ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

MIDDLE EAST FEB/MAR 2025

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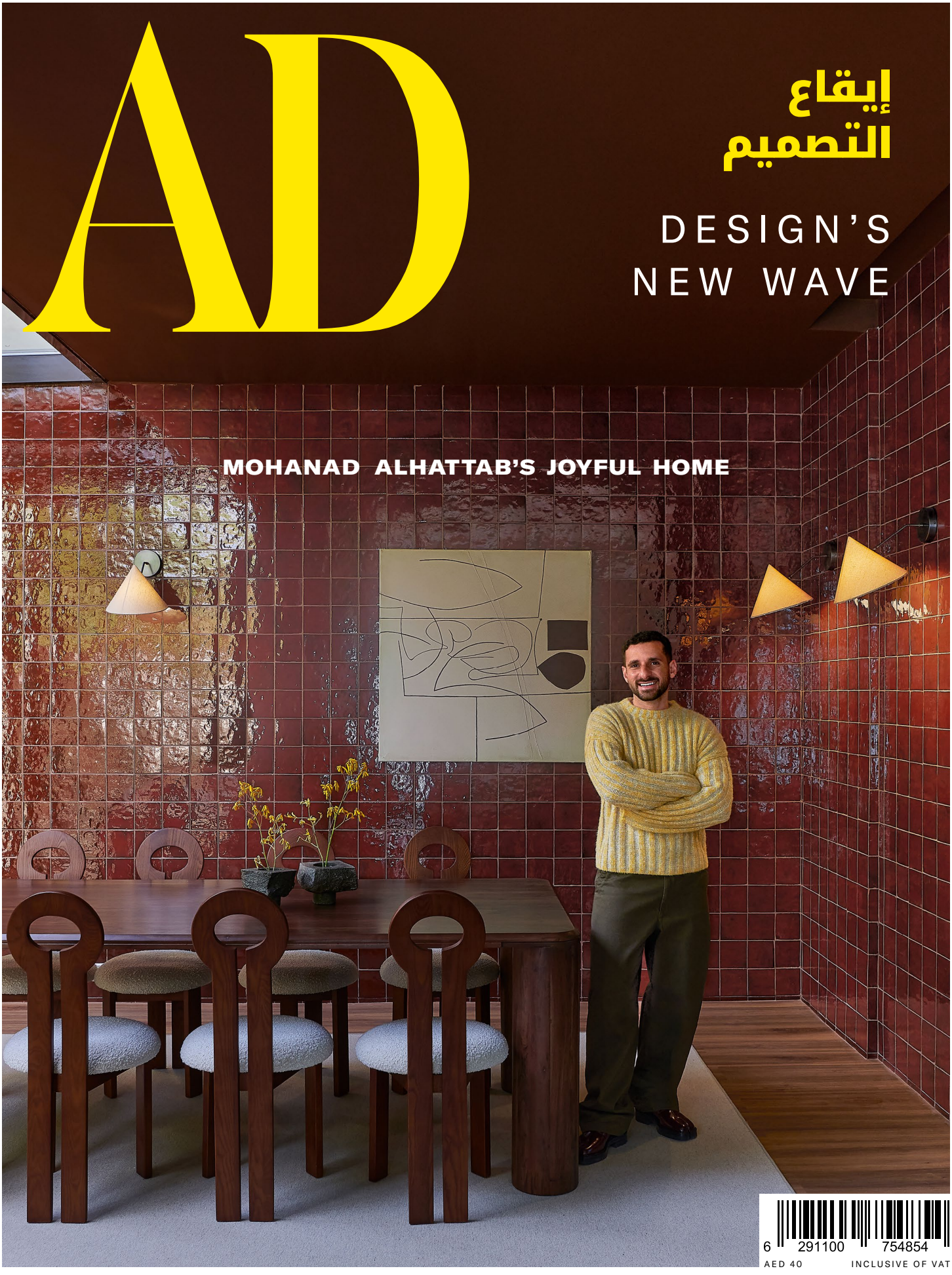
DESIGN'S NEW WAVE

MOHANAD ALHATTAB'S JOYFUL HOME



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PROPERTY SPECIAL

- **A-LIST ADDRESSES**
- **RADICAL REALTORS**
- **LIFE-CHANGING DESIGN**

REWRITING HISTORY

Words NONI WARE

AD PROPERTY SPECIAL

Chelsea Barracks features one-of-a-kind homes by A-list designers. Opposite page: the development reinstates five acres of green space in central London

In London's Belgravia, the once cordoned-off Chelsea Barracks has been transformed into an oasis of luxury living that everyone can enjoy

Above: spread across 51,209 square feet, the Garrison Club boasts a multi-use sports hall, a 25-metre swimming pool and a 16-seat cinema hall. Opposite page: a townhouse dressed by designer Brigitta Spinocchia Freund

For over 150 years, a prime piece of London real estate was kept hidden from public view. From behind tall railings, the only sounds that passers-by could hear were commands being shouted by someone in control and heavy boots thumping on the ground. This was Chelsea Barracks – designed by architect George Morgan in 1855 and home to four companies of the British royal guards, who lived on the site until 2007, when the last troops departed.

Today, at 52,000 square metres (12.8 acres), it is the largest development in Belgravia, its transformation masterminded by Qatari Diar, a global leader in luxury real estate, which since 2005 has backed projects pioneering community and sustainability. The company enlisted a small army of its own – award-winning architects, master planners, landscapers, interior designers and museum-worthy artists – to embark on a decade-long effort to redevelop the historic military base as a world-class residential neighbourhood.

"This is the first development of its type in over 100 years, and likely the last," says Richard Oakes, chief sales and marketing officer at Qatari Diar, of the project that has reinstated over five acres of open green space – approximately 40 per cent of the site – in the heart of London. "We set out to design an entirely new neighbourhood that connects seamlessly with Belgravia and is open to all. Celebrating the site's history in the master plan and design of the homes was central to our vision."

To achieve this, master planners Squire & Partners, architecture firm Dixon Jones and landscape designer Kim Wilkie worked hand-in-hand, developing a new concept for the site, which had survived two World Wars. They made the historic Garrison Chapel the focal point of a layout based on traditional London squares. Next, Qatari Diar brought best-in-class British artisans and makers on board to revisit Georgian design features for a contemporary age, on a scale that influences the wider community.

"Expressing a new architectural language that was as graceful and resonant of the location as the distinguished architectural ancestors that surround it was vital to the success of the development, just as much as its modern-day appeal," explains Oakes. From a thoughtful 21st-century interpretation of the traditional Georgian townhouse concept to the restored Grade-II listed railings that line the development and the bespoke public furniture throughout, the attention to craftsmanship is matched by top-of-the-line amenities that ultra-high-net-worth buyers expect, such as valet parking, state-of-the-art security systems, guards and, above all, privacy. Even the Garrison Club, a sprawling lifestyle destination featuring a tepidarium and swimming pool alongside a 16-seat cinema, private function rooms and business suites, can be accessed directly via the underground car park. In short, if they don't wish to, residents and their guests don't ever need to venture into the public realm, eyecatching as the development's seven garden squares are (they're dotted with sculpture trails featuring work by the likes of Dale Chihuly, Conrad Shawcross and Anna Gillespie). Plus, there is a 24-hour concierge service, meaning that residents can request anything at any time.

Privacy and safety aside, today's investors are paying for ease. "There is an increased demand for one-of-a-kind turnkey properties across the ultra-prime residential market," says Oakes of why Qatari

"Celebrating the site's history was central to our vision. We set out to design an entirely new neighbourhood that connects to Belgravia and is open to all"

Photos: Jack Hobhouse; Kensington Leverne; Felix Speller

Above: the swimming pool at the Mulberry Square Townhouse by Albion Nord. Opposite page: the elegantly appointed entrance foyer of the Spinocchia Freund-designed Collector's House, which comes with its own art and design portfolio

Diar collaborated with A-list interior designers to design fully decorated residences catering to curated lifestyles. "For example, No 1 Whistler Square, which has been dressed by Brigitta Spinocchia Freund, is billed as the Collector's House. Its interior focuses on the timeless architectural details of a townhouse as the backdrop, supported by rare and collectable art and furniture which was sourced for every space."

Overall, the development has been split into six phases: the first phase, completed in 2019, included the delivery of 64 apartments and three penthouses, as well as a spa and The Campaner restaurant. Phase two saw the completion of 13 townhouses, and phase three includes the launch of the Garrison Suite, the Mews House, Garrison Square and the Chapel, as well as retail spaces. Phase four will include 97 new residences across three buildings designed by Eric Parry Architects, with prices starting at $4.2 million. The practice has also designed the latest residential address, 1 Five Fields, that's set to launch this year.

The LEED Platinum-certified Chelsea Barracks chimes with the sensibilities of the savvy, new-age investor. Nearby, the Garrison Chapel is home to the King's Foundation, and is used to publicly exhibit elements of the charity's work in a gallery space, with particular emphasis on traditional arts and heritage craft skills. Proximity to chic Sloane Street, Pimlico and Knightsbridge further amps up the neighbourhood's appeal.

"We have future-proofed the residences," asserts Oakes. "We've learned from our fast-evolving world and created a development to stand the test of time for our residents and the wider community." AD *chelseabarracks.com*

INSIDER GUIDE

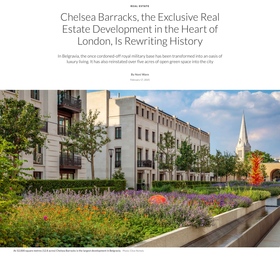
Designer Brigitta Spinocchia Freund shares her favourite hotspots within walking distance of Chelsea Barracks

- **La Poule au Pot** A Belgravia institution since the 1960s, this is a quintessential French bistro with timeless charm and a generous helping of nostalgia. It's as close as you can get to Paris without leaving London. 231 Ebury St, SW1
- **Saatchi Gallery** My favourite gallery in Chelsea, it excels at showcasing emerging artists, which aligns with what I like to do within my own projects. Duke of York's HQ, King's Rd, SW3
- **John Sandoe Books** I have a weakness for coffee-table books and the selection here never disappoints. The shop itself, with its creaking floors and old world charm, is as special as the books it sells. 10 Blacklands Terrace, SW3
- **88 Gallery** Every object here, whether it's a sculptural chair or a statement table, is a conversation starter. I admire its focus on contemporary designs that feel bold yet liveable – it's a place that always leaves me inspired. 88 Pimlico Rd, SW1
- **Vivienne Westwood – World's End** World's End is more than a store – it's where the spirit of London's punk movement lives on. Stepping inside feels like entering Vivienne Westwood's brilliant mind, where rebellion meets artistry in every piece. 430 King's Rd, SW10
- **Chelsea Physic Garden** A serene escape tucked away in the heart of Chelsea with winding paths, botanical wonders and calming scents. It's an ideal spot to recharge, whether with a good book or a quiet moment to yourself. 66 Royal Hospital Rd, SW3

Chelsea Barracks, the Exclusive Real Estate Development in the Heart of London, Is Rewriting History

In Belgravia, the once cordoned-off royal military base has been transformed into an oasis of luxury living. It has also reinstated over five acres of open green space into the city

By Nicole Milne
February 27, 2020



A view of the iconic Chelsea Barracks redevelopment in Belgravia's most exclusive neighborhood. Photo: Courtesy of Chelsea Barracks

Featuring top-notch turnkey residences, a sculpture trail, chic restaurants and even a championship size tennis court, Chelsea Barracks was designed as a mini city in the middle of London.

For over 150 years, a prime piece of London real estate was kept hidden from public view. From behind tall railings, the only sounds that passers-by could hear were commands being shouted by someone in military uniform. Established as a cavalry barracks in 1855, Chelsea Barracks—designed by architect George Morgan in 1855 and home to four companies of the British royal guards, who lived on the site until 2007, when the last troops departed.

Artwork in the iconic Chelsea Barracks' landscaped sculpture trail, which offers a range of contemporary sculptures. Photo: Courtesy of Chelsea Barracks

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Today, at 12,000 square meters (12.8 acres), it is the largest development in Belgravia, its transformation masterminded by Qatari Diar, a global leader in luxury real estate, which since 2005 has backed projects preserving community and sustainability. The company enlisted a small array of its own—award-winning architects, master planners, landscapers, interior designers and hospitality worthy artists—to embark on a decade-long effort to redevelop the historic military base in a world-class residential neighborhood.

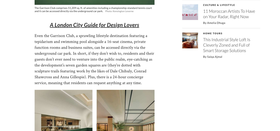
Chelsea Barracks has reinstated over five acres of open green space and is dotted with seven changing contemporary sculptures. Photo: Courtesy of Chelsea Barracks

"This is the first development of its type in over 100 years, and likely the last, given the scarcity of land in Central London," explains Qatari Diar, of the project that has reinstated over five acres of open green space—approximately 40 per cent of the site—in the heart of London. "We set out to design an entirely new neighborhood that connects seamlessly with Belgravia and is open to all. Celebrating the site's history in the master plan and design of the buildings was central to our vision."

Architecture firm Foster + Partners designed the Chelsea Barracks' landscaped sculpture trail, which includes a 2,000-square-meter pavilion. Photo: Courtesy of Chelsea Barracks

To achieve this, master planners Squire & Partners, architecture firm Dixon Jones and landscape architecture firm Wilkes worked hand-in-hand, developing a new concept for the site, which had survived two World Wars. They made the historic Garrison Chapel the focal point of a layout based on traditional London squares. Next, Foster + Partners, Dixon Jones and British artisans and makers are hired to revisit Georgian design features for a contemporary age, on a scale that influences the wider community.

"Expressing a new architectural language that was as graceful and resonant of the location as the distinguished architectural ancestors that surrouned it was vital to the success of the development, just as much as its modern-day appeal," explains Oakes. From a thoughtful 21st-century interpretation of the traditional Georgian residence, comes one of the most iconic design features of the development and its contemporary interpretation of the Georgian terrace. The contemporary aesthetic is matched by top-of-the line amenities that ultra-high-net-worth buyers expect, such as valet parking, state-of-the-art security systems, guards and, above all, privacy.



Pavilion Street Gate, designed by PDP London, is an exemplary example of a contemporary reinterpretation of traditional Georgian design. Photo: Courtesy of Chelsea Barracks

A London City Guide for Design Lovers

Even the Garrison Chab, a sprawling lifestyle destination featuring a supermarket and restaurant, and the Chapel, which houses private function rooms and business suites, can be accessed directly via the underground car park. In short, if they wish to, residents and their guests don't even need to venture into the public realm, eye-catching as it is. Nevertheless, they can choose to explore the sculpture trail, which includes sculptures each featuring work by the likes of Gormley, Cascol Shoreston and Anna Gillespie). Plus, there is a 24-hour concierge service, meaning that residents can request anything at any time.

The exterior of one of the Chelsea's 5 blocks of apartments designed by Foster + Partners. Photo: Courtesy of Chelsea Barracks

A MINI BRIDGE was designed for residents, allowing them to provide resident's control over aspects of the Chelsea Barracks development. Photo: Courtesy of Chelsea Barracks

Privacy and safety aside, today's investors are paying for one. "There is an increased demand for one of a kind luxury properties across the Chelsea Barracks development," Oakes says. Qatari Diar has collaborated with A-list interior designers to design fully decorated residences catering to curated lifestyles. "For example, No. 1 Wheeler Square, which has been dressed by Brigitte Spinocchia Freund, is Lifted in the Gilbreth's Design. Its interior focuses on the timeless architectural details of a townhouse as it's backdrop, enriched by rare and collectable art and furniture which was sourced for every space."

The exterior's front of the Gilbreth's Design at Chelsea Barracks, designed by Brigitte Spinocchia Freund. Photo: Courtesy of Chelsea Barracks

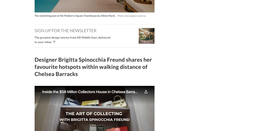
Spaces from Freund's project are rich with a blend of contemporary and classic pieces. Photo: Courtesy of Chelsea Barracks

Overall, the development has been split into six phases the first phase, completed in 2019, included the delivery of 44 apartments and three penthouses, as well as a spa and The Campanee restaurant. Phase two saw the delivery of more residences, and phase three includes the launch of the Garrison Suite, the Mews House, Garrison Square and the Chapel, as well as retail spaces.

The Mews House at the Chelsea Barracks. Photo: Courtesy of Chelsea Barracks

Phase four will include 97 new residences across three buildings designed by Eric Parry Architects, with prices starting at £4.2 million. The practice has also designed the latest residential addition, 1 Five Fields, that's set to launch this year.

The LEED Platinum-certified Chelsea Barracks closes with the sensibilities of the savvy, new age investor. Nearby, the Garrison Chapel is home to the King's Foundation, and is used to publicly exhibit elements of the charity's work in a gallery space, with particular emphasis on traditional arts and heritage craft skills. Proximity to chic Sloane Street, Pimlico and Knightsbridge further amps up the neighborhood's appeal.



Chelsea Barracks, Pavilion Gate, at a mid-Georgian Style 2bd. Designed by Eric Parry Architects. Photo: Courtesy of Chelsea Barracks

Designed, and owned, by Eric Parry Architects, Chelsea Barracks. Photo: Courtesy of Chelsea Barracks

The outside terrace of one of the 5 Chelsea Barracks apartments, designed by Eric Parry Architects. Photo: Courtesy of Chelsea Barracks

"We have Eastern provided the residences," answer Oakes. "We've learned from our last evolving world and created a development to meet the test of time for our residents and the wider community."

The Swimming pool at the Chelsea's Square Townhouses by Adam Nickel. Photo: Courtesy of Chelsea Barracks

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Designer Brigitta Spinocchia Freund shares her favourite hotspots within walking distance of Chelsea Barracks

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A Belgravia institution since the 1960s, this is a quintessential French bistro with timeless charm and a generous helping of nostalgia. It's as close as you can get to Paris without leaving London. *20 Ebury St, SW1*

Sandra Gallery
My favourite gallery in Chelsea. It excels at showcasing emerging artists, which aligns with what I like to do within my own projects. *Duke of York's SQ, King's Rd, SW3*

John Sandoe Books
I have a weakness for coffee-table books and the selection here never disappoints. The shop itself, with its creaking floors and old world charm, is as special as the books it sells. *49 Blacklands Terrace, SW3*

10 Gallery
Every object here, whether it's a sculptural chair or a statement table, is a conversation starter. I admire its focus on contemporary designs that feel bold yet lovable – it's a place that always leaves me inspired. *10 Pimlico Rd, SW1*

Vietnam Westwood – World's End
World's End is more than a store – it's where the spirit of London's punk movement lives on. Stepping inside feels like entering Vivienne Westwood's brilliant mind, where rebellion meets artistry in every piece. *430 King's Rd, SW10*

Chelsea Flower Garden
A serene escape tucked away in the heart of Chelsea with winding paths, botanical wonders and calming scents. It's an ideal spot to recharge, whether with a good book or a quiet moment to yourself. *Royal Hospital Rd, SW3*

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