

THE FACE OF LONDON is changing. The banks of the River Thames, neglected for decades as they drifted into industrial decay, are again reclaiming their place in the hearts of residents and city planners alike.

Today, prestigious cultural landmarks compete for attention with luxury property developments, especially south of the river where the opening of the Tate Modern art gallery on the site of a decommissioned power station has helped tilt London's cultural centre of gravity.

Take Albion Riverside, for example.

This development is much more than a residential complex. It is designed to be the heart of a vibrant new neighbourhood, expanding modern urban living options in the busy capital.

The widely acclaimed structure, famously dubbed “The Glass Doughnut”, was designed by the world renowned and award-winning architect Lord Norman Foster, whose other masterpieces include the passenger terminal at Chek Lap Kok Airport and the HSBC building in Hong Kong, the Bilbao Metro in Spain and more recently the Swiss

Reinsurance headquarters “Gerkin” in the City of London.

Albion Riverside lies between the historic Albert and Battersea bridges, offering phenomenal views of the Thames. It has all the hallmarks of a Lord Foster creation: calm, airy interiors encased in a stunning visual exterior. “The aluminium and glass curved design gives the building maximum view, as well as ensuring a high degree of privacy,” said Dr Edmond Ho, Executive Director and General Manager of Hutchison Whampoa Properties (Europe).

Completed in early 2004, the building has set a new standard for urban living, attracting a strong following among celebrities and the super rich normally associated with the affluent strongholds of Belgravia, Knightsbridge and Kensington north of the river. The Albion Riverside development won the Best Apartment Building award at the

ALBION RIVERSIDE FACT FILE



- Address:** 8 Hester Road, Battersea, London, SW11 4AP.
- Number of units:** 196 apartments, including 13 penthouses.
- Size:** 1 bedroom (550-750 sq ft) to 4 bedrooms (2,000 sq ft). Penthouses: 3-6 bedrooms (3,000-8,500 sq ft).
- Amenities:** Gym, swimming pool, underground car park, 24-hour concierge service, private podium garden.

Mail on Sunday Design Awards 2005.

Suddenly, the South Bank is very much in fashion. Boosted by opulent developments such as Albion Riverside, only a 10 minute walk from the shopping mecca of King's Road, the South Bank today is emerging as a new oasis of culture and style.

The sales figures speak volumes for Albion Riverside. No flashy advertising campaign or marketing gimmicks were needed in high society London where word of mouth is far more effective. The flats sold very well, attracting celebrities such as Oscar-winning composer Leslie Bricusse, golfer Colin Montgomerie and several members of the Chelsea soccer team.

Around 75 per cent of the apartments have so far been bought by UK buyers, with the remaining going to overseas buyers, Hong Kong included. It goes without saying that the *feng shui* is excellent.

If you have the cash, the going rate for the largest penthouse duplex, which has up to six bedrooms, has been priced at a whopping GBP10 million. Those who can

control options. They can even be accessed via the Internet or a mobile phone when you are away from home. "The control panel allows you to remotely control lighting and audio, as well as other types of functions within the flat," said Dr Ho.

Inside, a massive entrance hall leads visitors to a majestic staircase that takes them up to a glazed cloister running the length of the building, giving access to four lifts and a private riverside garden. Residents can also make use of an impressive health and leisure centre, and a 20-metre indoor pool.

Meanwhile, the retail space has attracted the likes of major art dealer Michael Hue-Williams and his spectacular Albion Gallery is a major attraction emphasising the cultural shift away from London's West End. On the more conventional retail front, elite kitchen and bathroom outfitters, Alternative Plans, have joined a leading personal training facility in the complex.

Other exciting retail opportunities are on the way, including discussions about the opening of a leading restaurant that could take up 6,500 square feet of floor

space. "We are negotiating the contract now. It is taking a little bit longer than expected because as it is a restaurant, the restaurateur is being very careful to ensure the kitchen and designs are what

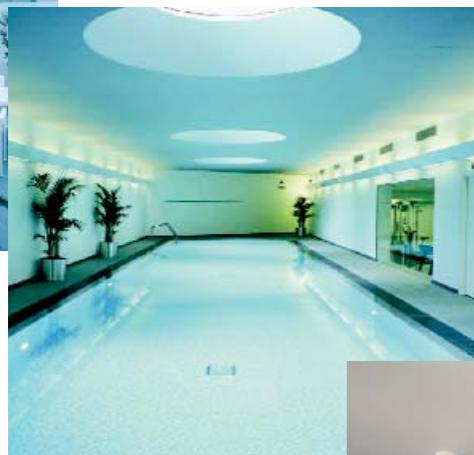
he wants," Dr Ho said. "I hope the deal will be announced very soon."

It would be wrong to suggest that Albion Riverside is a compound created just for the wealthy. As part of a new planning commitment to the local community, the mixed-use development has two other buildings. A low-rise apartment building caters for professional key workers such as nurses and teachers, while Hutchison Whampoa has its European headquarters in another separate low-rise office building on the same site, putting all its European operations including Ports, 3G, Properties and Watsons under one roof.

If Hutchison continues to take up projects on such a scale and employs the same sense of adventure, there is no doubt it will change not just the physical landscape of historical neighbourhoods but also challenge cultural perceptions about them.

"While traditionally focusing on developing residential properties in prime London locations, we are also looking at developing retail and office space," said Patrick Leung, General Manager, Hong Kong Development and Marketing, Hutchison Whampoa Properties. "In addition to London, the company is also looking at other big cities in the UK as well as seeking out properties in other countries." 

The building has set a new standard for urban living



afford such luxury will remain under the Lord Foster spell long after they have gone home and shut the front door. Everything, from the layout of each apartment, bespoke bathrooms and kitchens down to even the lighting and the door handles, were designed by Lord Foster's team.

The strong aesthetics aside, every home is also equipped with smart technology, which makes available a whole new world of cutting-edge remote con-

The lap of luxury: interior shots of the award-winning Albion Riverside; Opposite page: The development has the perfect riverside location.