

And the Bermondsey beat goes on

BERMONDSEY has brushed off its recent past of cockney sparrows, dock workers and pearly kings to join the ranks of London's la-di-da. The area's residential rise has been gathering momentum for years, with the arrival of the hedge-fund boys and creative types enjoying warehouse space and loft-height ceilings, and now the celebrity set is being drawn to the old character with the new-spin Thameside.

And there is no better benchmark for glamour than the latest tenant — Home House. The fashionable West End club, which counts Madonna and Sting as regulars, is to open a boutique hotel and members' club alongside 76 funky apartments, an arthouse cinema, loft offices, delicatessen, bars and restaurants.

Called Bermondsey Square, the development is being built on the site of the famous antiques market. A semi-enclosed public square will become a new space for antiques traders and other weekly markets.

The boomerang-shaped development rises to nine-stories and has a colourful timber-and-perforated-steel façade. Apartments — up to three-bedroom flats — will be released in January, with completion due in the spring.

Prices are expected to start at £340,000. Call DTZ on 020 7710 8111.

A funky lifestyle scheme beside the Thames and a Home House boutique hotel are raising the glamour stakes in SE1, says **David Spittles**



Rui Vieira

Sting and Madonna are regulars at the fashionable West End club Home House, which is to open a boutique hotel and club in Bermondsey

Bermondsey Square will be refreshingly diverse scheme, the first of its kind in London, according to Giles Sequeira, project manager for developer Igloo Regeneration. "We're targeting owner-occupiers, not buy-to-let investors, and the design of the flats reflects this; they are bigger than normal and have high-grade interiors. It's genuinely about lifestyle."

Residents will get free club and spa membership for a year and concessionary rates on hotel rooms should they want to book in friends or relatives. Part of the service charge will go towards a "community chest" to finance local arts and educational initiatives. All occupiers (commercial as well as residential) will have a stake in a management forum. And in keeping with the quirky, individual nature



Alpha-PhotoFab

of the development, restaurant premises will be let to local independents rather than high-street multiples.

The Home House link-up will strike a chord with London fashionistas. Boutique apartments are spreading to smart pockets of central London as the "club generation" of dot-com entrepreneurs, brand consultants and DJs comes of age.

Developer Londonewcastle has successfully tapped into this market. "I can't remember the last time we sold a flat to a married couple," says its director, Robert Soning. "Most buyers are singles aged between 25 and 45 who work in the City or the creative sector. They've got money and are part of the London vibe. They're design-conscious, image-sensitive people who want a cool home because it's an important statement of who they are."

The same can be said for Soning and business partners David Barnett and Simon Berg. The thirtysomethings set up as developers in the mid-Nineties