

BUYER BEHAVIOUR

While London still dominates, buyers are increasingly factoring lifestyle, space, and long-term value into decisions beyond the capital



Jamie Hope
Managing Director
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Founder and CEO
Valouran

London remains the strongest magnet for high-net-worth individuals looking to buy or rent luxury homes in the UK. Its combination of international appeal, education, culture, and business continues to give it an edge. But while the capital holds its ground, buyers and renters are increasingly exploring locations outside the city, driven by lifestyle choices, shifting work patterns, and evolving design preferences.

Jamie Hope, Managing Director of Maskells, points to the consistency of demand in Prime Central London (PCL). "The most desirable locations will always offer a mixture of close proximity to top schools and world-class amenities, whilst providing a sense of privacy and security," he says. "The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea will always be in demand due to the number of excellent independent schools." Mayfair and Belgravia, he adds, remain firm favourites "due to their prominence, easy access to some of the world's finest boutiques and abundance of large homes that often surround exclusive private garden squares."

But alongside the familiar prime postcodes, a quieter shift is underway. Buyers are not turning their backs on London, but they are expanding their view. As Alex Michelin, Founder and CEO of Valouran, puts it: "While the 'golden postcodes' of prime London will always remain desirable, there is an undeniable shift in HNWI's looking to purchase in other

areas with the space to better accommodate a modern lifestyle."

One example is Queensway, a once-overlooked stretch next to Hyde Park that's undergoing major regeneration. "The reimagining of The Whiteley... into a mixed-use development of 139 unique homes, a 109-key Six Senses hotel and 19 shops and restaurants, marks a long-overdue transformation," says Alex. "With over £1bn being invested in the street over the next three years, it is definitely the area to watch."

Outside of the capital, the pull of countryside living is clear. Louise Nicholson, Head of Cotswolds Lettings at Savills, notes: "Demand for country properties at the upper end of the market has increased over the last 12 months." Some clients are testing the waters: "Particularly if they're coming out of London, they want to know that a village or local setting is right for them and their lifestyle needs." For others, it's about a second home or a place to retreat to on weekends.

What these renters are looking for is specific: "Turnkey houses with a great internal specification, good amount of acreage and a sense of privacy," says Louise. "In places like the Cotswolds, tenants will be looking for a picture-perfect honey-hued home in a well-connected village," with proximity to restaurants and members' clubs such as Daylesford, Estelle Manor or Soho Farmhouse.

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Design and amenities are now playing a central role in decision-making, across both London and regional markets. Michelin sees a major shift in expectations: "Gone are the cigar terraces and the enormous dining rooms. In are spas, cryotherapy chambers and meditation spaces, and a near-obsessional focus on the bedroom... quality sleep."

Jamie agrees that modern buyers "want features that will either improve their living experience, such as the latest home automation systems or incredible leisure facilities," but they're also thinking ahead: "Buyers want amenities and features that ultimately add value to the home."

This applies to tenants as well. Isabella Birch Reynardson, Head of Super Prime Lettings at Savills, says, "At the very top end of the market, demand has been strong for flats... Most are using their place in London as a base rather than staying in hotels." Around 60% of lettings she's handled this year involved apartments with hotel-like facilities: gyms, pools, concierge services and meeting spaces. For many international buyers, the capital still plays a crucial role. "Foreign buyers have accounted for

approximately 70% of the market in Chelsea and 30% in Kensington over the past 10 years," says Jamie. "Changes to the tax thresholds will undoubtedly impact their buying patterns, but the draw of London is still strong."

Michelin notes that the £5-15m segment is particularly active: "Wealthy overseas purchasers increasingly turn their focus to smaller, high-value homes rather than going all out and buying their main home here."

But it's not just about London versus the rest. The current market allows for both. Michelin summarises it well: "This is a good time to enter the London property market. Prices have not grown for over 10 years... on a relative basis the city is looking pretty affordable." At the same time, the appeal of areas like The Bishops Avenue, Hampstead, and even countryside settings like Henley or the Cotswolds are giving buyers genuine lifestyle-driven alternatives. In today's super-prime market, London still sets the pace. But for those willing to look slightly further afield, a new tier of exceptional options is waiting, and gaining ground. **III**



Isabella Birch Reynardson
Head of
Super Prime Lettings
Savills



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GRAND ENTRANCE

» Set behind a secure gated driveway for multiple cars, this newly built, grand detached house extends to approximately 11,467 sq. ft./1,053m², with a startlingly original interior behind its classical facade.

Arranged laterally across four floors, all accessed via a passenger lift, the home is presented in superb decorative condition. The dramatic galleried reception hall leads to a cloakroom, study, formal dining room, drawing room with terrace access, and a large kitchen/breakfast room. Additional features include a family room, utility, boot room, garage, and one-bedroom staff apartment. The garden level houses leisure spaces including a pool, gym, cinema, and more. Four bedroom suites sit on the first floor, with the principal suite occupying the second.

£12.95m / €15.52m / \$16.77m



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BRIGHT COMPOSITION

» Natural light is a defining feature of this apartment, carefully considered throughout the design.

Generous ceiling heights and views over the garden enhance the sense of space, while front-to-back outlooks on the ground floor, a spacious mezzanine, and split-level dining and drawing rooms all contribute to a bright, open, and elegantly balanced home.

£5.85m / €6.99m / \$7.59m



ARCHITECTURAL PRESENCE

» Architecturally imposing, St Catherine's Court stands in a commanding elevated position, with sweeping views over its gardens, meadows, and the wooded valley beyond.

Approached via a gravel drive that winds through ornate iron gates, the setting is both private and striking. The drive passes the impressive 18th-century barn and continues beneath the 12th-century church of St Catherine's, from which the manor takes its name. The gardens are of significant historical importance, appearing on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. Broad terraces step through the landscape, connected by elegant stone stairways, and framed by carefully planted evergreens

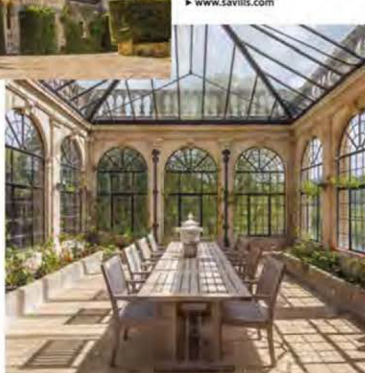
and foliage. The entire setting is one of understated grandeur, perfectly in keeping with the house's heritage and the timeless beauty of its surroundings.

£12.5m / €14.95m / \$16.44m

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» A completely unique and rare double-fronted new build house, constructed and finished to the very highest of standards under the expert guidance of visionary developers and project managers Wilben.

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