

# PROPERTY

## Cameron pledges new homes at discount

Premier woos voters with extension of 'Help to Buy' scheme for young first-timers

Reuters in London

British Prime Minister David Cameron (pictured) pledged to build 100,000 new homes and offer them to younger first-time buyers at a 20 per cent discount if his party wins a national election in May.

The extension of the ruling Conservative's "Help to Buy" scheme, which is meant to get people on the housing ladder, was announced on Saturday, the eve of the party's annual conference, the last before the vote.

Property is a politically potent issue in a country facing a housing shortage that has pushed prices nearly 10 per cent higher nationally in the past year, and much more in London.

The "Starter Homes" plan would only cover houses built on brownfield sites, land already set aside for commercial purposes, in England, the Conservatives said in a statement.

Buyers aged under 40 would get the discount on the market value, made "possible because a Conservative government will exempt them from taxes, reduce development costs and allow the release of cheaper brownfield commercial land to build these homes on", the party added.

The "Help to Buy" mortgage guarantee scheme was brought in last year to help would-be buyers struggling to pay large deposits. Some critics said it did nothing to spur newbuilding.

A report by a former Bank of England policymaker published in March said the country needed one million homes. Construction of homes in England slumped after the 2007-09 financial crisis and is still struggling to recover. In 2013, 110,000 homes were built, the second-lowest reading since records began in 1978 and down from 177,000 in 2007.

Stewart Baseley, the chairman of the Home Builders Federation, said the house-building industry welcomed the Conservative plan.

"Enabling more first-time buyers to realise their ambition of home ownership and introducing policies that allow more land to come forward and increase house building would clearly be positive," he said.

As deposits and property prices have risen, so, too, has the age of those entering the housing market. The average age of a first-time buyer is 30 nationally, up from 28 in 2009. It is 32 in London.

### DESIGN



The glamorous interiors of the Wolseley (above) and Ritz-Carlton Residences (below left and right) designed by David Collins Studio's creative team, continuing the legacy of the company's founder, David Collins (below centre). Photos: David Collins Studio



# STUDIO KEEPS LEGACY OF ITS FOUNDER ALIVE

Famed London company finds a way to keep going after the death of its architect boss, with recent expansion in Asia to show for the effort

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When the British interior designer and architect David Collins died after a short illness last year, many feared his eponymous studio - behind award-winning interiors of boutiques and homes, restaurants and bars, including the Wolseley and Claridge's Bar - would disband.

Collins was so synonymous with his company's glamorous design aesthetic that the personal tragedy could have easily become a business disaster.

Instead, the London-based studio, with managing director Iain Watson and creative director Simon Rawlings at the helm, has continued and, one year on, has

expanded its presence in Asia with several high-profile projects.

Key to the studio's successful succession, says Rawlings, was Collins' cultivation of a creative team who shared his design perspective: he was known for a sophisticated blend of modern luxury and chic heritage with the bold use of colour, especially his signature blue.

"I am in my 17th year with the studio so it really is in my blood, while Iain had been with David since day one so the business runs like a well-oiled machine," he says. "Some organisations force designers to try to be good at everything but David knew he had to bring together experts at different things."

"The studio has never been about a particular design style and more about a feeling for details and materials, about making a space work well."

Rawlings says many clients have remained loyal and continued to commission projects. Recently completed works include a sleek, marble-clad 390 sq metre Alexander McQueen Aoyama flagship in Tokyo, conceived in collaboration with McQueen creative director Sarah Burton.

"We try to make every flagship store site specific," says Rawlings, who created a marble facade with subtle engraving visible only when illuminated at night. "Tokyo is a day and night-time city and we wanted to reflect the different visual experiences in the architecture."

The design team has just completed the interiors for Condé Nast's Vogue Lounge in



The studio's design work for Jimmy Choo's Beverly Hills store.



Bangkok's new MahaNakhon Cube retail centre, part of an Ole Scheeren-designed mixed-use development that includes the David Collins Studio-designed Ritz-Carlton Residences.

"The actual building itself is challenging as the spiralling architecture changes floor by floor, but we've adapted our original concept of a grand old New York apartment with elegant spaces to accommodate that," says Rawlings.

The Vogue Lounge is a medley of black, white and gold with bold stripes and marble offset with natural timber finishes and original photographs from the magazine's archives.

"The outdoor terrace seats about 70 and is a very glamorous space," says Rawlings. "We like to support local young artists so have added a sculpture by a Thai artist that references the black stripes in an organic way."

In Hong Kong, the team has created interiors for the Conti-

mental at Pacific Place. The design for that restaurant saw British chef and restaurateur Rowley Leigh, David Collins Studio and Swire Hotels collaborate to create different spatial experiences from breakfast to dinner.

Rawlings says the interior, a distinct departure from "the goldfish bowl feel of the previous incarnation", introduces a cosy residential feel with soft lighting and walnut flooring as well as glazed, electric-green tiling "that transforms the space".

Other current projects include the interiors for a Kengo Kuma-designed country club serving a luxury villa resort in Hua Hin, Thailand, and a Madison Avenue boutique conceived as a Parisian salon, complete with a fireplace and a cobbler for bespoke men's shoe designer Louis Leeman.

"The interior display walls are highly flexible to create different experiences," says Rawlings. "It's like a puzzle."

The studio already has provenance in designing unique displays for footwear, having recently completed a 42,000 sq ft art deco-style Shoe Heaven Harrods and new-look interiors for Jimmy Choo's Beverly Hills store.

"We are usually lucky to work in historic spaces like our new project renovating Melbourne's Windsor Hotel, which is the only Victorian hotel in the city still being used for its original purpose," says Rawlings. "It is being extended with an office while the hotel part will be completely renovated."

"We enjoy projects with a history and a conservation angle." Earlier this year, the studio published a 232-page monograph, ABCDCS, as a tribute to Collins' remarkable three decades of design.

## STYLE DAVID RODEN



**What:** Exception screen  
**Why:** Crafted in black maple and upholstered with Rubelli fabric  
**How much:** HK\$144,500  
**Where:** Armani Casa, 1/F, 111 Leighton Road, Causeway Bay, tel: 2882 2239



**What:** Furse theatre light  
**Why:** Vintage 1920s stage light with wooden tripod legs  
**How much:** HK\$22,000  
**Where:** The World Beyond, 4/F, PMQ, 35 Aberdeen Street, Central, tel: 6891 5494



**What:** Longchamp armchair  
**Why:** This features a black lacquer frame, crocodile-pattern upholstery and crystal detailing  
**How much:** HK\$191,000  
**Where:** Lalique, IFC Mall, Central, tel: 2234 7333



**What:** Shahrazad the Stool  
**Why:** Each facet of this hexagonal stool features a different stone inlay  
**How much:** HK\$9,800  
**Where:** Www.SusannaValerioCasa.com, tel: 2327 9066



**What:** Cloisonné table  
**Why:** Made using handmade cloisonné tiles gilded with 24k gold  
**How much:** HK\$18,900  
**Where:** Lala Curio, 32 Sau Wa Fong, Wan Chai, tel: 2528 5007

### ON THE MARKET



**Skyla Serviced Apartments, 32 Sands Street, Kennedy Town**  
Each apartment comes with a private, wood-decked verandah and an open, modern floor design. Both studio units and one-bedroom duplexes are available. Sizes range from 596 to 1,201 sq ft in gross area and 390 to 787 sq ft in saleable area. Residents will enjoy housekeeping services, a fully equipped gymnasium and a beautiful garden terrace with barbecue facilities. Asking rent: From HK\$22,800 per month. Agent: Amy Kong (2846 5759) of JLL



### SYDNEY PRESTIGE PROPERTIES

**1/5 CARLISLE STREET TAMARAMA OCEAN LIFESTYLE LIVING**  
Sensational 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom apartment with amazing ocean views. Small block of only 6, timber parquet flooring, open plan living, large remote garage, on the doorstep of Tamarama Beach, sand/surf and short stroll to Bondi Beach. On site Auction 11/10/14

**1+ 2/4 STAFFORD STREET DOUBLE BAY LIVE ON SYDNEY HARBOUR**  
Choice of 2 apartments or buy both and create your own massive apartment. Character older style with high ceilings, open plan living, eat in kitchen. Each with 2 bedrooms, (one king size) polished timber floors, one with parking. Sensational position to yacht clubs, fine dining and a short ferry ride to CBD.

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**CITYLIFE**  
Level 24, 29 Wyndham St, Central Hong Kong, Tel: +852 2929 5688  
Contact: Michael Bentley

**BENCE**  
415 New South Head Rd, Double Bay Sydney, NSW Australia, Tel: +61 2 9362 0800  
Contact: Mark Bence, Cell: +61 411 892 576

## ABERCROMBY'S

Australia, Victoria, Kew | 894 Glenferrie Road

**'MILFORD' c1890**

MILFORD has been a significant Melbourne residence since the 1890s - and remains so today. Majestic entertaining areas including an evocative reception room and a grand formal dining room bear the hallmarks of exceptional renovation. Modern counterparts, equally memorable, include a welcoming family living area, elite quality kitchen, generous family dining and beautiful outdoor areas enhanced by a gas heated pool. Five bedrooms, three marble bathrooms, large study, a 1500 bottle cellar and hydronic heating further distinguish MILFORD, surrounded by John Patrick gardens, crowned by a romantic tower that sees the entire city.

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Jack Langley +61 419 530 008  
Andrew Harlock +61 419 379 992  
Office +613 9864 5300  
EOH: Closing Tuesday 28th October at 5.00pm

abercrombys.com.au

## ABERCROMBY'S

Australia, Victoria, Toorak | 4 Irving Road

**Elegance In An Elite Address**

This landmark family residence's dramatic marble foyer introduces refined formal and informal spaces served by a superb marble finished, Gaggenau fitted kitchen, a substantial study/library and four sumptuous upstairs bedrooms, each with a marble ensuite. Lift access to all levels, including a basement featuring a temperature controlled wine cellar, gymnasium, bathroom and four car garage. In the world's most liveable city. Land size 685sqm approximately.

Contact:  
Jack Langley +61 419 530 008  
Tim Darham +61 438 332 844  
Office +613 9864 5300  
Private Auction: Wednesday 29th October 24/7 View: abercrombys.com.au

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**Sheung Shui Centre, 3 Chi Cheong Road**  
Developed by Henderson Land Development, Sheung Shui Centre was built in 1993. On offer is a unit of 780 sq ft in gross floor area or 623 sq ft in saleable area. Asking price: HK\$6.3 million. Agent: Yen Wong (6080 6754) of Centaline Property Agency

