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The Investor View

Balham
Q4 2015

NIGHTINGALE
LANE SW12



Douglas
& Gordon

Good to know.

Introduction

Anyone who owns a property in London is a property investor. Our lives and plans often depend on the performance of what is likely to be the largest asset we own. So perhaps it will be helpful to take more of an investor's view of the market.

To produce this report we worked closely with D&G Asset Management, a company we co-founded in 2005. They deploy money into London residential property all the time, so they are constantly analysing different areas and the assets within those areas, seeking to maximise returns.

As well as publicly available sources, we have used the proprietary data that we have been capturing since 1996 to help us make decisions and provide advice and guidance to our clients.

D&GAM has helped us focus on the data that counts and we think the results make fascinating reading.

If you would like to learn more about the Balham area, please do get in touch with our office on Nightingale Lane. Contact details can be found on the back page.

Property Values

In Q3, a standoff emerged between buyers and sellers

In Q3 2015, the movement in capital values in Balham occurred at different ends of the market. Two bedroom flats and three bedroom houses remained unchanged whilst one bedroom flats fell by 2.77% and four bedroom houses rose by 1.96%. This was in complete contrast to the pattern of events across many of the other Douglas & Gordon Emerging Prime offices, where flats performed better than houses.

Q3 in more detail

- Property prices in Balham over the last 18 months, stand out as a contradiction to our other Emerging Prime offices.
- Most offices have seen the flat market recover after a weak H2 2014 and the prices of houses are generally weaker than last summer.
- The explanation for houses in Balham remaining strong though is an affordability factor. Houses up to £1.45m have proven to be a magnet for couples transitioning from flats in other areas of Emerging Prime.
- Flats prices in Balham were exceptionally strong in the lead up to their peak and in Q1 2014, one bedroom flats rose by 15.8%. Buyers are now reticent about paying these prices.
- We have seen a continued weakness of larger (£2m+) houses across our Emerging Prime offices, which remain weighed down by the increases in SDLT.

Background factors in play

- Homeowners across our Emerging Prime offices have large equity positions and are therefore discretionary sellers.

Balham Nominal Property Values			
	Q3 2015	YTD	Since Q2 2014
1 Bed Flats	-2.77% ↓	-2.33% ↓	-4.55% ↓
2 Bed Flats	0.00% →	0.00% →	-0.74% ↓
3 Bed Houses	0.00% →	9.30% ↑	11.90% ↑
4 Bed Houses	1.96% ↑	8.33% ↑	4.00% ↑

Source: D&G proprietary data

- A year ago this led to the beginning of a standoff between buyers and sellers across other Emerging Prime offices. This now appears to be happening in Balham.

In Q3 2015 buyers were price sensitive

- Our research also suggests that in Q3 2015 buyers were price sensitive as borrowers were wrongly guided to expect higher interest rates. See page 4 for our outlook on monetary policy.

Outlook

- Sellers should remain realistic and ignore headlines about UK national house price rises as they do not apply to London. The bull market in Balham ended in April 2014.

How an investor looks at the market

Residential property investors use two key measures: the capital value of the property and its net rental yield.

You can make money from an increase in capital value and earn additional income by renting out a property you own. The net yield is the annual rent, less expenses, divided by the property's capital value.

Both are important and are influenced by many factors including: supply of new properties,

infrastructure projects, demographics of the area, the economy (in particular, interest and tax rates) and the wider geopolitical picture.

The interplay of these factors is what determines investment returns and what makes property investment decisions so interesting. We hope this report provides some help as you assess your options.

In Q3 larger houses in Balham experienced pockets of weakness

Rental Growth & Yield

In Q3 2015, average rents across D&G Land rose by 0.3%. Prime offices averaged growth of 0.9% and Emerging Prime offices produced a very small increase of 0.03%. Against this background, rental growth in Balham increased by an average of 0.9%. The breakdown of the numbers paints a complicated picture.

Corporate budgets are getting tighter - a message to house owners

In our last report, we described the Balham house rental market as "subdued". As Q3 2015 unfolded, pockets of real weakness started to emerge and the higher up the chain one went, the more acute the problem became. One reason for this is that domestic renters are becoming increasingly cash strapped. Another reason is that Balham is one of a number of our "core" Emerging Prime offices that has recently experienced a decline in corporate relocation budgets.

Investors need to think ahead

Over the past year we have written about the trend of corporate tenants looking for better value in lower-priced areas. We are now seeing more tightening of the belt, which will further impact the corporate rental market going forward. Investors need to think ahead.

Fewer corporates means landlords will need to invest in upgrading their properties to appeal to the decreasing pool of prospective tenants, and/or consider the growing professional sharer market.

Those house owners who have been averse to the sharers market will be interested to know that the demographics are shifting. Our internal data shows that 60% of our tenants in Balham are over 30 - the new so called "generation rent": people who aspire to buy and want to maintain excellent credit records but have to remain in rental accommodation for longer.

Balham Nominal Rental Growth			
Rents	Q3 2015	YTD	Since Q2 2014
1 Bed Flats	0.00% →	2.67% ↗	10.00% ↗
2 Bed Flats	2.06% ↗	7.61% ↗	12.50% ↗
3 Bed Flats	4.32% ↗	8.21% ↗	11.54% ↗
4 Bed Flats	-2.86% ↘	0.00% →	1.19% ↗

Source: D&G proprietary data

Current Rental Gross Yields October 2015	
1 Bed Flats	3.90% - 5.00%
2 Bed Flats	3.50% - 4.70%
3 Bed Houses	3.00% - 4.00%
4 Bed Houses	3.00% - 4.00%
10 Yr UK Gilt Yield	1.76%
FTSE All Sh Yield	3.60%
UK Base Rate	0.50%

Source: D&G proprietary data

On a brighter note for investors, rental values in the Balham flats market were firm in Q3, as indeed they were across D&G Land. One explanation for this is that the sales market has not, as yet, taken off and people are staying put in rented accommodation.

Outlook

In this low growth and low inflationary environment, we remain cautious on rental growth.

In Q3 the global economic backdrop to the London property market was challenging (see chart). Some commentators believe that the recent turmoil in emerging market economies is the third stage of the global financial crisis that began in 2008. The implications of this are:

- Central banks across the world remain worried by no inflation:
 - In the USA: 2014 - 15 US median household income fell
 - In the Eurozone: Inflation turned negative in September 2015 (notwithstanding E 500 billion + of asset purchases by the ECB this year)
 - In Japan: The third quarter looks set to contract after the second quarter contracted 1.2% (notwithstanding \$665 billion of asset purchases by BOJ over the last year)
- Capital flight from emerging market economies will pose a major threat to global growth (between 2010 and 2015, China was responsible for 50% of global growth)
- There will also be renewed threats to capital adequacy of US/UK/European major banks.

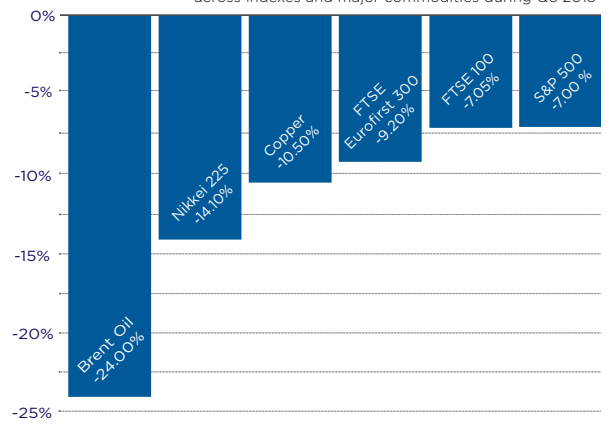
These global downside pressures will inevitably dampen UK growth, employment and inflation.

A lone voice holding this view has been Andrew Haldane, Chief Economist at The Bank of England.

On 18th September, the day after the FOMC kept US interest rates on hold, he said “In my view the balance of risks to UK growth and to UK inflation at the two year horizon is skewed squarely and significantly to the downside ... there could be a need to loosen rather than

Global economic backdrop to Q3 2015

Recent turmoil in emerging market economies has seen losses across indexes and major commodities during Q3 2015



tighten the monetary reins as a next step to support UK growth and return inflation to target.”*

Since 2009 we have been arguing that the threat of deflation will overhang the global economy for many years and that there was no prospect of interest rate rises for years to come. We have also argued for the last two years that further QE and/or monetary loosening in the UK was likely, when others have been predicting rate rises and higher inflation.

Continuing and stabilising low borrowing rates will lead to a pick up in mortgage approvals and this will have greater effect on some parts of the UK housing market than others.

* Speech to Portadown Chamber of Commerce 18th September 2015

Balham key facts & figures

Here are the key facts and figures anyone investing in the property market needs at their fingertips.

Nominal Rental Income Growth to Dec 2014			
	2014	5 years	10 years
1 Bed Flats	9%	32%	56%
2 Bed Flats	8%	31%	53%
3 Bed Houses	3%	22%	68%
4 Bed Houses	1%	13%	48%

Nominal Capital Returns to Dec 2014			
	2014	5 years	10 years
1 Bed Flats	13%	63%	139%
2 Bed Flats	4%	69%	133%
3 Bed Houses	8%	43%	107%
4 Bed Houses	0%	41%	109%

Other Assets Capital Returns to Dec 2014			
	2014	5 years	10 years
Nationwide HPI*	7.20%	16%	24%
Halifax HPI*	7.80%	12%	16%
FTSE100	-2.70%	21%	36%
RPI	1.6%	18%	36%

*House Price Index

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