



A personal view

Sunny Crouch, Managing Director, World Trade Centre London

It was not so long ago that, as Director of Marketing for the London Docklands Development Corporation, I spent most of my time trying to convince a sceptical press and business community that London Docklands was a serious place to do business. Those days seem very far away, and even the most doubting critics of the London Docklands phenomenon have had to revise their opinion.

That the area is a business success story is self-evident. Nowhere else in Europe has seen such extraordinary increase in new office and commercial space, and of such high quality. The pioneering development at Canary Wharf, built with an eye to good design and quality of life, has led the way for other major developments, such as those proposed at Arrowhead Quay, and two with which I am pleased to be associated: World Trade Centre London, just next door to Canary Wharf, and Peruvian Wharf on the Thames opposite the North Greenwich peninsula. Both of these schemes will add to the rich mix of high quality business, retail and residential development which is attracting so many world-ranking organisations to this part of London.

But Docklands is more than just a business district. Over the last few years Londoners have begun to appreciate the advantages that are on offer - wide river views, fresh air, good public transport links, and, increasingly, attractive retail and leisure facilities. Hence the surge in high-quality new homes, and the influx of people who are happy to live here. Many can now walk to work from their homes, and can get to the West



End in minutes on the Jubilee Line for an evening out. City workers are also well represented because of the good DLR links and I expect ever more West End workers to notice that the new transport links make for an easy commute. The City Airport, too, is increasingly being used for week-end breaks as well as business travel.

Increasingly, however, those of us who live in Wapping, the Isle of Dogs, Silvertown, and Greenwich

do not need to go the West End for our leisure. There is already a great choice of restaurants, pubs and wine bars available locally, and, thanks to the efforts of the Greenwich and Docklands Festival, Canary Wharf Group and the Boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Newham and Greenwich, there is a wide programme of arts and entertainments which is developing all the time.

From near-dereliction to this in

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the space of 20 years is pretty good going, but it is my belief that the process of rejuvenating the part of East London called Docklands is still only just into its stride. The Royal Docks are only now beginning to wake from slumber, and allied with neighbouring areas such as the Greenwich Peninsula, Stratford, Woolwich, the whole area will continue to be the most exciting part of London to be in.