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PECKHAM'S NEW ORDER

This regenerated south London 'hood is one of the capital's coolest, but the middle-class influx is dividing opinion, says *Hugh Graham*

First there was *Towie* and its Essex bling, then came the posh kids of *Made in Chelsea*, who are back on the small screen this autumn, but the latest reality show puts the spotlight on a much hipper 'hood: Peckham.

Forty years ago most people knew the south London neighbourhood as the down-at-heel home to rogue trader Del Boy in the sitcom *Only Fools and Horses*. Twenty years ago it made headlines for all the wrong reasons after the tragic murder of ten-year-old Damilola Taylor.

Today Peckham has more positive associations: SE15 is just about the coolest postcode in the capital, renowned for its nightlife, creative culture and melting-pot vibe. Hence the launch this Wednesday of the new ITV2 reality show *Peckham's Finest*, which features a suitably cool and eclectic cast: a DJ, a BMX coach, a boutique owner, an influencer, a drag performer, a barista, a street-food chef, a choreographer and a salon owner. But as Peckham's buzz grows into a roar, it has become a flashpoint in the gentrification debate: the middle classes have driven the prices of terraced homes above £1 million.

"When I was a teenager, me and my friends used to go to Peckham to get our lashes and eyebrows done, it was super-cheap," says Otesha Charles, 28, the owner of a local hair salon, the Boss Look, and one of the cast of *Peckham's Finest*. "It has changed so much. Right now the nightlife is incredible. It didn't used to be a thing to go out in Peckham at all. Now, in the evening, when I'm leaving work, people are flooding into Peckham to go out. It's mad; I love it. And in the day there are art galleries, people going for morning runs, walking the dog. You never saw that kind of thing before."

Charles has mixed feelings about gentrification. "There is more nightlife; it's a more desirable place to be. But a lot of the people who made Peckham what it was can't afford to be here any more, and that's sad."

Peckham is at a critical point in its evolution. "The best thing about Peckham is all the cultures that are here," Charles says. "You've got African, Chinese, Afghan, Indian. You can buy anything you need. I do love the fact that some of the original people are still here: the African women selling material, the butcher, the African food store. I hope they can stay."

But the classic Peckham shops are now interspersed with co-working spaces, boutique gyms and buzzy food destinations such as Kudu, a South African restaurant and cocktail bar, as well as rooftop bars galore.

"This summer I saw loads of yummy mummies going up to Forza Wine, a rooftop bar, with their buggies, to look at



The colourful exterior of Copeland Park, which houses cultural spaces. Right: the cast of *Peckham's Finest*. Main: patrons of Bussey Rooftop Bar

the world with a glass of wine," says Becky Munday, the owner of Munday's estate agency, who had a busy June as buyers rushed to beat the deadline for the stamp duty holiday: she completed 30 sales that month – one a day. Things are less frenzied now. The average property price in Peckham is £467,060, a 93 per cent rise in ten years, versus a 71 per cent rise in London as a whole, where the average price is £497,750, according to research by Hamptons International estate agency.

Munday estimates that half her clients are the Bank of Mum and Dad buying houses for their twentysomething and thirtysomething offspring. "And I see lots of young families selling their three-bedroom house for £1 million to upgrade to a four-bedroom house for £1.5 million to £1.7 million. They are going all out and buying as big as they can. Some of them move on to East Dulwich or West Dulwich to be near the Charter School."

Most buyers want to be near Belham Primary School, on smart and village Bellenden Road, which is home to the Review Bookshop, a zero-waste food shop called Gather, and Artusi, an acclaimed Italian restaurant. The most desirable streets are around here, near Peckham Rye station: Holly Grove, Highshore Road, Lyndhurst Way, in a conservation area where four-bedroom terraces have sold for £1.8 million. "The more affordable



£399,950

NAYLOR ROAD

This 575 sq ft one-bedroom flat has a hallway with built-in storage and two (small) balconies. It's a seven-minute walk to Queens Road Peckham rail station, for eight-minute trains to London Bridge. It is 15 minutes to Rye Lane, for Forza Wine and Copeland Park. mundays.com

£450,000

PECKHAM HILL

A recently renovated two-bedroom flat with 661 sq ft of living space, just across the road from Peckham's Stirling prizewinning library. You're an eight-minute walk from Peckham Rye railway station, for trains to London Bridge, London Victoria and Blackfriars. mundays.com

£865,000

KINSALE ROAD

This bay-fronted end of terrace has a west-facing garden in an eight-minute walk from Peckham Rye Station, and has 113-acre Peckham Rye Park and Common at the end of the road. You get two bedrooms and period features including sash windows. mundays.com



streets in SE15 are closer to Queens Road Peckham station," Munday says. "Asylum Road, Kings Grove and Montpelier Road are popular for young buyers – a one-bedder can be priced from £400,000 to £465,000. The closer to Old Kent Road, the lower the prices are."

Anti-gentrification is a growing movement in Peckham. Two of the creative hubs, the Bussey Building and the Peckham Levels (a former multistorey car park), were saved from demolition by Peckham Vision, a citizens' activist group that campaigns for "real regeneration" led by communities, and re-use of existing buildings rather than developer-imposed schemes. They can take much of the credit for the vibrant centre. And it recently fought BlackRock, a hedge fund that was planning to turn the Aylesham Shopping Centre into a series of tower blocks. BlackRock has now sold the site to Berkeley Homes. "There should be no planning permission without first doing

“It's a more desirable place. But a lot of the people who made Peckham what it was can't afford to be here any more. That's sad



General store grocery shop on Bellenden Road

an analysis of local neighbourhood needs and showing that the proposed development is meeting those needs," says the group's founder, Eileen Conn, who has lived in Peckham for 40 years.

"At the moment hundreds of thousands of unaffordable homes are being built across London. Planning permission for unaffordable housing should be no more than 20 per cent of the total until housing lists are cleared. I saw figures of salary levels in Southwark, and the housing being built was affordable to only 5 to 8 per cent of the population, which is absurd. The housing market is broken. I hope Michael Gove [the new housing minister] can usher in real change."

If any place can lead the way, it's Peckham.

HIP REPLACEMENT: OTHER PLACES BEING GENTRIFIED

TOTTENHAM

Tottenham is another London neighbourhood with a notorious past. In 2011 protests over the police shooting of Mark Duggan sparked riots. It is still one of the most deprived boroughs in the capital, but its warehouses have attracted a creative community and a microbrewery scene. True Craft sells craft beer and sourdough pizza. Argent Related is investing £500 million in the area and plans to build more than 1,000 homes. A Crossrail 2 station is also proposed.

On the up Old Kent Road, or at least the bit closer to Bermondsey. Vadim Toader, the chief executive of Proportunity, says: "You are buying Zone 3-4 prices on the border of Zone 1."

STIRCHLEY

Moseley long had a reputation as Birmingham's most boho 'hood, but those priced out of the area are trying nearby Stirchley. Pershore Road is a scruffy but great high street with a mix of businesses, from the practical (a vacuum repair place; plumbers' merchants) to the consumable (Loaf, an artisan bakery; Couch, an indie cocktail bar). A monthly community market is a local institution. You can still buy three-bedroom terraces here for less than £300,000.

On the up Kings Heath has a bustling high street. A train station will open in 2024.

TOXTETH

Named by Rightmove as the UK location with the biggest asking price during the past year, up 20 per cent on average to £151,958, Toxteth (top) is shuffling off its rough reputation and emerging as Liverpool's latest happening quarter. Between the Baltic Triangle's converted warehouses, the gorgeous Georgian Quarter and Sefton Park, where Lark Lane chimes to the sound of clinking chai cups, Scousers say Toxteth is a fulcrum of the L8 postcode. Conversions tend to sell for about 10 per cent above asking price, and upwards of £600,000 for a complete house.

On the up New Brighton. Across the River Mersey, independent shops, cute cafés and a dog-friendly

beach are breathing fresh air into the Victorian resort.

STRETFORD

Stretford Foodhall is known as Manchester's "coolest corner shop". Developments are springing up around Talbot Road and the Bridgewater Canal. There are cool bars and restaurants on Barton Road and Stretford Mall is being revamped. It's affordable – average sold property prices are £267,805, according to Rightmove – and attractive for first-time buyers and young families, who also like the six Ofsted-outstanding primary schools.

On the up The former textile town of Stockport. The old sorting office is now a 117-apartment scheme called the Mailbox. Indie shops include Still Life Story, a homeware store dedicated to slow living.



DUBLIN 8

Creatives have been moving into the warehouses in Dublin 8, just west of the city centre, for a decade. Old-man pubs have turned into pizza and cocktail joints, but parts of it still feel like old Dublin. Hotspots include Hen's Teeth, an exhibition space, shop and café; and Fumbally, a community café with stables next door that host pop-up markets and readings.

On the up Harold's Cross was best known for its greyhound track, but its festival and cafés are now stealing the show.

LEITH

Leith has been on hipsters' lips for years, but the continuing transformation of industrial spaces into cultural hubs is cementing its credentials. Once a port town with a flavour distinct from the Scottish capital, it joined Edinburgh in 1920. This month *Time Out* named Leith (below) the fourth coolest neighbourhood in the world; you'll find lots of creative start-ups, including a gin distiller. As hipsters moved in, house prices exploded. Although one-bedroom flats are offered from about £150,000, properties can sell for 20 per cent over home report value.

On the up Portobello. A beach with a wild-swimming club and a prom selling pizza by the slice.



Additional reporting by Jayne Dowle