

Battersea Power Station finally opens its famed turbine halls for new London generation

► Residents, workers and shoppers are moving into London's most celebrated redevelopment



Battersea Power Station in London. Photo: FTI Consulting



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London

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As the centrepiece of Europe's largest urban regeneration, [Battersea Power Station](#) has come a long way from a symbol of post-industrial blight to a luxurious enclave promising spectacular lifestyle choices on the banks of the Thames.

Look east from the balconies of the penthouse apartments set snugly between the four towering white chimneys of the former electricity plant and a river snakes past the Houses of Parliament, the London Eye plus many skyscrapers, including the arrow-like Shard.

Work on the all-brick power station has been completed this summer and an army of outfitters has moved into the two central halls, where dozens of shops and retail outlets are set to open before the end of the year.

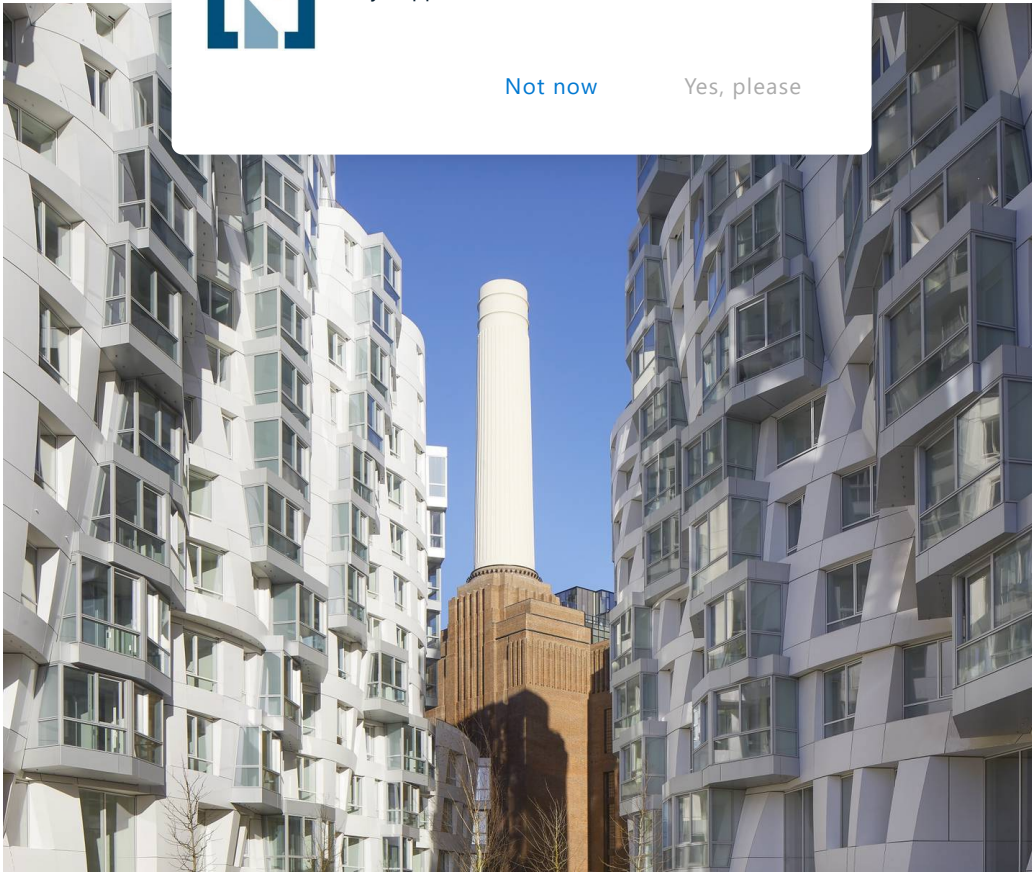
Plonked on top is the 18-metre high tower for an unrivalled outdoor entertaining space.



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Work on the all-brick power station has been completed this summer. Photo: FTI Consulting

The heritage of the building has been preserved in the works. A glance upwards reveals the former station operating room, while a look sideways shows the preserved tiling of an Art Deco-era original fit-out.

When *The National* visited the 17-hectare former industrial brownfield site, the first main street retailer — one of the more than 100 shops — had just erected its shopfront sign above the door.

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To crane your neck backwards at the lifts to the Sky Villas is to look up to the sky through a distinctive white chimney.

The Grade II listed monumental features were rebuilt section by section (using wheelbarrows) from scratch. When a viewing platform opens, one of the chimney lifts will carry visitors more than 50 metres above sea level.

Two other chimneys fulfil their historic function carrying off steam from the power generation units beneath the building.

The development was only removed from Historic England's Heritage at-risk register before its full opening to the public after the owners, a consortium of Malaysian investors, agreed to put the funding for restoration in a special bank account overseen by the local planners.



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On top of the power station is the 18-duplex, £7.1 million "Sky Villas", where the rooftops offer an unrivalled outdoor entertaining space. Photo: FTI Consulting

The latest phase to open to residents boasts the unique for London experience of living in a space designed by the Los Angeles based Frank Gehry, the architect behind the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi museum set to open in 2025.

Prospect Place is a cluster of towers that is bounded by the shops and offices of Electric Boulevard, which leads to the area's own underground station. It recently marked two million passengers since opening.

As with all Gehry properties, no two rooms are the same and the building quality is particular to each apartment.

The corridors to the apartments are laid with distinctive dappled red carpet that is the signature of other properties from the LA studio.

Private roof gardens give the residents a vantage point on a power chimney that will surely feature in many Instagram posts.

London's iconic Battersea Power Station converted into luxury residences





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The Gehry towers stand next to a Foster and Partners roof gardens building, which sits on the other side of the boulevard.

There are suggestions that the two great architects played off each other in designing cheek by jowl properties for the first time.

There are more than 2,000 residents scattered across the development, while in recent weeks the number of building workers has dropped from 4,000 to just 800 outfits.

Battersea Power Station Control Room A - 2007 and 2022



Source: FTI Consulting

 A Flourish map

How Battersea kept London lit during the Blitz

One of the most heavily defended sites in London during the Second World War, Battersea Power Station kept the lights of the city on during the Blitz.

Barges carried the coal that fired its turbines to be offloaded on what is now a boardwalk on the river.

The Art Deco features of the switch room have survived and is now a hospitality space for hire. Apple is anchor tenant at the front of the building and is now fitting out its dedicated office space.

First approved by planners at the local council in 2010, the £9bn project broke ground in 2013 when work commenced on the first phase of the eight-phase project to build a new mixed-use neighbourhood and business quarter south of the river on derelict land.

It was an enterprise with an adventure playground and

The property somehow kept its association with Pink Floyd

The psychedelic rock bar was built between its chimneys in November 1976.



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Yes, please

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because of the artwork

ed a giant pink pig



A 12-metre long inflatable pig suspended between two of the chimneys at Battersea Power Station, during a photoshoot for the cover of Pink Floyd's album 'Animals', in November 1976. Getty

The completed project will have 25,000 people living and working on the site, making it one of London's largest office, retail, leisure and cultural quarters with 250 shops and cafes, restaurants, a theatre, hotel and cinemas, as well as 7.68 hectares of public space, including a park.

For the developers, this feeling of a new neighbourhood is the one that is now drawing most attention.

"The apartments are one thing but the mixed use elements of this 15-minute neighbourhood is what really appeals," said Matthew Sansom, head of residential.

"Having the Tube, having the retail, having the food and beverage as the power station comes into its own.

"It's a completely new area but we've got the building that anchors the site, Battersea Park on our doorstep, which has always been popular with residents of Chelsea, and Apple being based here, and a further 200,000 square feet of office space coming onstream."

Battersea Power Station



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Source: Getty Images

 A Flourish map

Any visitor to the area remains compelled by the old power station building, which was derelict and open to the elements when the current owners took over the project in 2013.

Historic England and Wandsworth Borough Council oversaw the creation of a special "Battersea Blend" brick to replace some of the original six million used in the main building.

Now rebuilt using 1.75 million new bricks, the turbine halls that once powered south and west London have been revived in minimalist style.

Inside there are natural light wells and a feature called the bandstand, which hangs from the ceiling and was formerly a moving crane that carried coal across the cavernous interior.

"It's a space where we can put musicians, we can put a car in there, we can advertise anything and it goes up and down the space," says one of the marketing team. "It's a very cool addition."

The frequency of trains at the Battersea Power Station Tube station on the Northern Line has been raised to 12 an hour during the day and Tottenham Court Road, where the new Elizabeth Line connects, is just 23 minutes away.

"It's a massive unlocking of the neighbourhood," said Mr Sansom. "Autumn will be a very big moment."

Battersea Power Station through the years - in pictures



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Construction workers take a lunch break with the 300ft high chimney of Battersea Power station, which was nearing completion, in the background in July 1932. All photos: Getty Images

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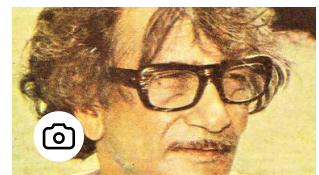
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