

The year in property

Chris Cooper, Associate Director at Benham & Reeves, reflects on a transformative 2024 for property



The fact that the mortgage approvals are back to pre-pandemic levels is definitely welcome news,

especially since this growth has been achieved in the face of higher interest rates. Along with this new-found market resilience, a

recovering economy is galvanising buyers who are already seeing affordability constraints beginning to ease. A combination of lower interest rates and increased earnings should increase optimism even further.

NW3 postcode sees home ownership growth

The end of this year sees owner-occupation levels in the NW3 postcode reaching new heights and

a modest six per cent increase in the purchases of rental investment properties, although the downside to this is that supply of housing stock continues to be scarce. So, limited supply remains our biggest challenge, and with strict regulations and limited space for new development, this is keeping local property values high.

Downsizers and cash buyers lead the pack

Off-market property transactions have reached record levels this year, primarily because of returning clients and recommendations. These are buyers and sellers familiar with our position as an independently owned business formed in Hampstead in 1958, with a director-led service at the heart of everything we do.

This year has been particularly gratifying as we've had the pleasure of assisting a new generation of buyers, based on the recommendation from one family member to another. This cross-generational flow of business is something that we actively cultivate and are proud of.

Other transactions continue to gather pace

We are proud to have overseen a number of notable sales over the past few months. We recently handled the off-market sale of a three-bedroom garden maisonette in Pilgrims Lane, a prime Hampstead Village location. We've sold this stunning home three times in the past 25 years; our most recent sale was to a young family for close to the £2.5 million guide price. Also memorable was the sale of a lovely two-bed raised ground floor flat with a terrace in Haverstock Hill, which had been owned by two actors for over fifty years. They were delighted that the buyer introduced by us was also a creative, looking to secure his first home in the area. In August, we sold five flats in Belsize Park for owner-occupation, all of which were best and final offers and sold within one to four weeks. In Primrose Hill, a one bed flat in a 1930s block was sold to a cash buyer for £400,000, with the contracts exchanging within four weeks. Another strong sale was a five-bed modern townhouse overlooking Primrose Hill in Meadowbank, a great location. Multiple offers were received and it went to final bids with a sold price of £2,325,000.



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Local rental market still very strong

With a large, transient population of students and professionals making London their home, there's consistent demand for rental properties across the Capital. Average rents in London recently hit a new high, averaging £2,694 per month, a 2.4 per cent increase on Q3. The Hampstead rental market remains lively, mainly due to under-supply, while the sales market is showing some very promising signs, ending this year on a positive note. ■ benhams.com