## Return to former glory

## Natasha Higgins talks to Edward Benyon, Landlord of the Benyon Estate, De Beauvoir Town



Edward Benyon, Landlord of the Benyon Estate

orth of Shoreditch, south of Stoke Newington and sandwiched between Hackney and Islington, lies a small enclave of activity: De Beauvoir Town. At its core, is the Benyon Estate with more than 300 properties set within a desirable conservation area.

The name 'De Beauvoir' immediately sparks interest yet the area doesn't feature on people's lips in the way its neighbouring villages; Dalston or Canonbury do. Why? "After the second world war the area remained run-down for quite some time, buildings were demolished to make room for Social Housing and it wasn't until the 1980s that it began to recover," explains Edward Benyon, Landlord of the Benyon Estate.

"That's all changed now," he states, "it's returning to its former glory." In the mid 1800s, it had been a thriving community

with stunning period homes lived in by wealthy merchants and their families. The Victorian properties remain and today the area attracts similar professionals and has a healthy village atmosphere and sense of community

The area is steeped in history and The Benyon Estate, remarkably, has been owned by the same family for more than 300 years. Richard De Beauvoir, first came to the area from Guernsey in 1640 and bought the Balmes Estate: a

farm and a

large house

which is now De

Beauvoir

Town. De

Beauvoir's

grandson,

philanthropist.

Reverend Peter De Beauvoir inherited the Estate but died in

1821 and it was left to his nearest

relative; his aunt's great grandson:

Richard Benyon, a landowner and

De Beauvoir Town was originally

who'd persuaded Peter de Beauvoir

lease. When Benyon inherited the

building lease on the basis that

Estate, however, he challenged this

sound mind when he granted it. It

but Benyon eventually won. The

Today the estate lies in the hands of

around De Beauvoir Town. He is a local

resident and without a doubt, its greatest

"I've been in property for most of my working life. Looking after the family estate

custodian ensuring it's in good condition for

Benyon's work involves looking after and

when it's handed to the next generation".

servicing all 250 buildings and 391 leases of the Estate. He works with a team of five

and it's a full time job: "There's always

maintenance work to be done as they're

all period properties. While some of the

protected tenants whose homes have been

lived in since the Sixties, Seventies and even

Edward Benyon who is often seen cycling

the

the late 1830s.

supporter.

the 1930s!'

Today the estate lies in the hands of Edward Benyon who is often seen cycling around De Beauvoir Town. He is a local resident and without a doubt, its greatest supporter

well maintained". Last year Benyon took on a renovation project in De Beauvoir Square. The five bedroom house needed to be gutted and entirely renovated but once the finished product was complete, Knight Frank let it for a record price in the area. This year, Benyon took on a second

"We take huge pride in each and every property ensuring they're comfortable and

similar project on Northchurch Road: "It's a stunning period property and we were keen to keep all its original detail such as the French windows, the cornicing, the original fireplaces and the

wooden floors – albeit with underfloor heating! The finished product is stunning. Our architect, Lisa Shell, was amazing and we've used her for every project we've worked on". It's all go for De

Beauvoir Town and its crown jewel Estate. Benyon is keen to emphasise how far the area has come: "We now have a local greengrocer, a deli, a florist, an Argentinean restaurant, a pizzeria, a cafe, De Beauvoir School (a free school) and a summer fete. As for public transport, there are a number of nearby station and excellent connections into the city'

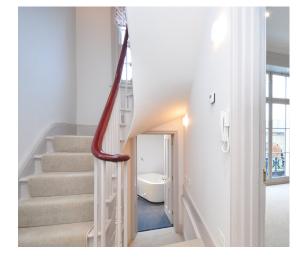
With such fantastic amenities, demand for property is rife. A small tip from London Property Magazine: get in there before it's too late!



The rear garden of the latest renovated property – Northchurch Road. See opposite page for more details.

















Northchurch Road, Islington, N1 (all images): "It's a stunning period property and we were keen to keep all its original detail such as the French windows, the cornicing, the original fireplaces and the wooden floors – albeit with underfloor heating! The finished product is stunning".



Knight Frank, Islington (020 3657 7360) at £1,500 per week