

Halcyon





Niccolò Barattieri di San Pietro, CEO of property developer Northacre, discusses current plans and architectural favourites

Words: George de Grey

The Broadway development (above) will soon create a dramatic enclave close to the Houses of Parliament

Q: Northacre is developing the former New Scotland Yard HQ. What is being planned for that site?

A: Northacre's latest scheme, named The Broadway, will create a dynamic new commercial and residential destination between the Houses of Parliament and Buckingham Palace. The property is Northacre's first major new build and mixed-use development and it marks an exciting new chapter in the company's 25-year history.

Set to complete in 2021, the development will feature six architecturally striking buildings set over two podiums. There will also be a new 20,000sq ft public realm linking Victoria Street with Broadway Street to the north for everyone to enjoy.

The design of the development will express a transition between the historic buildings to the north and the more contemporary architecture along Victoria Street.

Q: The company is also developing No.1 Palace Street. Why is this an exciting opportunity and how will it set 'a new standard for ultra-prime residential developments in London'?

A: No.1 Palace Street is unique in that it is the only residence offering views over the royal gardens of Buckingham Palace. Not only will residents have the opportunity to live next to the queen, but they will also buy into a rich architectural heritage.

The island property encompasses five different architectural styles, combining the traditional with more contemporary designs.

The Grade II Italianate Renaissance Buckingham Gate was built in 1861 as 'The Palace Hotel' and hosted guests of Queen Victoria. Other styles range from 1880s French Renaissance, 1880s French Beaux Arts, 1890s Queen Anne and 2018 Contemporary.

Residents of No.1 Palace Street have the opportunity to select a specific style of apartment to suit their tastes within the same property. Apartments include original and restored period features such as cornicing, skirting and original fireplaces and impressive ceiling heights (up to 4.7m).

No.1 Palace Street will have leisure amenities of over 10,000sq ft. Residents can enjoy a 6,500sq ft 'haven of wellbeing' with expansive gym, personal trainer suites, treatment rooms, Jacuzzi, sauna and steam rooms, as well as a 20m swimming pool.

The property will feature state-of-the-art security, benefiting from its island site. Lastly there will be a 24-hour 'new generation' concierge service, complemented by a concierge app available to all residents.

Q: To what extent is the company experiencing a change in trading conditions since the Brexit vote?

A: Following some initial uncertainty post-Brexit we've seen a surge in interest from dollar-denominated buyers, who view London as a secure long-term investment, particularly while the pound is low against the dollar.

Ultimately, any negative fallout from Brexit is predominantly perceived as short term. I think London will very much retain its position as a pre-eminent global city and, as such, people still want to have a base here.

Take No.1 Palace Street, for example. We're not just selling a product, we're selling a lifestyle to those buyers who seek the ultimate home. We haven't seen a change in demand.

Q: Which of the world's great architects would you say you particularly admire?

A: Zaha Hadid. Her contribution to the world of architecture was ground breaking, innovative and is globally recognised as a pioneering force in the industry. It is a regret of mine that Northacre never worked with her on any of our previous schemes.

One of Hadid's most iconic legacies is the annual Serpentine Pavilion, which invites an architect who has never exhibited in the UK to create a temporary structure in Hyde Park. Having created the inaugural Serpentine Pavilion in 2000, Hadid put architecture at the foreground of London's cultural scene.

I was very proud that Northacre was involved in this year's 16th annual Serpentine architecture programme, as sponsor of the four Serpentine summer houses, an extension of the annual Pavilion, which was designed this year by Bjarke Ingels. For the first time, four additional architects were invited to design four Summer Houses inspired by Queen Caroline's Temple, a classical-style summerhouse built in 1734 and located a stone's throw from the Serpentine.

Q: What is your own favourite building and why?

A: I am originally from Rome and so the Pantheon is one of my favourite buildings. Almost 2,000 years after it was built, the Pantheon's dome is still the world's largest unreinforced concrete dome and its design has been copied many times by modern architects.

On a more modern note, the Heydar Aliyev Center in Baku, Azerbaijan gave Hadid the moniker of 'Queen of the Wave' with its distinctive flowing, curved style. It eschews traditional angles and edges, and everything from its dramatic 'wave' exterior to the circular interiors celebrates a fluid approach to architecture.

Q: What do you enjoy most about living in London?

A: I would have to say its diversity and its sophistication. Walking through London you appreciate how it is a hub of activity, with new ventures and opportunities around every corner. London's cultural pre-eminence, with its vast number of museums and art and design exhibitions draws visitors from around the world, and is one of the reasons that so many people want to live here.

It's remarkable to observe the architectural fabric of London as an integration of traditional and contemporary designs. Westminster is the perfect example of this, with the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey in juxtaposition with new and contemporary buildings. Of course, The Broadway will be Westminster's newest contemporary quarter when it completes in 2021.

Niccolò Barattieri di San Pietro (below) believes No.1 Palace Street (below left) will be a game-changer

