

## WORKPLACE CONVERSIONS



Islington Square: Sager's mail centre redevelopment

# Now it's cool to live at the office

BY CHARLIE JACOBY

**P**RESSURE FROM buyers – and perhaps the slow death of the traditional office building – has led to many commercial premises becoming flats and even houses. West End commercial estate agents who would not dirty their hands with residential property during the 1990s have turned to the sector with enthusiasm.

Some of these schemes are enormous. Islington Square is a project by Sager, in association with Cato Hoy, providing warehouse-style and newly built apartments in the transformed former North London

Mail Centre. Once complete, this will form a £400 million 4.5-acre Covent Garden-style area behind Upper Street. It will have 263 new homes, 308 serviced apartments and 170,000 sq ft of retail and leisure facilities.

Designed by award-winning Piers

### A 1950s brick-built shoe factory has become apartments

Gough of CZWG Architects, it comprises restored Edwardian buildings and new-build elements around a pedestrian boulevard to be called Father Anne Place.

Gira Rabinovitch, chief executive of Sager, says: "Residents will have

the benefit of living in a spacious lateral apartment with generous ceiling heights and having access to a range of lifestyle facilities. Shops, cafés, the Lounge Odeon cinema and Third Space health club are just some of the on-site amenities available at Islington Square."

Asking prices from agents Savills, Knight Frank and Beauchamp Estates start at £795,000.

Savills is also agent for the Linton Group, which has launched the Maple Building, 57 one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments and penthouses in the former Kentish town furniture factory of Maple & Co. Linton has refurbished the 19th-century six-storey red brick building to produce apartments of 450 sq ft to 2,000 sq ft. Prices start from £255,000.

In Camden, the Anello Building is another brick-built factory, this one



The Maple Building, Linton's revamp of a furniture factory



Third Space health club at Islington Square



Bathroom at Islington Square

dating from the 1950s. It has now become 22 apartments and penthouses, named after the premises former role as manufacturing base of the theatrical shoemaker Anello & Davide. Developer is Warner Lofus.

North London is seeing its fair share of commercial conversions. In Edgware, with the transformation of Premier House nearly complete, the area's regeneration is fully under way.

Seventy per cent of the development has sold off plan, with Premier House scheduled for completion in March. This former office block on Station Road will provide 119 apartments, starting at £310,000 for a one-bedroom unit and £375,000 for a two-bedroom. Agent is Preston Bennett.

Half the flats at Talbot Skyline in Imperial Drive, Rayners Lane, have now been reserved off plan. There are 18 studio and one-bedroom units on the second floor of an existing office block. Prices start at £220,000, through Preston Bennett.

Meanwhile, developer WJ Black and agent Preston Bennett have three apartments still left to sell at their Riverside Place in Marsh Road, Pinner.

This new development of one- and two-bedroom apartments close to Pinner underground station is a former office block converted to 11 apartments. Prices start from £425,000 for two bedrooms.