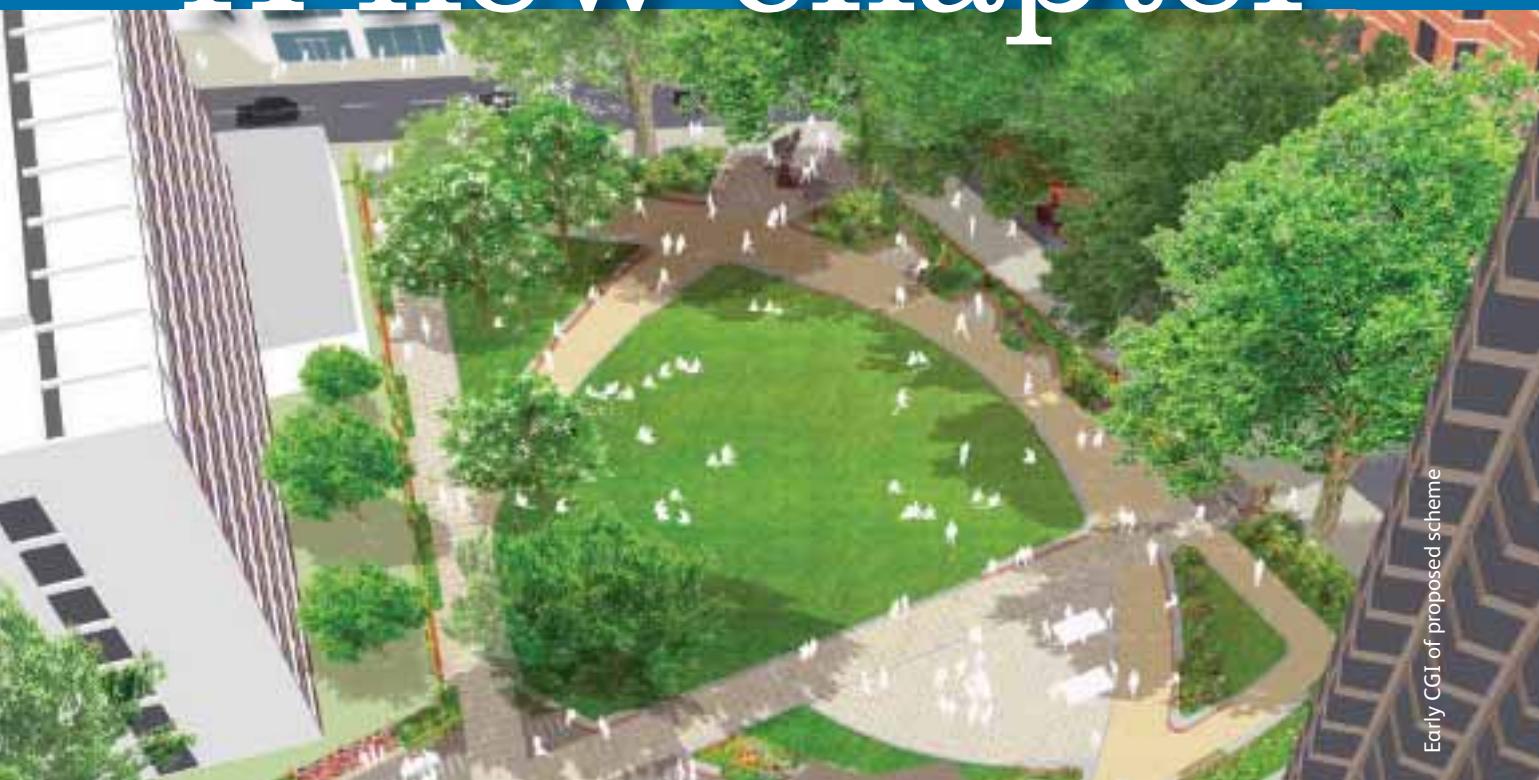
In 1969 Harold Wilson's government lowered the voting age in the UK from 21 to 18 for all citizens.

Christchurch Gardens is set for a new chapter. As the final touches are made to its design, we dive into its fascinating past

BY LUCY DOUGLAS

Though its modest size might suggest otherwise, Christchurch Gardens has a history that dates back almost 400 years. The site of the gardens today was once the location of the New Chapel, built in 1631 as a chapel of ease to St Margaret's Church, next to Westminster Abbey. Maps of the area from the 17th and 18th centuries suggest the chapel's surrounding churchyard probably stretched beyond where Victoria Street now runs. It originally served as a burial ground for St Margaret's, and is even reported to be the site of a mass grave of victims of the plague in 1665.

A new chapter



Early CGI of proposed scheme

CAPTAIN THOMAS BLOOD

The churchyard became the burial site of several striking characters. Perhaps its most infamous resident is Captain Thomas Blood, a 17th century conman. Irish-born to a wealthy family, Blood fought in the English Civil War, first for Charles I's Royalists, then switching to the Republicans. He's believed to have made attempts at usurping the Irish government

and kidnapping Irish nobleman the Duke of Ormonde. However, it was his plot to steal the Crown Jewels from the Tower of London for which he is most notorious.

Disguised as a parson, Blood went to the Tower of London and befriended Mr Talbot Edwards, the master of the Jewel House. He made several visits, gradually gaining the trust of Edwards and his wife, before one

day in May 1671, he arrived with several accomplices, overpowered Edwards and stole the jewels. Blood himself reportedly made off with the St Edward's Crown, while his accomplices took the Sovereign's Orb and the Sceptre. However, they were captured before reaching the city gates.

Despite being caught in an act that amounted to treason, Blood was not executed for his attempt on the jewels. On arrest, he was brought before the king and convinced Charles II to spare his life; the king also awarded him an estate in Ireland worth £500 a year.

Blood died in 1680 and was buried at the churchyard at the site of today's Christchurch Gardens. His body was dug up a few days after his burial, reportedly to check he was really dead.

IGNATIUS SANCHO

A rather more honorable character among the gardens' internees was Ignatius Sancho, composer, writer and the first black man to vote in a British election. Born into slavery in around 1729, Sancho spent his early years in Greenwich, working for three sisters. There he met the Duke of Montagu, who recommended that Sancho educate himself and lent him books to read.

Sancho escaped slavery in 1749, running away from the Greenwich house to the Montagus', where he served as the Duchess's butler after the death of the Duke in the same year. Sancho remained in the service of the family until 1774, working as a valet for the next Duke of Montagu.

In the mid-1760s, Sancho wrote to the author Laurence Sterne, encouraging him to support the abolition cause. Sterne's reply was widely published, which propelled Sancho into the public eye and he went on to write editorial letters to newspapers advocating for the abolition of the slave trade, making him one of the few black voices published on the subject at the time.

With the support of the Duke of Montagu, Sancho and his wife opened a grocer's shop on Charles Street in Mayfair. As a financially independent man, he became eligible to vote in the elections in 1774 and 1780. He would continue his prolific letter writing until his death in 1780, and a collection of his letters was posthumously published in 1782.

CAPTAIN THOMAS BLOOD



IGNATIUS SANCHO

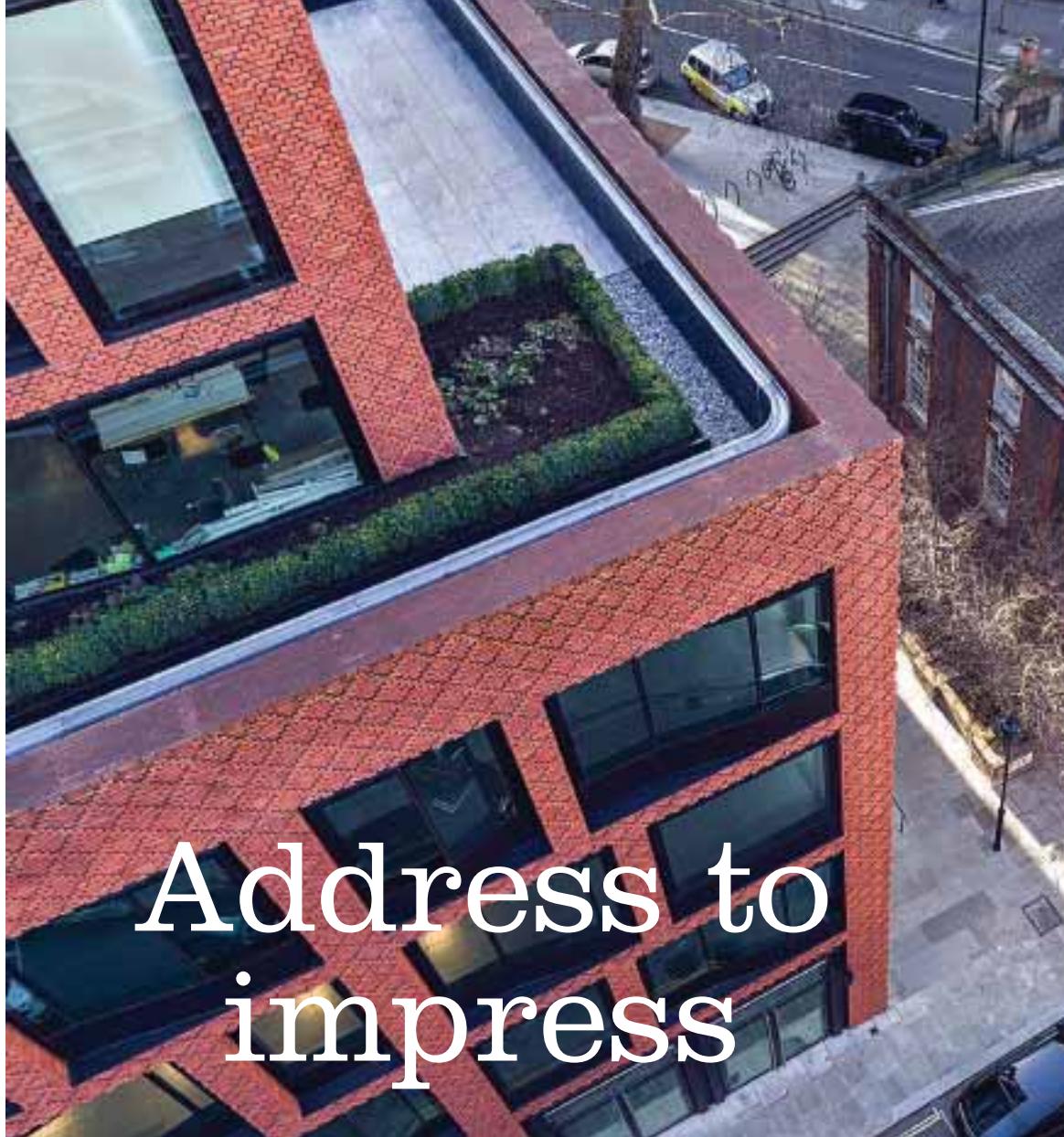


CHRIST CHURCH

CHRIST CHURCH

The house of worship that gave the gardens its name was built by architect Ambrose Poynter, who completed Christ Church Broadway in 1844.

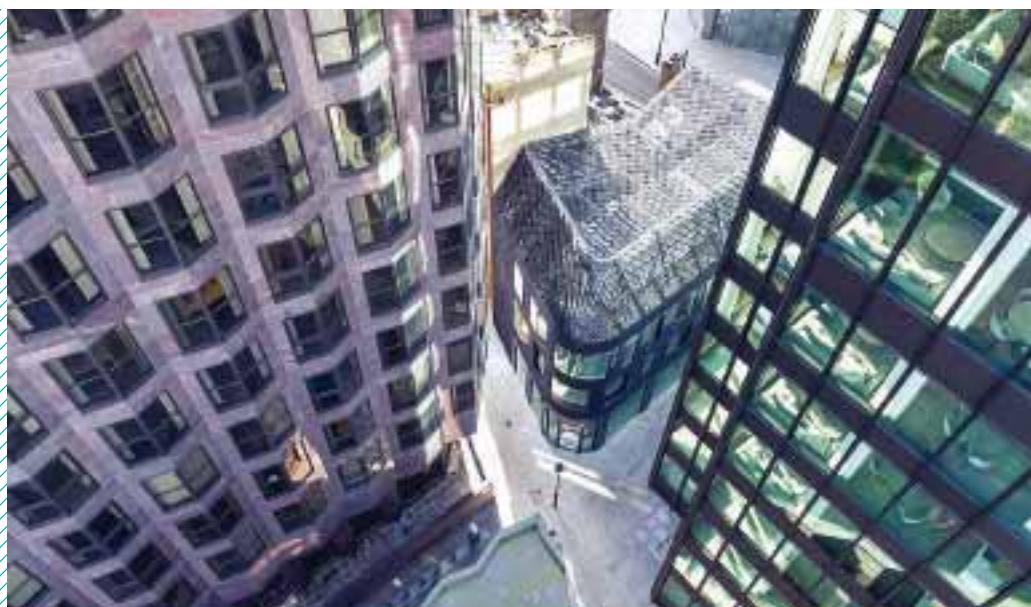
On April 17, 1941, during one of the heaviest nights of the Blitz, Christ Church was bombed and its roof and interiors were destroyed. Its remains were left standing as a burned-out shell until 1954, when it was torn down along with the neighbouring vicarage.



Address to impress

Buckingham Green is the latest high quality, mixed-use scheme to spring up in Victoria. We get the lowdown on the luxury development – plus five other key sites

BY HARDEEP SANDHER





Buckingham Green, London & Oriental's mixed-use scheme in Victoria, represents a new type of development for the area.

The site is notable for having served as the headquarters for luxury car maker Rolls-Royce in the past, as well as the Labour Party HQ. However, L&O's redevelopment has set about utilising the space better to create a new multipurpose London destination.

The development, which sits on a triangular site, comprises three unique buildings around a tree-lined pedestrian area and generous open space. It offers some 55,000 sq ft of office space and 11,000 sq ft of retail across the buildings, named The Caxton, The Tower and The Gate House. There are 64 apartments of between one and four bedrooms.

"While we have retained one of the existing structures of one of the buildings [The Tower] at the centre of the scheme, we have completed as full a redevelopment of it as we could without

demolishing it," says Loris Tinacci, associate partner at L&O.

"Meanwhile, the adjacent building, which served as the Labour headquarters has been replaced with a striking new building with a contemporary glass façade which we have named The Caxton. The positioning of these buildings has enabled us to create a brand new public realm between the two buildings, and is bringing about what we believe is truly an unrivalled business and lifestyle destination."

The focus for the site as a whole has also gone much deeper than simply creating a new development. For L&O it represented a key opportunity in terms of sustainability, particularly as the entire site – including the residential elements – will be leased rather than sold. This is to ensure there is a single point of landlord ownership and that leases across the scheme remain in sync.

"We are invested in this development for the long term and therefore our approach to all aspects of the scheme is different from other developers," says Loris. "We have focused very much on the quality of materials we should be using, and invested heavily into the architecture of the site as a whole and its public realm. It was important our design stands the test of time, and it is a testament to our architects Fletcher Priest, who were able to decipher exactly which materials would work best."

Loris points to the new tower on the north side of the site, which has been built to remain sympathetic to the Victorian history of the area as a whole. The development has also been designed to achieve a BREEAM excellent rating.

Loris believes Buckingham Green offers something different by bringing forward a more community-orientated scheme that has drawn inspiration from London's established villages such as Chelsea and Marylebone.

The retail units have been let to boutique operators rather than large chains; while the office space offers smaller floorplates of between 1,150 sq ft and 6,500 sq ft. Just four of the retail units are still available and 25 per cent of the office space has been leased. Savills and Jones Lang LaSalle are the letting agents on the office element of the scheme.

The apartments are spread over 11 floors of a 16-storey tower and epitomise high-rise luxury living. With the scheme now ready to move into, Loris adds: "The site's location is its key strength: we are next door to St James's Park station, yet a short walk from Green Park and Mayfair. For our residential occupiers, it is a striking and unusual building that can offer incredible views."

Victoria's development pipeline



WESTMINSTER FIRE STATION

The Grade-II-listed Edwardian building is being converted into a mixed-use residential and retail development of 17 apartments by Singapore's largest private property developer, Far East Orchard and development manager Alchemi Group. Set to house a restaurant on the ground and lower ground floors, the apartments will range from one to three bedrooms. Each apartment will be bespoke and no two homes will be the same, according to the developer. The scheme also features a courtyard, created by James Lee Design. CBRE is the residential agent for the scheme.

EBURY PLACE

Developer Taylor Wimpey Central London has epitomised luxury contemporary living at Ebury Place, a new building offering some 47 apartments with views of the capital. Comprising a range of one to three bedroom apartments, the development boasts a bespoke entrance on Sutherland Street and sits in between the fast-paced



lifestyle hub of Victoria and the village vibes of Sloane Street, Pimlico and Belgravia. The apartments, which are completed and ready to move into, start at £1,270,000.

33 GREYCOAT STREET

33 Greycoat Street is a boutique development of 21 apartments and two penthouses by RER London, Sidra Capital and 90 North. While understated and elegant from the outside, inside every detail and finish has been meticulously thought out to form a sophisticated

and contrasting style, according to the developer. The three-bedroom penthouses boast roof terraces of up to 1,000 sq ft providing panoramic views over Westminster and the City. One-bedroom apartments are available from £850,000 while penthouse prices are from £3,160,000. Savills is the agent.

VI CASTLE LANE

Nestled in the historic Birdcage Walk Conservation area of Westminster, developer Sons & Co describes VI Castle Lane as a "rare" boutique development in the heart of political Westminster. Accessed via Wilfred Street, and running between Palace Street and Buckingham Gate, this location has a long and prestigious history, with close proximity to Buckingham Palace and St James's Park. The development comprises a mixture of apartments and townhouses and currently there are eight units available for sale, with prices starting from £2,120,000. Savills is the agent.

THE BROADWAY

Arguably one of the most transformational developments underway in Victoria, The Broadway is set to revolutionise the 1.7 acre triangular site on which it sits. Developer Northacre is currently on site, bringing forward six residential buildings of 13 to 19 storeys that will include more than 260 apartments.

The development, which has been designed in partnership with Squire and Partners, will also include a "new street" with retail units alongside residential facilities such as a gym and a 25-metre pool and spa – one of the few that will exist in the area. It also boasts views of the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey. It is scheduled to complete in 2021 and Savills is the agent.

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