

9

Marketing Buildings at Risk

1 Introduction

Any strategic approach to buildings at risk, or council property asset management plan, should include provisions for the effective marketing of building at risk in a manner that ensures the special qualities and conservation needs of buildings at risk are taken into account and ensure in its future.

2 Information for Purchasers

Effective marketing should work to remove as much uncertainty around the building at risk as possible and the use of planning briefs can be crucial in providing information and guidance for potential developers (Toolkit text 8 *The Planning / Development / Conservation Brief*).

Example: Seafield House, Ayr

This large house was marketed by estate agents in late summer 2013. The agent's website¹ for the property offered, in addition to the normally anticipated brochure copies of the buildings listing description, a visual structural survey, original floor plans, a planning position statement by the local authority and a statement from Historic Scotland on its listing status. An 'Open Day' for developers and interested parties was also held.

3 Developer Days

Renfrewshire Council has been highly active in offering the practical support to potential developers. The council's Centres Strategy² contains provisions for investing and bringing forward mechanisms to facilitate development on priority 'stalled' sites and buildings within urban centres. This involves concerted action involving a variety of partners including planning, the local business community, commercial operators, Historic Scotland, the Heritage Lottery Fund and others. 'Developer Days' have been held to increase awareness of heritage led regeneration opportunities and to promote early dialogue with potential developers. Briefs are prepared to aid the understanding of the constraints and opportunities at each site and high quality, coloured brochures produced in much the way that an estate agent might market commercial property. These are 'badged' by both historic Scotland and the council. By promoting the wider area as an attractive place to invest and by co-ordinating a tour of key buildings, interest in heritage-led regeneration is generated. Key staff members are involved

¹ <http://property.ryden.co.uk>

² *Renfrewshire Local Development Plan. Action Programme.* January 2013, p. 10.

throughout the process to ensure continuity and instil confidence. This approach has been recognised by the Scottish Government as an example of innovative ways of working in the planning service.³

Argyll and Bute Council has also run Developer Days for redundant listed buildings in Oban and during one held in 2012 a local housing association approached the council with a view to acquiring a redundant school building. The association subsequently obtained a grant to undertake an options appraisal for the site and buildings⁴.

4 Matchmaking Schemes

A number of local authorities have introduced 'matchmaking schemes' to try to introduce owners on empty homes who are looking to sell their property to others who are looking to purchase. The South Ayrshire scheme⁵ summarised the benefits as:

To **sellers:**

- It is free to put the property details on the scheme.
- The scheme increases the amount of exposure the property receives.
- The empty property will be seen by buyers who are specifically looking for an empty home.
- The property can remain for sale with an estate agent and the sale can continue through this agent if a 'match' is made via the scheme.

To **buyers:**

- It is free to put details on the scheme.
- An empty home needing some renovation can be an opportunity to buy at a more affordable price.
- An empty home gives the buyer the advantage of vacant possession.
- Potential buyers can have their details passed on to sellers who otherwise they would have struggled to contact.

This approach may have potential for buildings at risk although it might be best organised as a shared initiative on a regional or national basis.

³ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0039/00394218.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.obantimes.co.uk/2013/03/13/survey-work-on-obans-old-rockfield-school-building>

⁵ <http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/empty-homes/matchmaker.aspx>

The Buildings at Risk Toolkit 9

The above guidance was prepared by The Architectural Heritage Fund for Historic Scotland and is published by the Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland as part of the Buildings at Risk Toolkit. <http://www.buildingsatrisk.org.uk/>

The text contains references to legislation and its interpretation that may contain inaccuracies or be out of date. Ensure you take appropriate professional advice before making decisions relating to property. Feedback, relevant case studies and suggested changes are welcomed.

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