COUNTRY LIFE

EVERY WEEK

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The Easter issue

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Annunciata Elwes

Can we tempt you back to the office?

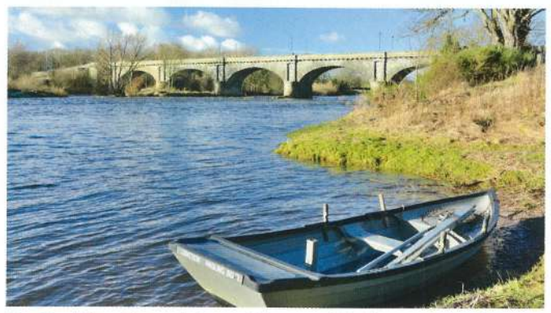
Circle of life: wellbeing is top of the agenda in the design of The Round, Bankside, SE1

THE capital's first mixed-use 'wellness village' is set to hit Bankside, London SE1, as global real-estate firm Hines announces it has secured planning permission for a Foster + Partners-designed development that promises to set the worldwide standard. Benefiting from the expertise of wellness specialist Pillar, best known for the wellness club at Raffles London at The OWO, The Round will be 'created as a solution to pervasive societal issues, such as social isolation, depression and anxiety, increased incidences of dementia, chronic underactivity and increases in cardiovascular disease, obesity and diabetes,' explains Oli Patrick, Pillar's clinical director.

Ultimately, those who come to work here should 'feel better when they leave than when they arrived,' adds Ross Blair of Hines. The data-driven focuses—based on the core categories of environment, movement, mindset, social, nutrition and recovery—will range from air quality, acoustics and a desk space that 'encourages regular and spontaneous movement' to mentorship, music, art, breathwork, meditation, cooking workshops and nutritionist consultations. Access to the great outdoors won't be a problem, as The Round will have more terraces than any other tower in the city and, as part of a 150% increase in biodiversity planned for the site, 100 new trees will be planted.

Mr Patrick continues: 'Working with Hines, we have taken wellbeing back to its science: what are the multitude of factors that directly and indirectly affect the functioning of the human machine and how do we optimise these? Our objective was to create a 360-degree environment that facilitates positive wellbeing interactions as the path of least resistance. The Round will fuse physical design and space allocation with tailored service provision, combined with community building and embedded in a centralised wellbeing culture.'

The Round will also be fossil-fuel free, 100% electric and net-zero carbon in operation, with 95% of the 1¾-acre site's heat coming from ground-source heat pumps; there are hopes that it will be the first high-rise scheme in the UK to achieve the official WELL Community Gold Standard. The £2 billion project is set for completion in 2030, offering 800,000sq ft of office space and 433 new homes (40% affordable); visit www.theround.co.uk for details.



On the River Tweed, two of the world's finest Atlantic salmon fishing beats have come to the market. 'Junction [*above*, offers over £2.8m] is the best-known and most prestigious beat in the salmon-fishing world and, although less well known, Sprouston [offers over £2.65m] is many Tweed anglers' favourite due to its combination of privacy and productivity,' explains Robert McCulloch of Strutt & Parker (07734 545972). Acquired by the current owners from the Duke of Roxburghe in the mid 1970s, the beats are run as commercial rod-and-line fisheries, supported by a full-time team of five boatmen; they are consistently profitable, with record-breaking catches

Expert advice on where to live

PRICES at the top of the market have 'softened', says Garrington Property Finders, which has propelled some prime locations to the top of its 2025 Best Places to Live index. Released earlier this month, the annual ranking analyses 1,600 villages, towns and cities (with more than 5,000 inhabitants) across England, Scotland and Wales to find a balance of high living standards, natural beauty, good schools and value for money.

This year, the No 1 spot for England and Wales has gone to Redbourn in Hertfordshire, a charming village on the River Ver, four miles from St Albans (fourth on the index), with Roman origins, two golf courses and a legacy of cricket dating back to 1666. Today, a typical family home there costs £767,501; above the English national average, but down 8.2% on last year, bucking the national trend (up 4.3%). Also in the top 10 is Marple in Greater Manchester, Chigwell in Essex and Menston in West Yorkshire. In Scotland, top spot went to Bridge of Allan, Stirling.

'Today's most successful locations blend a winning combination of lifestyle, investment security and accessibility,' comments Garrington CEO Jonathan Hopper. Visit www.garrington.co.uk/best-places-to-live-2025-prime to view the interactive league table.

High-flying forests

WE might be a little behind Japan in this, but property developers in the UK appear to be embracing the forest-bathing trend, prioritising the creation of biophilic high rises with dedicated green spaces. With the Global Wellness Institute valuing the wellness real-estate sector at $438 billion, predicted to grow 15.8% annually until 2028, and with Knight Frank's Wealth Report revealing 25% of buyers now value amenity-rich homes with wellbeing spaces (up from 9%), it appears the trend is here to stay. The phrase 'forest bathing' is a literal translation of the Japanese *shinrin-yoku*, coined in 1982 (but not invented) by a Japanese government figure after numerous studies proved the therapeutic benefits of spending time amid Nature, with its capacity to reduce cortisol levels and accelerate healing.

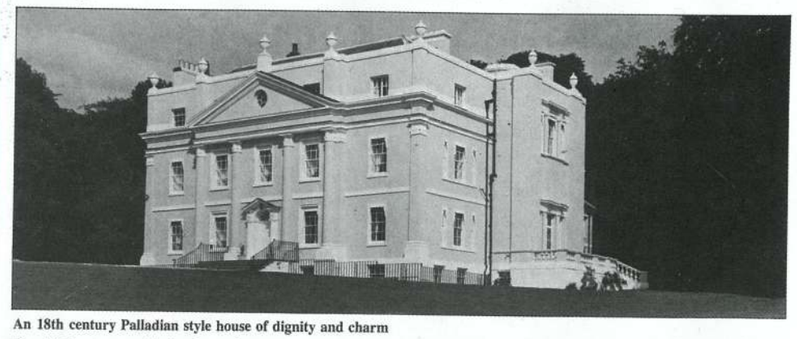
In London, landscape architects and urban-planning firm Gillespies is a poster child for the movement, responsible for the green spaces around Neo Bankside, SE1, and the critically acclaimed Sky Garden at 20 Fenchurch Street, EC3 (the Walkie-Talkie), the capital's highest public garden. Now, the Gillespies team and the former head horticulturist at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, have created the planting schemes for Farrer Huxley and Squire & Partners' tropical oases within Chalegrove Properties' Landmark Pinnacle project in Canary Wharf, E14, the tallest residential building in Europe, where apartments start from $615,000 (www.landmarkpinnacle.com). On the 27th floor, more than 3,500 plants, such as ficus (*below right*), fragrant stephanotis (*left*), spider plants (*above*) and peace lilies (*far left*) dominate, rising to 13,000 on the 75th floor's Sky Terrace, the largest and highest of its kind in the UK, with the UK's tallest living walls and 360-degree views.

'Where land is at a premium, this new model of internal gardens on a large scale could be part of the solution for better, healthier lives at the centre of our cities,' argues Armel Mourgue, partner at Gillespies. 'The controlled temperature, light and humidity generated within the Panorama Garden will create ideal tropical conditions, where lush, green, exotic bold foliage will thrive even in winter.'

If only I'd bought...

December 31, 1981

Surrey, between Guildford and Farnham



An 18th century Palladian style house of dignity and charm

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Our new daily online quiz always features a 'guess the property price' question; visit www.countrylife.co.uk/quiz

Redbourn Parish Council/Annie Kelly Photography; Alamy; Getty

What's hot

Following the sun
It used to be panic rooms and £1 million AV systems; now, the latest super-prime home convenience is a circadian lighting system that follows the natural rhythm of daylight, promoting better sleep and enhanced energy, finds Nucleus AV

Queensway
The once-overlooked W2 street is getting £3bn investment into widening pavements, upgrading Tube stations, 'regreening' and creating a new entrance to Hyde Park; now, developer Valouran has received the planning go ahead to reimagine the Redan Pub for mixed use

Warm welcome
Air-source heat pumps can heat new homes for as little as £1.84 per day, finds the University of Salford

Parental support
An increasing number of ever-younger first-time buyers 'supported by the Bank of Mum and Dad [are] out in force,' says Dominic Agace of Winkworth, perhaps due to 'worries about pensions becoming taxable'

Running for a good cause
A Property Vision-sponsored team, made up of agents from Knight Frank, Blue Book, Jonathan Cunliffe and John Bray Estates, is tackling the Leeds Marathon on May 11 for two charities—4Ed and the MND Association (https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/property-vision-team)

What's not

Millionaire neighbourhoods
Knight Frank has declared only three new £1m markets—Cambridge, Chichester, West Sussex, and Winchelsea, East Sussex—compared with 11 the year before

Downsizing when the kids leave
Now, people in their forties are downsizing, because of 'the cost of living, with several years of compounded inflation together with higher interest rates,' explains Mark Crampton of Middleton Advisors