

## London homes

# Where the stars settle down

There are suburbs, and then there is Hampstead Garden Suburb, home to Jonathan Ross and mansions costing millions. **Anne Ashworth** takes a peek

**L**eafy and ideally suited to family life — these may be the only features that Hampstead Garden Suburb shares with the typical suburb. For one thing, it's far ritzier. Sacha Baron Cohen and Peter Mandelson are among the prominent persons who grew up in this affluent North London neighbourhood, close to Hampstead Heath and Highgate. Today's celebrity count includes Jonathan Ross.

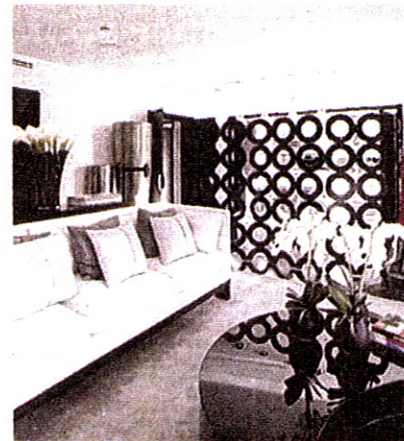
"The Suburb", as residents call it, was intended to be classless when it was founded by the philanthropist Dame Henrietta Barnett in 1904. But the area — which spans the N2 and NW11 postcodes — followed a different path into



Winning formula: this new mansion in Winnington Close, above and below, has a pool and seven bedrooms

the most expensive streets league. In this ranking, drawn up by Mouseprice.com, Winnington Road N2 takes sixth place with an average value of £5,386,000. In 2008 one property on the road fetched £16.8 million so there will be hardly any surprise at the £12.5 million price tag on a new house in Winnington Close, a Winnington Road side street. The seven-bedroom, eight-bathroom property, on sale through Savills, has been developed by Regal Homes, in partnership with Kelly Hoppen, the designer.

A measure of commercial activity was another aspiration for the Suburb. This was also not realised, but on a sunny morning down Winnington Close, the gardeners are certainly busy at their trade, painstakingly tending already immaculate



“**In 2008 one home fetched £16.8 million, so the £12.5m price tag for a house in Winnington Close will come as little surprise**”

hedges. The new house is an example of the various crafts in the deluxe contemporary residence (DCR) sector, such as bespoke plasterwork. There is, for example, an iridescent finish on the side of the ground-floor staircase that lends a sparkle to evening entertaining. The DCR industry's mission statement is to deliver, as Hoppen summarises, “the client's dreams and wishes — they don't want to have to ask for anything. All they need to do is to bring their clothes and the children's toys.” The 8,430 sq ft home already has all the toys that grown-ups might demand, such as a pool, gym, sauna and steamroom.

The owners can also feel reassured that, although the house is new, its look is in keeping with the 1930s style in this section of the Suburb. Simon De Friend, of Regal Homes, says that during planning he had to produce five types of brick to ensure a match with nearby houses.

Reconciling the contradictory tastes of husbands and wives is essential to the project of pleasing the super-rich. “You mustn't make a house too masculine,” says Hoppen, who has decorated and furnished the property in her trademark greys and beiges, enlivened with quirky touches, such as the funky baronial dining chairs. The slick, white kitchen is a careful blend of neutrals (which wives like) and technology (as required by husbands). Robert Clift, described by Hoppen as the man who “put the fun back into lighting”, is responsible for the combination of spotlighting and over-the-top chandeliers. Just in case there is a spat between spouses on this or any other aspect of the decor, they can retreat to their individual bathrooms in the master suite.

Regal Homes does not operate only in the high end of the market; it also develops affordable housing. But at present, De Friend says, most activity — a “helluva lot of it”, in fact — is in the upscale part of his business. He has already shown potential buyers from the Middle East and the Far East around the Winnington Close mansion. But there is interest also from locals “scaling up”. For the opportunity to move into a property of this size represents yet another difference between the Suburb and any other London suburb. Savills Hampstead 020-7472 5000