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WE REVIEW THE NEW INTROSPECTIVE SPIDERMAN See Page 35

LONDON 2012

28

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FREE

BANK SHARES PLUNGE AS SCANDALS SPREAD

■ Barclays boss tries to explain actions ■ FSA to confirm fresh mis-selling shame

BY PETER EDWARDS

AROUND £3.7bn was wiped off the value of Barclays' shares yesterday as anti-fraud investigators looked into the interest rates scandal and George Osborne said the bank's executives should "pay the price".

Barclays' shares fell up to 18 per cent, as chief executive Bob Diamond said



■ HSBC Holdings PLC

558.20
28 Jun

■ Lloyds Banking Group PLC

29.94
28 Jun



PROPERTY TECH HOMES



Our pick of Europe's best former celebrity residences: **Page 28**



CASE STUDY 1: WATERFORD HOUSE

WENTWORTH
£4.25m

Imagine a home that knows to have a steaming hot bath ready the moment you come home from work. Now stop imagining it and move to Waterford House. Other gadgetry in this tech haven includes blinds and curtains controlled by wifi tablets; biometric and keypad entry controls; a "what's turned on" screen to see where you are spending money on electricity and fully centralised control over lighting – great for both security and convenience.

Contact Knight Frank on 01344 840 020.

You wouldn't buy a car without a few gadgets in it – why should it be any different for your home? Steve Dinneen looks at the latest high-tech properties

The 'internet of things' is big news right now. It's the idea that anything with an electrical plug can become a "smart" device, connected to the web.

Companies like Intel have been busy showcasing everything from smart gas metres to intelligent washing machines but it is only recently this smart technology is moving out of the showroom and into your home.

For an idea of what you can expect from a futuristic home, look no fur-

ther than the new ultra high-tech Ebony Suite at the May Fair Hotel, whose gadgetry includes a colour-changing bathtub, heat-sensitive sinks and a £25,000 toilet that will, well, you can probably work that out for yourself.

Almost everything in a modern home can be digitalised and personalised to save you time. The latest homes have fully programmable central heating, allowing you to save energy in the rooms you don't use; light sensitive blinds to keep the sun

out of your eyes without a trip to the window (not that you would notice, given the recent weather); smart metres that can connect to the national grid and switch between providers to get you the cheapest deal at different times of the day.

The question is – are these just luxuries or are tech homes also a savvy investment? Charlie Bubeat, from Savills Chelsea, said: "It is a very mixed opinion. There are those who love to have all the toys and want to be able to control their TV, curtains,

fireplace and everything else from one controller and there are those who find that far too complicated and would rather a simple dimmer switch to turn on the light.

"Developers will always put in the maximum amount of technology as, on the whole, it does add value.

"However, this isn't always the case – I have sold properties where someone has installed £200,000 worth of electronic gadgets and the buyer has had it all removed – it really is down to the individual.

"It should be a consideration for sellers, though – most people do put it in as it is a selling point."

While the jury may be out on whether installing the latest kit will make you rich, it will certainly make your life easier. People already expect the latest technology in their cars, be it smart brakes to make them safer or airconditioning to make them more pleasant. But even the longest commuters spend more time at home than they do on the road. So what are you waiting for?



CASE STUDY 2: FOUNTAIN HOUSE

**HYDE PARK
£79.5m**

For the best part of £20m, you expect a few bells and whistles. Fountain House certainly provides them. Almost everything can be controlled with Star Trek-style central control panels, including lighting, audio-visual, curtains and blinds. It comes with a 36-point stereo system, video entry, built-in BluRay and iPod docks and the messy-bald wiring to add even more gadgetry. All that, and it looks rather nice, too. Time to get saving. Contact Knight Frank on 020 7226 1111.



CASE STUDY 3: HALCYON HALL

**BADLETT, HERTFORDSHIRE
£12.95m**

If security is your number one concern, this high-tech fortress could be your dream home. The bathroom doubles up as a safe-room – just close the door in a certain way and three steel bars will make sure no intruder can follow you inside. The advanced Carens security system is all centrally controlled and you can even keep an eye on what is going on while you are abroad by watching the video feed on your iPad. Contact Savills on 020 7226 1331.

The Olympics could be a great chance for the savvy to tap foreign investors

Q Do you think the Olympics are going to put a brake on the property market and should I withdraw my flat while they're on?

A It seems to have become fashionable to assume that everything is going to grind to a halt. Whilst this may be true of the traffic in some parts of the capital, I can't help thinking that if I was a wealthy foreigner (and you have to be to buy the flipping tickets), I'd be bringing a little extra cash in order to investigate the faded London property market while I was here. As many as a third of the London work-force are being encouraged to work from home



**DIRECTOR
DOUGLAS & GORDON**

during the games but I have a sneaking suspicion we could be busier than we think. This year has not really conformed to type in central London, with macro-economic, geo-political and currency events dictating the speed of the market and not the seasons.

With supply still limited, those coming over are most likely to be looking for investment properties, so cheaper one and two bedroom flats are most likely to be of interest. If you own a property that your agent thinks might appeal, I'd give your agent rather than abandoning the market. I'd certainly be getting three estimates from local agents as to what your property might rent for and I'd make sure my agent quoted that in the listing details and online. Indeed, if you feel your agent is not doing what you want, it might be worth instructing another one as well preferably with a decent high street presence to take advantage of increased footfall during the games.



SALES HOTTING UP AT VERMILION DEVELOPMENT

The Vermillion development in Canning Town, a 271-unit, mixed use development comprising one, two and three bedroom flats, has seen buyers flock to its ultra-modern apartments since its launch earlier this year. The project includes an innovative "eco-garden" that can water itself. Many of the flats benefit from a balcony or terrace, as well as use of the garden. Vermillion has Rathbone market on its doorstep – one of the East End's oldest markets – and is close to Canary Wharf, Stratford City, the O2 Arena and other major transport links. For more details log on to vermillionlondon.co.uk or call Harrolds International on 020 7758 6481.