

Balham    Battersea    Battersea Park    Chelsea    Clapham    East Putney    Fulham    Gloucester Road  
Hammersmith & Shepherd's Bush    Kensington    Notting Hill    **Pimlico & Westminster**    South Kensington    Southfields    West Putney

# The Investor View

Pimlico & Westminster  
Q3 2015



**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 Pimlico & Westminster area, please do get in touch with our office on Wilton Road. Contact details can be found on the back page.

## Property Values

## Since last summer capital values in Pimlico & Westminster have remained static.

### Q2 2015 performance

In Q2 capital values were unchanged in Pimlico & Westminster. This follows a similar pattern to Q1, when all unit sizes, with the exception of 2 bedroom flats, plateaued. The trend in Pimlico & Westminster had more in common with Prime prices, which in Q2 were only marginally higher (+0.7%). In contrast many Douglas & Gordon Emerging Prime offices saw price rises, at an average of 1.81%, fuelled by flats and smaller houses.

### In the context of the last 12 months

- Prices in Pimlico & Westminster, with the exception of two bedroom flats, have not moved since December 2014. They also remain unchanged on a 12 month basis.
- Interestingly, the market for larger houses across many areas of Emerging Prime has been particularly subdued. In some instances, capital values have fallen by over 10% since the peak in the summer of 2014.
- Last April's Mortgage Market Review put the brakes on the property market and new Stamp Duty rates (announced in December) have made vendors deliberate for longer before moving. Buying a £1.8m property now incurs SDLT fees of £129,750 (against £90,000 last year and £18,000 25 years ago).
- With many potential vendors being more able to choose when to sell, the market has experienced lower volumes.

**The election result has produced all of the ingredients necessary to create a strong and stable London housing market.**

### The Election Effect

Immediately after the surprise election result on 7th May we forecast that the outcome would produce all of the ingredients necessary to create a strong and stable London housing market.

Whilst post-election prices in some parts of the market are rising, data from the last six weeks indicates that in other segments, particularly for higher valued stock, it is too soon to detect any market movement.

### Pimlico & Westminster Nominal Property Values

	Q2 2015	Q1 2015	Since Q2 2014
1 Bed Flats	0.00% →	0.00% →	0.00% →
2 Bed Flats	0.00% →	-2.78% ↓	-2.78% ↓
3 Bed Houses	0.00% →	0.00% →	0.00% →
4 Bed Houses	0.00% →	0.00% →	0.00% →

Source: D&G proprietary data

Looking to the future, however, investors should consider the following:

- One of the new government priorities is to return its stake in Lloyds and RBS to the private sector. This will create a political landscape that will see an increase in lending, with potentially helpful consequences for the housing market.
- The early signs of change are evident in the mortgage market. Data from the Bank of England has shown that 5 year fixed rate mortgages (for 75% LTV) fell below 3% in Q2 2015. The recent upward trend in mortgage approvals, although way below historic levels, is also a positive sign.
- We have consistently argued that any fiscal tightening from the new government will keep base rates low.
- We are hearing that following the election, vendors have hardened their stance towards price reduction. In some instances this is understandable. In general, however, as the market strengthens, vendors looking to move up the property ladder should consider the risk of holding out for an aspirational sale price, whilst the purchase price of their new property increases at an incrementally higher rate.

# 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 Q2 2015 rental values in Pimlico & Westminster were firm.**

**Rental Growth & Yield**

## Q2 2015 performance

In Q2 2015 average rents across D&G Land rose by 1.6%. In Emerging Prime rental growth averaged +1.7%. This was higher than in Prime, which saw average growth of 1.5%.

Against this rather buoyant background, our data shows that rental growth averaged +1.9% in Pimlico & Westminster in Q2. This followed a firm Q1. Over the last 12 months rental growth in the area has been modest.

Rental values for flats remained steady in a market that has seen above average churn this quarter – a good sign of the robust nature of the local market. Smaller houses have seen stronger rental values in Q2.

Stronger rental growth in Pimlico & Westminster, compared to other areas, has been as a consequence of the following factors:

- ▮ The high number of small flats (some of them high quality ex-Local Authority stock) available.
- ▮ The change in the commercial make-up of the area.
- ▮ The emergence of high-specification new developments. Over the medium-term we are bullish on rents in the area, particularly for flats, and think that it is in the process of being re-rated.

## Outlook

Over the last 12 months in Pimlico & Westminster, the rental story has been about rental values remaining firm in the face of a slow down in the sales market.

As reported in the previous edition of The Investor View, a strengthened sales market will potentially lead to a slow down in rental growth. This may happen in the Autumn.

Pimlico & Westminster Nominal Rental Growth			
	Q2 2015	Q1 2015	Since Q2 2014
1 Bed Flats	2.38%	2.44%	2.38%
2 Bed Flats	1.56%	0.79%	1.56%
3 Bed Houses	3.23%	1.31%	2.56%
4 Bed Houses	0.39%	-0.38%	0.39%

Source: D&G proprietary data

Current Rental Gross Yields December 2014	
1 Bed Flats	3.00% – 4.00%
2 Bed Flats	2.80% – 4.00%
3 Bed Houses	2.00% – 3.20%
4 Bed Houses	2.00% – 3.20%
10 Yr UK Gilt Yield	2.12%
FTSE All Sh Yield	3.36%
UK Base Rate	0.50%

Source: D&G proprietary data

**A strengthened sales market may potentially lead to a decline in rental growth.**

At the start of 2015 Douglas & Gordon initiated a quarterly index, tracking capital values across Emerging Prime areas of London, particularly in relation to Prime London prices.

In the rental sector, the performance of Emerging Prime in relation to Prime tells an interesting story.

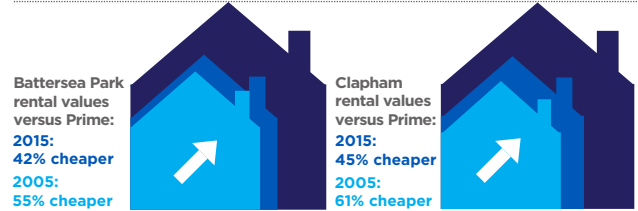
Over the last 10 years, rents in Prime have remained relatively static. By contrast, there has been considerable rental growth in Emerging Prime - consequently, the gap between the two markets is narrowing.

This movement is demonstrated in the charts using data from Battersea Park and Clapham.

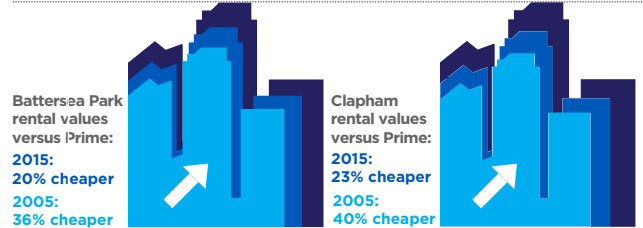
There are several factors behind this convergence:

- I Demographics: There are almost 1m more people working in London than a decade ago. This has generated increased demand in the rental market.
- I A changing corporate environment: Budgets have tightened since the financial crisis. This has led to corporate tenants seeking places to rent outside Prime London areas.
- I Social Trends: Emerging Prime is becoming more fashionable, particularly with overseas renters.

Prime (Chelsea) rental values for 3 bed houses



Prime (Chelsea) rental values for 1 bed flats



Source: D&G proprietary data

Many investors are waking up to the fact that, with changing demographics, the quality of income streams in Emerging Prime are on par with Prime. Additionally, current yields in Emerging Prime are significantly higher than Prime.

It will be intriguing to see how this unfolds.

## Pimlico & Westminster 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	8%	26%	49%	
2 Bed Flats	18%	41%	81%	
3 Bed Houses	-1%	18%	28%	
4 Bed Houses	8%	30%	63%	

Nominal Capital Returns to Dec 2014				
	2014	5 years	10 years	
1 Bed Flats	14%	69%	150%	
2 Bed Flats	13%	82%	165%	
3 Bed Houses	11%	74%	180%	
4 Bed Houses	17%	51%	150%	

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

## Pimlico & Westminster 2015 Our view

- Capital values: Strong year ahead for sub £1m, above £1m slow start but picking up in H2 2015
- Rental values to plateau in real terms.

## Our Pimlico & Westminster Office

106 Wilton Road, London SW1V 1DZ



Sales Julian Jephson  
T 020 7931 8200  
E jjephson@dng.co.uk



Lettings Louise Verrall  
T 020 7931 8300  
E lverrall@dng.co.uk

