

# Winnington Road - A walk down UK's most expensive street

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By Bridget Galton  
Features Editor and Associate Editor

Such is the size of the plots on the UK's most expensive street that there are fewer than 100 homes on its curving stretch.

Winnington Road's exclusive large, detached houses with tall gates and generous gardens are far enough apart that you could host a noisy party without the neighbours complaining.

Not that anything so rock n roll would take place on this sedate street where past residents include captain of industry Gerald Ronson, entertainer Des O'Connor, and the Sultan of Brunei's brother.

After Rightmove named the street the UK's most expensive for the second year running with an average price of £12.5 million, I took a stroll down the immaculately-kept road where many homes boast 10 plus bedrooms along with swimming pools, gyms, cinemas, wellness suites and even staff quarters.



Many of the houses back onto the exclusive Hampstead Golf Club founded in 1893 and whose past members have included film stars, prime ministers and bishops. (Image: Bridget Galton)

Most were built between the 1930s and 1950s in neo Georgian or Arts and Crafts style and have a pleasant tree-lined setting - some with views across a golf course.

It's better turned out than its more famous neighbour The Bishop's Avenue which came third in the Rightmove survey and which has suffered from investors who have left their huge mansions to rot.

Starting from the end near Hampstead Heath this impressive if not beautiful road has homes which back onto the mega-mansions of 'Billionaire's Row,' down one side, while on the other they back onto the 600-member Hampstead Golf Club where the joining fees are £4,000.

Described as a "hidden gem" the club boasts past members including former PM Harold Wilson, actor Alastair Sim, comedian Tim Brooke-Taylor and Bishop of London Arthur Foley Winnington-Ingram, who gave his two surnames to the roads around the course.



The bottom half of Winnington Road to the shops and cafes of Lyttelton Road while the top half gives access to Hampstead Heath and Kenwood House. (Image: Bridget Galton)

It may be a mile from the North Circular as the crow flies, but the road has the kind of quiet rural feel of further out of London.

According to The Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust, who oversee planning applications on Winnington Road, it forms the eastern boundary of Dame Henrietta Barnett's model Edwardian suburb.

As a temperance type she didn't much care for pubs, but the residents of Winnington Road are lucky to have the historic Spaniard's pub at the top of the road - while if you follow the gentle slope to the bottom you arrive at Lyttelton Road which has plenty of shops and cafes.



Bridget Galton took a stroll along Winnington Road to see why it's among the most expensive and desirable streets in the UK. (Image: Bridget Galton)

The Hampstead Heath end was once owned by the Bishops of London, while the middle part was sold to the HGS Trust in 1933 and laid out in building plots by architect JC Soutar.

In 1936 Adrian Gilbert Scott, the son of the great Victorian architect Sir George Gilbert Scott, built his own home at No 61 which is now Grade II-listed.

According to the suburb trust the "spacious, attractive residential area" was "always designed for wealthy owner residents" and the large shiny cars which pass by certainly meet that description.



Winnington Road has once again beaten its rival neighbour The Bishop's Avenue to the title of the UK's most expensive street in the annual Rightmove survey. (Image: Wikimedia Commons)

The trust adds: "The scale of the plots and their relative proximity to central London has, in recent years, increased the attractiveness of the road to developers and wealthy individuals from the UK and overseas, many of whom seek to redevelop or to extend the properties."

Trevor Abrahamson, whose business Glentree Estates was founded 50 years ago lives near the street where he has been selling homes for five decades.

"Winnington Road and The Bishop's Avenue are parallel roads likened in car terms to a Bentley and a Rolls Royce," he said.

"Bentleys are self driving, sportier and less in your face, while Rolls Royces are more attractive to international multi-millionaires.

"Because Winnington Road is part of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust, the architecture is more constrained, flats aren't recommended, and it's much more sedate and groomed.

"Even the larger homes look like big houses rather than super mansions. It was always the home of captains of industry, dignitaries, diplomats and upper middle class families who liked the large gardens and space."

Mr Abrahamson has seen the fortunes of both roads change with London's rise as the home of captains of industry, with The Bishop's Avenue drawing money from royals and oligarchs, and the house styles more "brash and about conspicuous consumption".

"They recognise it as one of the best known roads in the world - like Rodeo Drive - Winnington Road might be next door but if you asked people they wouldn't have heard of it."

But with its proximity to the Heath and central London, along with schools, two golf courses and the delights of Hampstead and Highgate Villages - he says it's a unique proposition for home buyers.

"We've sold 90 per cent of every house since 1976 which is how my business started. It does tick all the boxes for somewhere you can live with dignity and luxury - if The Bishop's Avenue is Billionaire's Row, Winnington Road is quality street."