

EXCLUSIVE The fall of Billionaire's Row: How one of Britain's most expensive streets has become a car park for tacky caravans as its once stunning mansions are left derelict and demolished

• **EXCLUSIVE:** The Bishops Avenue in Hampstead has become a car park for shabby caravans and clamped cars
• Property developers are looking to tear down posh pads on the road, located in the north west of the capital
• Consequently, an abundance of construction vans, orange cones and building trucks are strewn across the road

By SUMMER COCKING
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Once home to the super-rich and famous, London's The Bishops Avenue is a far cry from the 'Billionaires Row' it once was.

The street, made up of 66 of some of Britain's most expensive properties, is instead littered with tacky caravans, neglected potholes and half-demolished derelict mansions.

Tourists taking a stroll through the neighbourhood, once home to the likes of Justin Bieber and the Sultan of Brunei, would certainly find it hard to believe its glittered past.

Property developers are looking to **tear down posh pads** on the road, located in the north west of the capital, to transform them into apartments, retirement flats and a housing development.

Consequently, an abundance of construction vans, orange cones and building trucks are strewn across the road.

There is also an excessive amount of damage to the road and pavements, with cracks and potholes lining the streets.



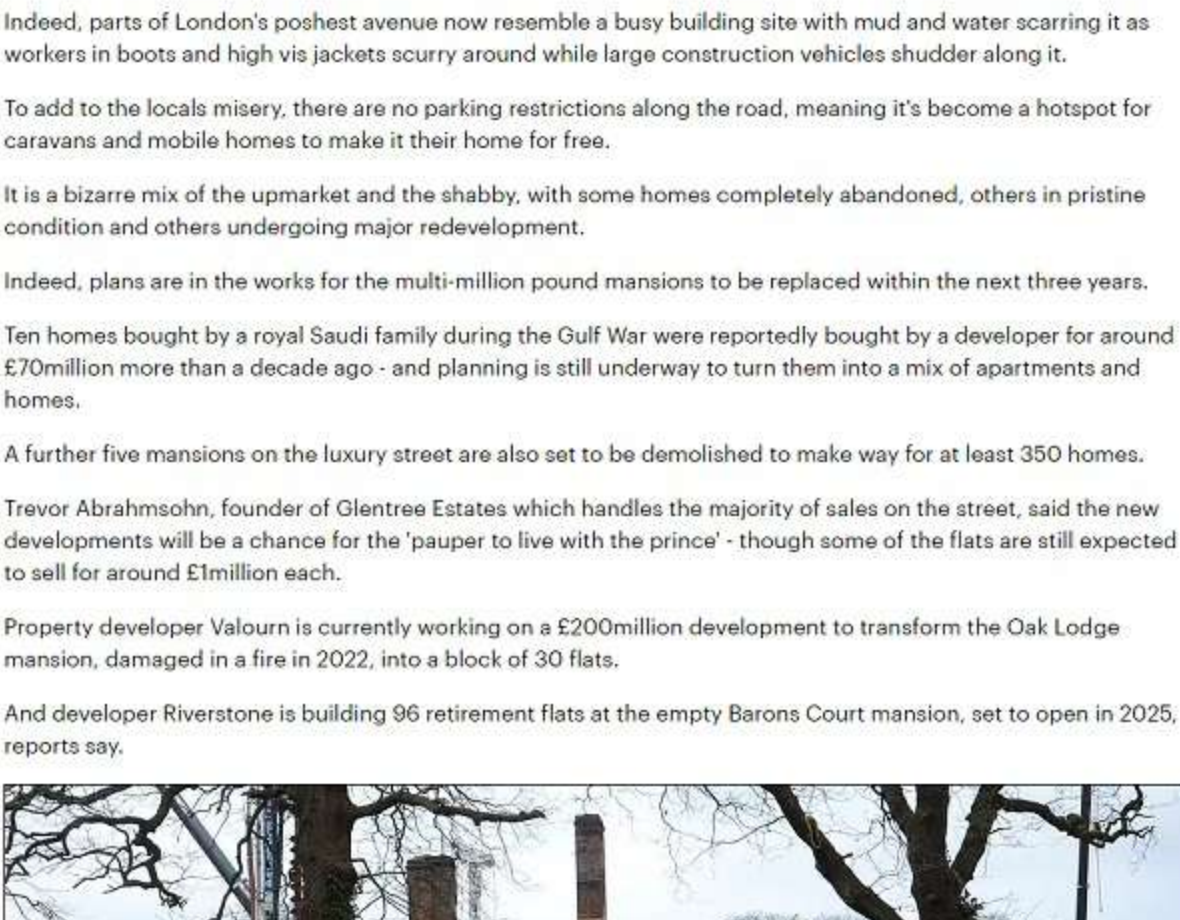
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Indeed, parts of London's poshest avenue now resemble a busy building site with mud and water scarring it as workers in boots and high vis jackets scurry around while large construction vehicles shudder along it.

To add to the locals misery, there are no parking restrictions along the road, meaning it's become a hotspot for caravans and mobile homes to make it their home for free.

It is a bizarre mix of the upmarket and the shabby, with some homes completely abandoned, others in pristine condition and others undergoing major redevelopment.

Indeed, plans are in the works for the multi-million pound mansions to be replaced within the next three years.

Ten homes bought by a royal Saudi family during the Gulf War were reportedly bought by a developer for around £70million more than a decade ago - and planning is still underway to turn them into a mix of apartments and homes.

A further five mansions on the luxury street are also set to be demolished to make way for at least 350 homes.

Trevor Abrahamsohn, founder of Glentree Estates which handles the majority of sales on the street, said the new developments will be a chance for the 'pauper to live with the prince' - though some of the flats are still expected to sell for around £1million each.

Property developer Valourn is currently working on a £200million development to transform the Oak Lodge mansion, damaged in a fire in 2022, into a block of 30 flats.

And developer Riverstone is building 96 retirement flats at the empty Barons Court mansion, set to open in 2025, reports say.



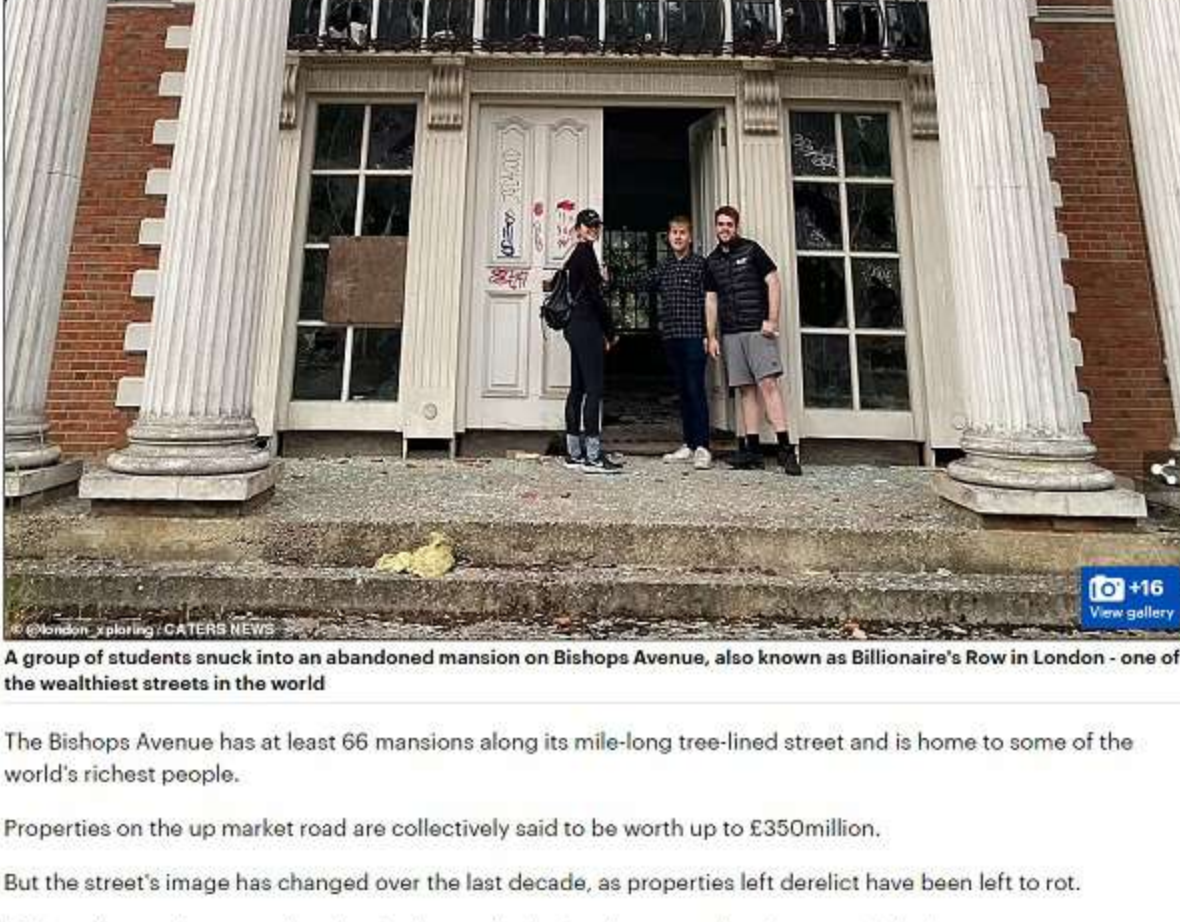
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A car is seen clamped and seemingly abandoned along the wealthy road



A group of students snuck into an abandoned mansion on Bishops Avenue, also known as Billionaire's Row in London - one of the wealthiest streets in the world

The Bishops Avenue has at least 66 mansions along its mile-long tree-lined street and is home to some of the world's richest people.

Properties on the up market road are collectively said to be worth up to £350million.

But the street's image has changed over the last decade, as properties left derelict have been left to rot.

'Bishops Avenue is an area that they're always developing because a lot of owners of the houses are overseas sellers, some of them don't even come back to the UK to the houses get very dated and start falling apart and then they end up selling them', one estate agent said.

The cause of a fire at the **disused £18million Oak Lodge** remains a mystery as the building was too badly damaged, investigators said.

A blaze ripped through the house, thought to have been empty for 30 years, in June 2022 - destroying the roof as well as the first and ground floors.

At the time, a spokeswoman for the London Fire Brigade said: 'The cause of the fire has been recorded as undetermined due to the level of damage to the building.'

'It was too badly damaged for our fire investigators to be able to determine what started it.'



The 66-house street has been home to some of the world's most wealthy, including Heather Mills and Sir Billy Butlin - founder of the holiday camps



The cause of a fire at an £18m mansion Oak Lodge on London's 'Billionaires Row' (pictured before the fire) in Hampstead remains a mystery as the building was too badly damaged, investigators said



A tacky caravan is parked at the side of the road on the exclusive street home to some of Britain's most rich and famous in leafy Hampstead, North London



Vans and caravans now flank sections of the road - a far cry from the glamour and wealth for which it became known



Campervans parked outside Kenwood park, which connects the posh London road with equally affluent north London neighbourhood Hampstead



Even the sign to the esteemed road in Hampstead appears dirty and green, while potholes cover sections of the road

Dozens of potholes can be seen all along the posh road which is flanked by imposing mansions and impressive town houses

One property, which is known by locals as 'The Towers' and is thought to have been abandoned for decades, was first owned by British actresses and music hall legend Gracie Fields before it was knocked down in the 1970s.

The current mansion then took its place, and was reportedly snatched up by the Saudi royal family during the Gulf War for an estimated £25million.

The Towers is the largest mansion on the road, and is now rotten, overgrown and falling apart, with windows smashed and mould growing in its gutted bedrooms.

Student 'urban explorers' snuck into the dilapidated mansion last August. UCL student Gabriella Burt, 20, decided to explore one such mansion with friends, and posted videos to TikTok documenting her expedition.

An imposing property called Summer Palace previously belonged to steel magnate Laxmi Mittal but was sold in July 2011 for £35.7 million to an international businessman, who lives there with his family.

It is difficult to establish who exactly owns the mansions along The Bishops Avenue as most are registered in the names of shell companies based in tax havens like the Bahamas, Panama and the British Virgin Islands.