

The Royal Borough of Kensington
and Chelsea
**VICTORIA
ROAD, W.8.**



Dustin's street most expensive is the in UK

Mark Blunden and Jonathan Prynne

RESIDENTS of Britain's most expensive street told today how Hollywood stars and banking tycoons are tempted by its "village atmosphere".

Victoria Road, originally known as Love Lane, is close to Kensington High Street and contains stuccoed mid-19th-century family villas.

It is the London home of Oscar-winning actor Dustin Hoffman – described as "charming" by residents – as well as the former king of Malaysia and the Vietnamese embassy.

A single house sale of £11 million last year lifted Victoria Road's average prices to £6.426 million, the top of the annual rankings compiled by property website Mouseprice. The previous year, it was in 10th place.

Today, a cream-coloured, eight-bedroom house is on sale for £13 million with Knight Frank.

American and French financiers are attracted to the street by its history and closeness to the Royal Albert Hall, Kensington Palace and Hyde Park. Notable former residents of the neighbourhood include poets TS Eliot and Robert Browning.

One of the longest-residing denizens is Wendy Durlacher, 72, part of the Durlacher stockbroking dynasty. She has lived in Victoria Road since 1964, the year Sixties boutique Biba opened a few streets away.

The former Montessori teacher, born in Regent's Park, said: "It's no surprise to hear Victoria Road has done so well. The neighbours know each other and everyone clubs together. There's also great support for our local church, Christ Church, and our neighbourhood watch.

"I was only 25 years old when we came here in the Sixties but I walked in and loved the place straight away." Grace Chapelle, who has lived in Victoria Road for four years, said: "We



were living in Mayfair, which is very transient, and so we looked at hundreds of houses until we found this place.

"We loved that it was quiet with good schools. It has a village feel but is close to Kensington High Street's shops and transport."

David Lewis, 68, a cigar importer, said: "We've lived here since 1987 and the character of the street has hardly changed. It's multicultural and it's a leafy street with nice trees."

All 20 of the most expensive addresses in the Mouseprice rankings were in London, mainly in Kensington, Chelsea, Belgravia and Hampstead.

Ingram Avenue in Hampstead came second, with an average house costing £6,419,400, Chester Square in Belgra-

via was third on £6,312,400, and Eger-ton Crescent in Brompton fourth on £5,971,200.

Entries outside the west London "golden quarter" included Winnington Road in East Finchley, ranked seventh at £5,730,100, and Highbury Road in Wimbledon, at 17th with an average house price of £5,315,400.

But the survey does not capture some of the most expensive transactions, which are not recorded by the Land Registry because they are conducted through offshore companies.

Meanwhile, estate agency Knight Frank revealed the prices for prime London property grew one per cent last month.

They are now within two per cent of the all-time highs in March 2008. The

agency had a record 61 nationalities buying property in London last year, with the fastest growing interest from Spain and Uzbekistan.

**PS: IF YOU WANT TO BE
DUSTIN'S NEIGHBOUR...**



FOR SALE: Eight-bedroom house in Victoria Road, Kensington at £13m through Knight Frank



Main man:
Dustin Hoffman with Victoria Road neighbours Wendy Durlacher, far left, and Grace Chapelle