
White City

LONDON

Think of London's creative scene and you're likely to picture Shoreditch and Hackney in the east – hip areas bursting with art studios, tech startups and co-working spaces. But some of this creative capital is slowly inching towards the other side of the city. Swanky, strait-laced West London is experiencing an influx of new developments, from trendy hotels to innovation hubs, and many of these spaces are clustered in White City.

Here, we speak to the movers and shakers reinventing the neighbourhood.



The new
Television Centre
– historic home of
the BBC until
2012 – after a £1.5
billion makeover





ALISTAIR SHAW

Managing Director of Television Centre, Stanhope Plc

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As the former headquarters of the BBC, the Television Centre has been an architectural icon, something that the managing director of its £1.5 billion makeover is intent on preserving. “It’s about keeping that sense of place,” Alistair Shaw says of the new project to create a residential and commercial hub here.

For Shaw, who has overseen the redevelopment of a number of major London landmarks, the trick was to integrate the building’s original Grade-II listed features, such as a cantilevered staircase and atomic dot wall, with smart, modern architecture – and some exciting new additions: “What really binds it together is the mix of great restaurants and retailers we’ve brought in,” he says. These include hotel White City House; Bluebird Café’s first outpost; and fine foods grocer Bayley & Sage.

Shaw hopes these venues will help the area forge a new identity and foster a creative community. “Whether it’s media companies or scientific firms looking to work with Imperial College, White City will appeal to those with innovation at the centre of their businesses,” Shaw reflects. “We’re creating spaces for people to meet, collaborate and spark ideas. I think we’re on the cusp of something quite exciting.” televisioncentre.com



In the house

The latest offering from Soho House celebrates White City’s heritage

Launched in April, White City House is a hotel and members’ club with 45 bedrooms that are as chic as they come, with “terrazzo floors, Mid-Century furniture and fluted timber wall panelling inspired by the original BBC reception area,” shares Soho House founder Nick Jones. Amenities include a rooftop pool, a two-screen Electric Cinema and cocktail bar The Allis; the latter two are also open to the public. “We want to celebrate the history of the building, while also creating a space for the creative community in White City to eat, drink, exercise and relax,” Jones says. whitecityhouse.com





DES GUNewardENA

Co-founder
and CEO of
D&D London

“At the moment, there isn’t a lot going on in White City in terms of restaurants. It’s very underserved,” declares Des Gunewardena, the head honcho of London-based hospitality group D&D. Clearly, the time is ripe for his latest project, Bluebird Café White City, the first outpost of the iconic Chelsea stalwart.

The 465m² space takes several cues from its sister establishment, with lavish interiors inspired by the Swinging Sixties in Britain. But the café prides itself on its neighbourhood focus. “We hope to be a place where people in the area can drop by at any time of day,” explains the CEO. “Bluebird has always been a restaurant for the local community.”

Bluebird may not be the only new restaurant that has sprouted in White City, but Gunewardena isn’t fazed by the prospect of competition. “We very much like the idea of being alongside other places like Homeslice and Cricket, which are all quality [spots] in their own right,” he says. “This will make the [area] more of a culinary destination.” bluebirdcafe.co.uk

Dining scene

Three other establishments spicing up White City’s nascent culinary scene

Wellbourn

Dabbous alumni Ross Gibbens and Michael Kennedy have brought their Wellbourn concept to White City Place. On the menu are brasserie-style dishes such as charcoal-grilled meats, as well as signature vol-au-vents. wellbournbrasserie.com



Homeslice

This pizza chain is owned by the sons of late BBC broadcaster Terry Wogan. It’s fitting, then, that it has opened its fifth outlet in the Television Centre. Sink your teeth into hearty New York-style pizzas, served whole or by the slice. homeslicepizza.co.uk





EULIAN ROBERTS

Chief Executive of Imperial College ThinkSpace

Imperial College’s gleaming new White City campus is a game-changer for the area’s innovation scene. And as the chief executive of Imperial College ThinkSpace, Dr Eulian Roberts leads co-location initiatives that enable corporations to work alongside the university’s best and brightest. While Dr Roberts describes the campus as a “multi-decade project”, several facilities are already open to the public. The Translation & Innovation Hub has open-plan office and laboratory spaces, while the Molecular Sciences Research Hub will soon house over 800 scientists. Together with White City Place – a new commercial development – and Hammersmith Hospital, the campus has created a hotbed of “research, academic and corporate activity that will help make West London one of the best places to start and grow businesses,” says Roberts.

“36,000 people will soon be working, living and playing in White City. There will be a new vibrancy that the [area] has never before seen – and it’s starting right now.” imperial.ac.uk/white-city-campus



Endo at Rotunda

Slated to open in July, this 15-seater Japanese spot by famed sushi chef Endo Kazutoshi (of El Bulli fame) will be located in the Television Centre. Menu details are still under wraps but expect exquisite sushi with prices to match. televisioncentre.com

Go west

Venues that are injecting creativity into other areas of West London

Second Home Holland Park

Opened in November 2017, this light-filled creative hub is aimed at entrepreneurs and social enterprises. With beautiful co-working spaces, a poetry bookshop and a courtyard café, it’s certainly an inspiring place for business. secondhome.io



Design Museum

This temple of contemporary design relocated to Kensington High Street in November 2016. Opening this month is a much-anticipated Azzedine Alaïa retrospective (10 May to 7 Oct), which pays homage to the famed couturier. designmuseum.org

V&A Photography Centre

Set to open this autumn, this dedicated centre will feature an impressive range of photographs, books, cameras and more, including artefacts from the Royal Photographic Society’s collection. vam.ac.uk