

PROPERTY | JUNE 6, 2025 | UPDATED 09 JUN 2025 10:47AM

First look: Holland Park Gate, the new super-prime development in Princess Diana's 'favourite cinema'

Kensington's historic Art Deco cinema is now home to luxury apartments priced at up to £32 million

BY LIVIA GIANNOTTI



Residence 76 is housed on the top corner of the left arch of the former cinema / Image: Lodha UK



Livia Giannotti

Livia Giannotti is a staff writer and researcher. Her work has been featured in The Guardian, Huck Magazine and Outside Magazine.

Spear's is the first publication to report from inside the brand new Holland Park Gate, a collection of 71 super-prime apartments housed inside a former 1920s cinema on Kensington High Street.

Developed by Lodha, the firm behind Mayfair's iconic No.1 Grosvenor Square, the

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project aims to combine ‘timeless elegance’ and ‘modern luxury’ at the historic site.

The renovation preserves elements of the original building, which is said to have been Princess Diana’s favourite cinema.



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The historical – and stylistic – relevance of the site becomes obvious just by standing outside what was known (until 2015) as the Kensington Kinema, an Art Deco cinema just opposite the main southern entrance to Holland Park. The original proscenium arch in the facade was reconfigured and replicated, and the exteriors have been adorned with curved motifs that echo the folds of a theatre curtain.



Holland Park Gate is housed in the former site of Kensington Kinema and retains some of the original features / Image: Lodha UK

Spear's was invited to view three-bedroom apartments in the development’s main block, which comprises three distinct buildings. Each residence offers the perks of lateral living, from spacious dining areas to light-filled living spaces and wide corridors that often incorporate thoughtfully designed work-from-home spaces.

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Whether it is the European oak flooring, the decorative moulding or the Italian marble stone kitchen worktops, the interiors are as opulent as they are homely.

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Some of the completed apartments have been dressed, with interior design by Lodha's in-house creative director, Blandine de Navacelle.

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The largest apartment in the building features triple-height ceilings and expansive windows that overlook Holland Park. The open-plan living area is embellished with a Japanese folding screen artwork and a luxurious rug by French maker Manufacture Cogolin, while other units are decorated with unique chandeliers and patterned wallpapers, which bring a townhouse feel to the residences.

Each room has its own atmosphere – and even a bespoke scent – which only adds to the homestyle, intimate feel, while all apartments share nods to the Art Deco legacy of the building, with golden ornamentations in the bathrooms and recurring bold motifs.



Creating a sense of home was central to the vision of de Navacelle, Lodha's creative director and a former LVMH executive, when designing the interiors of Holland Park Gate.

While the palette leans towards classic beige and gold, de Navacelle told *Spear's* she 'wanted to add even more warmth to the apartments'. She sourced each of the artworks displayed in the residences from 'all over the world', she explains, from Moroccan antiques to Greek ceramics. 'People fall in love with those apartments because they feel like a home,' she adds.

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But Holland Park Gate is more than just a private residence. Amenities, designed by architect Piero Lissoni, include a health club and spa with a 25-metre pool, gym, private treatment rooms, meeting spaces and a library. With many multi-room flats, the concierge service can especially cater to families, offering a house car available for school runs, a dedicated weekly school uniform laundry service and a kids club area – designed by de Navacelle with insider suggestions from her own kids.

Beyond the 54-acres of nearby Holland Park, the complex boasts a peaceful courtyard with a landscaped garden designed by nine-time Chelsea Flower Show gold medallist and *Spear's* Top Recommended adviser Andy Sturgeon.



Creative director Blandine de Navacelle wanted to add warmth to the apartment / Image: Lodha UK

The first residents moved into Holland Park Gate just a few months ago and, according to Lodha, 90 per cent of the apartments in the main block have already been sold – most of them to families. Prices can vary widely depending on the units, but unfurnished three-bedrooms will typically range from £7.45m to £12.95m (a 2,959 sq ft three-bedroom apartment is priced at £11.25m), with the penthouse priced at just over £32m.

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The development will see more exciting additions in the coming months, with the upcoming opening of a restaurant in the main entrance and a boutique cinema – a nod to the building's past – that will bring one of Kensington's historic silver screens back to life.

'Residents in the neighbourhood are really excited about these reopenings, the development will create a real sense of community,' de Navacelle said.