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# Spotlight on King's Cross: a property area guide

This once shabby district is now one of the hottest property tickets in town - it took some seriously good design to turn this grim place around and there's plenty more to come...

ANTHEA MASEY | Monday 8 June 2015 | □



King's Cross: Lounging on Granary Square's canalside steps

This has got to be London's biggest transformation story. In just six years, King's Cross has transformed from a shabby and grim area to become the hottest property ticket in town.

For Sale

To Rent

The numbers say it all - when the project is completed there will be a total of 2,000 new homes, 67 acres of derelict land reclaimed, 50 new buildings, 20 new streets, 20 heritage buildings restored, 10 new public squares, 26 acres of open space and even a new postcode, N1C.

This newly emerging neighbourhood has risen phoenix-like from what was the old railway badlands behind King's Cross station. Now it is a vibrant district, energised by the creative students of the Royal College of Fashion, making the area lively and stylish.

Granary Square, with its fountains and restaurants, has already become a favourite new destination. The backdrop is the Victorian Granary Building that became the home of Central Saint Martins, part of the University of the Arts London, four years ago.

Much has already been achieved since outline planning permission was granted in 2006. The Great Northern Hotel has been restored and reopened, the buildings next to Granary Square now house the Art Fund and the House of Illustration, there are new social and student housing developments, and offices have been let to major companies including Google, Havas and Louis Vuitton.

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**Property area guide to King's Cross: everything you need**



**13**  
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Homes Right

Location e.g. Euston or SE8






Houses No Min

Min Price £200,000 Max Price £1m

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There is also plenty more to come. Opening soon is an £18 million flagship Waitrose store and cookery school, while the landmark German Gymnasium will house a new restaurant. The historic Coal Drops are being converted into a new retail precinct called Coal Drops Yard, while the Grade II-listed Gasholder No.8 will become a park. Gasholders 10, 11 and 12 are being restored and will house a series of modern flats.

In the meantime, the famous Kerb street food market has a new home in Lewis Cubitt Square on the western side of the Granary Building. It lies close to the new outdoor swimming pond, the only natural public swimming pool in London purified with plants rather than chlorine.

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#### What there is to buy in King's Cross

There is a mix of early Victorian houses between York Way, Caledonian Road and Pentonville Road as well as in the Lloyd Baker Estate south of Pentonville Road and east of King's Cross Road. Converted Victorian houses and tenement flats are found in the roads and squares south of Euston Road. You can also find estates of council houses - most notably the Priory Green Estate designed by Tecton, the mid-century firm led by Berthold Lubetkin — and converted warehouses. The latter have been occupied by pioneers such as photographer David Bailey and inventor Sir Clive Sinclair in the time before King's Cross underwent its major transformation.

#### Average prices: buying houses and flats in King's Cross

One bedroom flat £659,000

Two bedroom flat £979,000

Three bedroom flat £2.62 million

Source: [zoopla.co.uk](http://zoopla.co.uk)

- buy in King's Cross

Estate agent Andrew Sorene, of Frank Harris, says it is exciting to see an entirely new London neighbourhood coming to life. "We never used to advertise properties as being in King's Cross - we would say it was near Russell Square, but now it is seen as a positive rather than a negative thing," he adds.

**Up and coming:** Sorene tips Somers Town, the area between St Pancras and Euston stations. The Francis Crick Institute opens next year, but as of yet this is an area that is being left behind. Frank Harris (020 7387 0077) is selling three two-bedroom flats converted from the Eastnor Castle pub in Chalton Street, with prices starting at £750,000.

The most expensive homes in King's Cross can be found in St Pancras Chambers on the upper floors of the St Pancras Renaissance Hotel - a tall, Victorian, Gothic building designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott. This two-bedroom flat is for sale for £1.8 million through Hamptons International.

Keystone Crescent is a charming curved terrace of early Victorian houses a stone's throw away from King's Cross station. This two-bedroom house is for sale for £1.3 million.

Boutique lovers will like Amwell Street in the Lloyd Baker Estate, as it has interesting independent shops. It also features this two-bedroom maisonette, which is for sale for £1.1 million.

### Travel

King's Cross and St Pancras International contain five railway stations, with trains to the continent via Eurostar, fast trains on High Speed 1 to Kent, long-distance trains to Scotland and the North East, and cross-London trains on Thameslink. For Tube services, Victoria, Northern, Circle, Piccadilly, Metropolitan and Hammersmith & City lines run through the stations. King's Cross and St Pancras are in Zone 1 and an annual travelcard costs £1,284.

### The area attracts

Sorene says his buyers in the more traditional areas of King's Cross are mainly from Europe or the UK buying a London pied-à-terre for themselves or for their student children. Prices even in the old tenement blocks south of Euston Road sell for more than £1,000 a square foot. "This week I am exchanging on a one-bedroom in Thanet House in Thanet Street, a tenement block, for £575,000," adds Sorene.

### What there is to rent in King's Cross

One-bedroom apartments range in price from about £1,260 a month for a converted flat in a basement in Caledonian Road to £2,773 a month in St Pancras Chambers above St Pancras station. Two-bedroom flats range from about £1,850 for a flat in a council estate to about £3,500 a month for a maisonette in the Lloyd Baker Estate.

### Average prices: renting houses and flats in King's Cross

One bedroom flat £1,880 a month

Two bedroom flat £2,676 a month

Three bedroom flat £3,250 a month

Source: [zoopla.co.uk](http://zoopla.co.uk)

- rent in King's Cross

### Postcode

Some areas in King's Cross fall into the WC1 central postcode, which includes most of Bloomsbury. But the rest falls into the N1 postcode that extends through Islington as far as Hoxton. The newly created N1C postcode covering the King's Cross development area is becoming increasingly desirable.



The new public space in front of Kings Cross station

### WHAT THE LOCALS RECOMMEND ON TWITTER

@iamfabish So many great places in King's X but @rotundalondon and @GandFCafe are my go-to places for a relaxing drink

@brandmcqueen Check out the hidden gem @rotundalondon for a lovely canalside view

@chrisjwalker84 Without doubt dinner & drinks @rotundalondon and coffee & cake from @GandFCafe

@ChloeFletcher\_x @MunchTimeLondon is the best café in #KingsCross by far

@ILGouldy Simmonds happy hour(s) is fun. Grain Store with outdoor bar

@Barchetta66 Lived here for 18 yrs. Best tip would be coffee from the best coffee cart in LDN — from the boys at @Noble\_Esp at KX station.

@Izybella1 Best coffee bar @HarrisAndHoole Caledonian Road

### Leisure and the arts

Kings Place in York Road, overlooking the Battlebridge Basin, has two concert halls, two art galleries, a restaurant, café and bar. It is home to three orchestras - Aurora Orchestra, London Sinfonietta and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment - as well as the Guardian newspaper. King's Cross Theatre in Goods Way is a new venue currently showing a version of E Nesbit's *The Railway Children*, while the London Canal Museum is in New Wharf Road.

The nearest council-owned swimming pool is the new pool at Pancras Square in Goods Way and Pancras Road, where there are new council offices and a library. There is also the Cally Pool in Caledonian Road, but the swimming excitement that's making a big splash is the new natural outdoor pool next to Lewis Cubitt Park to the north-west of the Granary Building.



Secret tunnel: the secret pedestrian walkway joining Pancras Square with St. Pancras Station

### Three things about King's Cross

• *How did a king come to take the place of a queen in King's Cross?*

King's Cross got its name after a grandiose statue of George IV was

erected at the junction of Gray's Inn Road, Pentonville Road and Euston Road in 1830. The purpose was to raise the tone of an industrial area. But the statue was much ridiculed and it was removed in 1842. In spite of this, the name King's Cross stuck. Before then the area was known as Battle Bridge and was reputedly where Queen Boudica, queen of the Iceni tribe, was killed fighting the Romans in AD61. Her body is rumoured to rest under platform nine in King's Cross station.

• *Where does a luggage trolley disappear into a wall and why?*

Harry Potter and his classmates take the train to Hogwarts from platform 9¾ at King's Cross station. There is a Harry Potter shop in the main station concourse and nearby there is the disappearing luggage trolley much loved by tourists who queue for hours to have their photograph taken with it.

• *What do Aldwych, Down Street and York Road have in common?*

They were all stops on the Piccadilly line and all the entrances can still be seen, with the Piccadilly line's distinctive maroon glazed tiling still on show. Down Street and York Road both closed in 1932, but Aldwych only closed in 1994. The success of the King's Cross development has brought forth the idea that York Road, situated in York Way, could be reopened, but there are no firm plans.

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