



Graham Norton, Ashley Cole, John Barrowman and Dizze Rascal (pictured) have all lived in Bow



Tower Hamlets council tax bands

Band	Property value (1991)	Tax
Band A	under £40,000	£796.90
Band B	£40,001-£52,000	£929.71
Band C	£52,001-£68,000	£1,062.53
Band D	£68,001-£88,000	£1,195.34
Band E	£88,001-£120,000	£1,460.97
Band F	£120,001-£160,000	£1,726.60
Band G	£160,001-£320,000	£1,992.24
Band H	over £320,000	£2,390.68

Source: www.towerhamlets.gov.uk

The future's orange: The Bow Bells is a popular pub; and (below) traditional pie and mash



Smart investors take a peep at Bow

HAD EastEnders been set in a real-life location rather than fictional Walford, chances are the characters would have lived in Bow. This part of London is the heart of the traditional East End, complete with pie and mash shops, Pearly Kings and Queens and rhyming slang.

It's possible to meet pensioners who've rarely been outside the E3 postcode but these days you're just as likely to hear Bengali as you are Cockney, as Bow is a vibrant, multicultural neighbourhood.

It borders fashionable Victoria Park and Bethnal Green, and is close to trendy Shoreditch, the City and Canary Wharf. However, until recently it was off many people's radar as a place to live.

A glut of ugly tower blocks and sprawling estates did little to enhance its reputation and neither did its gangland associations, for this was the Kray twins' patch during the 1950s and 1960s.

BOW: THIS WEEK METRO MOVES EAST TO AN AREA THAT'S ENJOYING A NEW LEASE OF LIFE
BY ANDREA DEAN

Happily, Bow is now a different place. The high-rises and estates have mostly been pulled down, the Krays and their henchmen are long gone and the streets feel safe.

The catalyst to the regeneration is the Olympics. Bow is only a hop, skip and jump from the Olympic Park in Stratford and a lot of money has been poured into improving this side of London.

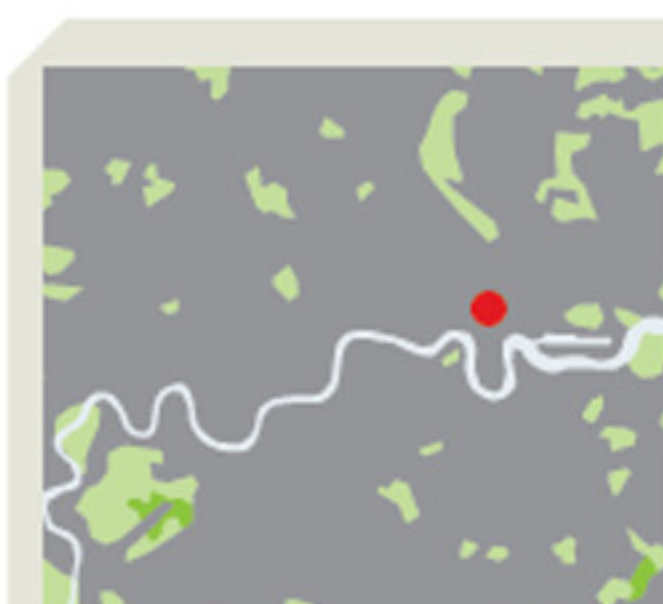
One of its main assets is convenience. Bow Road and Bromley-by-Bow stations are on the District and Metropolitan lines, with a quick change at Mile End for the Central line. Canary Wharf is 11 minutes from Bow Church station on the

Docklands Light Railway. All three stations are in Zone Two, with an annual Travelcard into Zone One costing £1,168.

Bow's shops are centred around Roman Road, home of a bustling market on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Serious shoppers head to the malls at Westfield Stratford City then return to unwind in one of Bow's friendly pubs.

However, the real excitement for buyers lies in the property prices, as Bow offers good value for money. There's masses of choice, too – from the Georgian townhouses in Tredgar Square to ex-local authority maisonettes, via Victorian terraces and new-build apartments.

'Bow attracts savvy buyers, with many overseas and first-time investors, as well as owner-occupiers who tend to be professionals,' says Sam Samad of estate agent Felicity J Lord. 'When I started here seven years ago, about 80 per cent of the available stock was ex-council. Now 60 per cent is privately-built.'



Did you know?

The Match Girls' Strike of 1888 started at the Bryant & May factory in Bow, resulting in Britain's first trade union for women

Ex-council homes – for which it can be tricky to get a mortgage – are popular with cash buyers as they offer higher rental returns.

'There's a premium on period properties,' says Samad. 'You'll pay from £150,000 for a one-bed ex-local authority flat, from £200,000 for a purpose built, and from £250,000 for a Victorian conversion. Two-bed ex-local authority flats are from £200,000, and privately-built ones cost between £250,000 and £500,000. Three bedroom ex-local authority houses are from £300,000, while period houses cost upwards of £450,000.'

REGENERATION has encouraged large-scale housebuilding. The Bow Quarter, the hugely popular redevelopment of the former Bryant & May match factory in Fairfield Road, is now complete, while schemes currently under way



Historic homes: The Bow Quarter is one of a number of popular redevelopment schemes in the area

include Bow Trinity E3 by Telford Homes, on Bow Common Lane, where apartments start at £210,000. Berkeley's Caspian Wharf, on the banks of the Limehouse Cut Canal, comprises 552 one, two and three-bed apartments and penthouses, and is due for completion in time for the Olympics. Two-bed apartments start from £365,000. St Andrews is a Barratt London scheme of 964 apartments in Bromley-by-Bow, with one-beds from £208,000.

Shared ownership apartments are available at Caspian Wharf and St Andrews through Circle Housing Group. And the Crossways estate – now called Bow Cross – is being transformed by Swan Housing Group in a mammoth £100million project. Two-bedroom apartments are available from £272,500.

Despite Bow's popularity with buy-to-let investors, supply can't keep up with demand.

'The rental market is buoyant and rents have been increasing over the

past year by more than ten per cent,' says Ruth Phillips of Purple Hat Property (www.purplehatproperty.co.uk), which manages properties across London.

'Typical tenants are young professional singles and couples wanting easy access to the City.'

'One-bedroom flats start from £210 per week, two-beds from £230, and three-bedroom houses from £350.'

Next week Metro moves west to Fulham