



## Until you are here

Hong Kong artist Ngai Wing-lam expresses a surge of mixed emotions in new works on show at YY9 Gallery, inspired by her dreams, surroundings and friends

+ Taikoo Li Chengdu, by The Oval Partnership

HK\$48  
US\$18  
€15



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# Super-prime time in Mayfair

Text: Suzanne Miao Photography: Courtesy of Clarges Mayfair

The highly exclusive London neighbourhood of Mayfair will soon welcome its first-ever super-prime development, Clarges Mayfair — a landmark new development by British Land

The gated entrance at Clarges Mayfair will provide both security and privacy for its residents



There is a rarified air of luxury and privilege that permeates the exclusive London neighbourhood of Mayfair, perhaps best described by Grainne Gilmore, head of UK residential research at Knight Frank: "London is the beating heart of the British economy," she muses. "And Mayfair is the soul of luxury London."

A study by Wetherell on Mayfair found that owning a property there remains a challenge. In total, the neighbourhood has 4,348 residential dwellings, and with only 110 properties sold each year on average, the property market is highly competitive. Property values in Mayfair are among the highest in the country — since 2009, for example, the average price per square foot of property has risen by 72 per cent compared to just 65 per cent across the rest of prime central London.

Additionally, more than 91 per cent of all properties sold over the last 12 months commanded a value of over £1 million and 28 per cent sold for over £5 million. It is into this tight market that Clarges Mayfair enters: a landmark new development by British Land close to Bond Street and overlooking Green Park and Buckingham Palace, it is the area's first super-prime residential-led scheme, comprising 34 premium residences

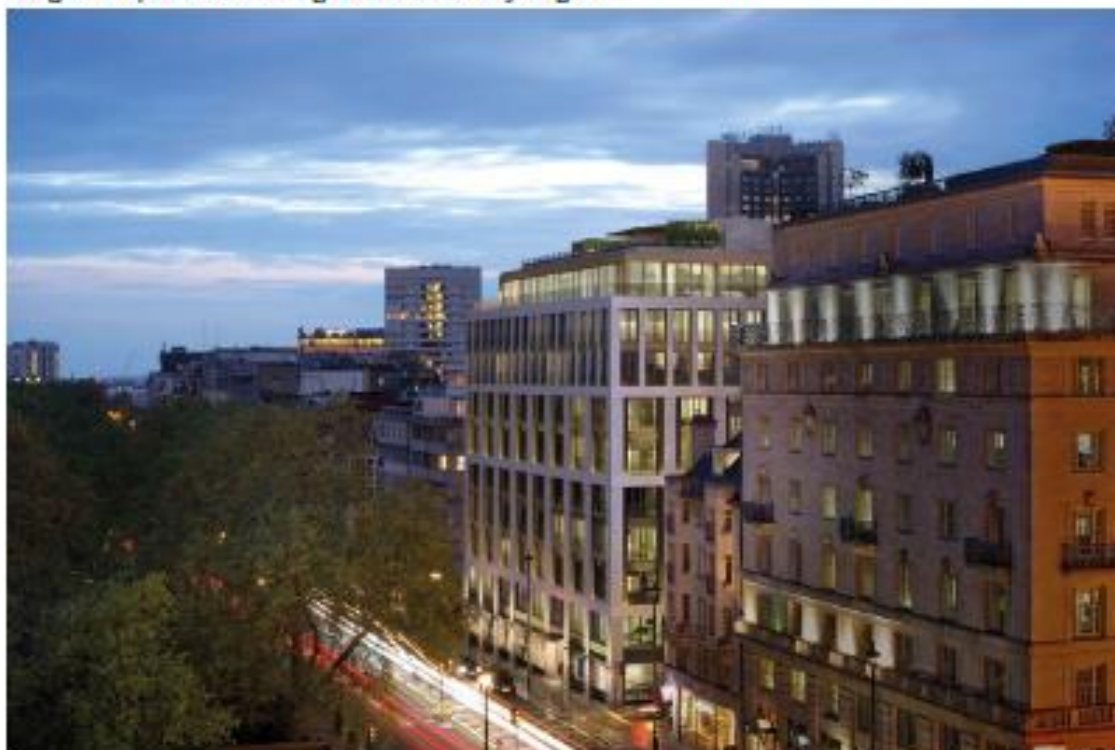
arranged over 10 floors, ranging in size from one to five bedrooms.

With panoramic views of the wider Central London skyline, Clarges Mayfair is a gated mews with secure drop-off, and upon completion in 2017, it will host a private wellness spa with a 25m swimming pool and fully equipped gymnasium, sauna and steam room. Then, as well as a private cinema room, there will be 14,800 sq-ft of retail and leisure space, including a new restaurant at ground floor level, and 47,800 sq-ft of high quality prime office space.

Leading architect Squire & Partners has designed the development incorporating numerous features, such as Portland stone, to complement the historic architecture of surrounding Piccadilly landmarks, including The Ritz and The Wolseley hotels. Inside, award-winning interior design firm Martin Kemp Design has also designed these 'turn-key' homes to the height of taste and sophistication.

Michael Squire, senior partner at Squire & Partners, is the son of architect Raglan Squire and grandson of poet Sir John Squire. His vision for Clarges Mayfair was clear: the site is surrounded by listed buildings such as Burlington House, the Royal Academy of Arts and Bath House, so Clarges needed to slot into this illustrious fabric — without the loss of its own visual identity.

At dusk, the expansive windows of Clarges Mayfair (the lighter building towards the centre of the image) will provide stunning vistas of the city's lights





**Left**  
The open-plan living and dining areas of the two-bedroom apartments are graced with tree-line views looking through into the neighbouring parks

**Facing page from top**  
The residents' lounge can be found at the foot of the Grand Stair • The Grand Stair is a standout architectural feature which runs the full height of the building



It would have been all too easy to mimic the historical architectural styles of the surrounding structures, but Squire instead looked elsewhere for the starting point for his inspiration — the deceptively simple tree. “The branches are the future, and the roots are the past,” he explains. “You never turn the tree upside down and try to copy the past.”

In 1700, Clarges Street represented the westernmost boundary of London. The area was transformed between the early 17th and mid-18th centuries, the latter period attracting a fashionable clientele to its newly splendid Georgian avenues, parks and squares. Clarges Street was named after Sir William Clarges, and was built around the year 1717 on the site of a stately building, owned by a former Lady Clarges, which had been in the occupation of the Venetian ambassador.

Many of the gentry's palaces were located on or around Piccadilly in the 18th century, with the Royal Academy the most notable architectural survivor. The Ritz, The Wolseley and Devonshire House all contribute visually to the rich architecture of this Conservation

Area. Clarges Mayfair is being constructed on the site of the headquarters of the Kennel Club, founder and organiser of Crufts, the world's largest dog show, among many other things.

That's not to say anything of great architectural value is being demolished to make way for the new development: “This particular site was heavily bomb-damaged in World War 2,” Squire explains. “The buildings here only date back to 1950, and were not listed.”

Following a successful tranche of off-plan sales in the summer of 2014, British Land has now exchanged contracts to sell 22 of the 34 apartments totalling £259 million. Five apartments broke the previous price per square foot record for Mayfair and the average achieved was £4,720 psf. Eighteen of the apartments that have been sold are located on floors four and below. Work began on site in early 2014, and the office element will complete in mid-2016, with the residential element completing in 2017. “All construction will be complete by the time residents move in,” Squire adds.

In terms of the Art Deco-inspired interiors, Martin Kemp, founder and creative director of his eponymous firm Martin Kemp Design, has a wealth of experience in designing super-luxe properties (including private jets and super-yachts). For Clarges Mayfair, he and his team have devised two distinct colour palettes for buyers to choose from: a more masculine series of greys, and a lighter, more feminine option of creams and golds. Within the ultra high-end fittings and fixtures will be a selection of bespoke designs, “a subtle reinterpretation of traditional elements”, as he puts it.

The remaining 12 units will be marketed closer to completion, when buyers can fully appreciate the unique design of the building and the panoramic views over London. As for who the new owners are or where they come from, Knight Frank proprietary partner Rob Adams declines to share details. “The residences will be secure and discreet, and this is what our clients are looking for,” he explains. “They have bought into Clarges precisely for its discretion.” ●

ARCHITECTURE  
*Clarges Mayfair • London, England*

