

Wish you lived here?

Milan

This design city's green developments are reviving the housing market, says Emanuele Midolo

The image of the Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli singing in front of the cathedral to an empty Piazza del Duomo in Milan will be one of the most poignant memories of lockdown. Today life in Italy's second most populated city is beginning to return to some sort of normal — flights from the UK can be found from £8.99 — and like elsewhere in the world the housing market is an early barometer of recovery. Also, as with many other European cities, it is the leafy outskirts that are seeing the first green shoots. Coronavirus is yet another chapter in the long history of the city that was once the capital of the western Roman Empire. About 1,600 years later it is home to the Borsa, the Italian stock exchange, and is the cradle of Italian fashion and design. Luca Dondi dall'Orologio, the chief executive of the research institute Nomisma in Bologna, says that, pre-Covid, Milan was living a season of "great momentum" and he says: "Milan will be able to relaunch sooner than other Italian cities because its fundamentals are better than elsewhere." This growth was also seen in property prices. According to Nomisma, Milan has the highest number of regeneration

projects (90) in Italy and commands the highest prices in the country. These can reach €16,000 (£14,460) a square metre for a new-build, while second-hand stock is on average €7,000-€8,000 a square metre. In some districts that means prices have doubled in the past decade. Vincenzo Marino, who works in advertising and is looking to buy in Navigli, the neighbourhood where he works, hopes for even a small readjustment. For him and many others it would make a big difference. "I'm trying to understand where the market will go after all this ends," he says. Prices in the hip neighbourhood — which takes its name from its navigable canals — are €4,500-€5,500 a square metre. These are still low compared with other areas, such as CityLife in the northwest of the city, famous for its skyscrapers and works by architects such as Zaha Hadid and the Japanese urban designer Arata Isozaki. Since the early 2010s it has been one of the most desirable spots, with prices rising accordingly. Nomisma's estimates range from €7,000 to €14,000 a square metre. The most expensive hotspot is the area around Porta Nuova, once known for its amusement parks and carousels. The growth here has been driven by one project. Bosco Verticale, designed by the Italian star architect Stefano Boeri, launched in 2014 and set record prices for Milan. This "vertical" park (*bosco* is Italian for forest) of two towers houses 1,800 trees and 30,000 perennial plants. Prices start at €1.8 million for a three-bedroom apartment, with rumours of a penthouse launch in the autumn. Another scheme in the area is Residenza Porta Nuova, which is being developed and managed by the Italian developer Coima. "Recent regeneration efforts have ensured [Porta Nuova] as a destination for living and leisure," says

Filippo Cartareggia, the president of Residenza Porta Nuova, who adds that the historic centre is only few minutes by tram, "or a 25-minute walk right to the doorstep of the duomo itself". Prices at Residenza Porta Nuova start at €800,000 for a one-bedroom studio, up to €3.7 million for a five-bedroom flat. At the other end of the spectrum — and further from the centre — is the regeneration scheme of Cascina Merlata, to the northwest. This development, which sits next to the Expo area and is called UpTown, is being built by the developer EuroMilano. It is more affordable than Bosco, but is equally green: the scheme is carbon-free and uses a geothermal system to heat the flats. It has a 30-hectare park, a school, nursery, co-working spaces and a gym. "The origin of the project comes from the idea of doing something innovative and at the same time very Italian," says Luigi Borrè, the president of EuroMilano, who explains that Milan has been "a sleeping beauty", from an architectural point of view, for almost 50 years. "That's why we have asked some young Italian architects to reinterpret classic Milanese architecture from the 1950s while adapting it to today's needs." The third phase of the scheme, 317 apartments, launched for sale in July. Prices are €4,500 a square metre, with the average three-bedroom flat 110 sq m. The only downside? The location, a 20-minute drive from the city centre. However, Attilio Di Cunto, the chief executive of EuroMilano, is convinced that new residential districts such as Porta Nuova and UpTown will change the typical "Milanese mentality" of living and working in the same neighbourhood. "A bit like what happened with Canary Wharf," he says. "We think Milan is the city with the greatest potential in the country."



Above: the canals of the hip Navigli district. Left: Andrea Bocelli on the steps of Milan's Duomo. Centre: the apartments in Porta Nuova place an emphasis on luxury. Right: the Bosco Verticale ("vertical forest") towers of the Porta Nuova district, designed by the star architect Stefano Boeri



Ask an expert

Can we claim for new noisy traffic?

Our road has recently been widened for traffic for a new development. The traffic makes our house shudder. How can we resolve this?

Under the Land Compensation Act 1973, anyone who owns and lives in a property can claim compensation for damage caused by road schemes and some other public works. For roads, the claim is made to the appropriate highway authority, namely the local council, Highways England or the Welsh government. Compensation is given for "noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke and artificial lighting" caused by the alteration. Compensation is not therefore payable if the road has always been busy or it has been resurfaced. Compensation is paid for damage to the property itself, not damage to the occupiers. You cannot therefore claim for loss of a view or privacy, personal inconvenience or nuisance caused by building works. However, the highway authority will usually have to cover homeowners' reasonable valuation fees and legal costs, and pay interest. To claim, you must have been the owner of the property before the road came into public use, as well as at the date of the claim. The first day you can claim is a year and a day after the new or altered highway came into public use, and a six-year limitation period applies. Compensation is usually assessed as a percentage of the overall value of the property. For example, in the 2016 Upper Tribunal case of *Goodman v Transport for London* claimants were awarded 4 per cent of the value of 12 houses affected by a new bypass in south London. **The writer is a barrister with Tanfield Chambers. Email questions to brief.encounter@thetimes.co.uk**

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What £500,000 buys you in...

Hampshire

Embassy Cottage is a grade II listed two-bedroom chocolate box with plenty of period charm. Dating from 1450, it has beamed walls and ceilings and is set on a side road in a village on the edge of the South Downs National Park. Walk in any direction and you'll enjoy beautiful countryside, and several pubs. There is a small kitchen, lounge, a dining room which opens on to the back garden and a second bedroom/study. Shawford train station is a ten-minute walk and Winchester is a ten-minute drive, from where the fast train to London Waterloo takes an hour. **Air pollution** 9.4mcg/m³ particulate pollution annual average, 0.6mcg/m³ below the WHO guideline of 10mcg/m³. **Upside** The south-facing sun terrace and summerhouse. **Downside** Some low ceilings. **Contact** knightfrank.co.uk



£495,000

London

This light and airy two-bedroom flat is on the first floor of a Victorian house on a quiet residential street, about five minutes from Streatham railway station, for the 24-minute train to London Bridge. For green space, you have both Streatham Common and Tooting Common (and its lido) within three quarters of a mile, while the Streatham High Road is close by for shops, restaurants, an ice rink and jazz club. The reception room has a lovely tiled fireplace and there's a cream Shaker-style kitchen, two bedrooms (one with an en suite shower room) and bathroom. **Air pollution** 14.3mcg/m³, 4.3mcg/m³ above the WHO guideline of 10mcg/m³. **Upside** Share of freehold. **Downside** There's off-street parking, but no garage. **Contact** marshandparsons.co.uk



£475,000

Gwynedd

Built in 1632, Plas Newydd is a grade II* listed moated manor house set in more than ten acres of woodland and walled gardens. Commissioned by the politician Thomas Glynne, High Sheriff of Caernarfonshire, the four-bedroom, four-storey house had been reduced to ruin by the end of the 19th century, when it was extensively remodelled. It has a 40ft-long panelled drawing room with a study recess and two fireplaces, and a gargyle stands watch over the stone entrance hall. A former priest hole has been converted into a cloakroom. Snowdonia National Park is on your doorstep. **Air pollution** 4.4mcg/m³, 5.6mcg/m³ below the WHO guideline of 10mcg/m³. **Upside** Kooky original features. **Downside** A coach house and cottage are excluded from the sale. **Contact** jackson-stops.co.uk



£500,000

Dordogne, France

Leafy tranquility is guaranteed at this five-bedroom converted watermill in Coux et Bigarogue, a medieval village on the Dordogne river in Périgord Noir. Soak in the views over the fish-filled mill pond from the open-plan kitchen/living room, which has a stone fireplace and opens on to a garden terrace and veranda. The handsome 18th-century house has three bathrooms, a utility room and cellar, plus a converted 750 sq ft tobacco barn. The honey-coloured town of Sarlat is 18 miles and the airport at Bergerac is a 50-minute drive, for direct Ryanair flights to London Stansted, East Midlands, Bristol and Liverpool. **Upside** The waterside views literally on your doorstep. **Downside** Avoiding the summer throngs in the nearby towns. **Contact** hamptons-international.com



£497,000