

The country property agency

Property Sales | Lettings | Management

THE
**COUNTRY
HOUSE**
COMPANY

The Country House Company Guide to the sale and rental of your house

The decision to put your house on the market either to sell or let is one of the most important decisions a property owner has to make and can be stressful. The help of our experienced and professional team can guide you through the whole process stage by stage to reduce the stress, aid a smooth transaction and achieve the best result. Being well informed, understanding the different stages and most importantly being prepared and preparing the property will simplify the process.

As the London property market continues its unprecedented path, the country has, to some extent been left behind. Yet the drivers for the move to the country are unchanged; be it a move for schools and a change of lifestyle or a weekend retreat - the country has far from fallen out of fashion. Indeed, in many ways the country house has never appeared better value (in comparison to London and the cost of borrowing) nor has it been more accessible (with improvements to road networks, in particular the A3 Hindhead tunnel). These facts are well recognised by the London buyers we receive around a third of our enquiries from.



Below are a few pointers to bear in mind when planning the sale or rental of your property

Timing

Timing in campaign launches is everything. The seasonality of a market can be lost in strong years but in uncertain times the fundamentals of the school calendar give the best markers. January and February are normally driven by the optimism of a New Year and London buyers seeking second homes. March heralds spring and Easter is a watershed for the country house market. May is the pinnacle of all that can be obtained in early summer. As the countryside flourishes; the market continues until the school summer holidays. September is a glorious month and the second week marks the start of the autumn market. Christmas is a wonderful time to spend in a new home with October and November spent arranging December moves.



From the letting / rental stand point timing the availability of a property and hence its marketing is very important. Traditionally it is an advantage to have family homes available from late July / August for families looking to move for the new academic year. Viewings for the more prestigious and traditional homes is usually

April / May and we as agents can have our ear to the ground for applicants from early in the New Year with many houses not coming to the open market. Other categories of properties from weekend

retreats to barn conversions, two / three bedroom cottages or annexes have their own seasons which our experienced team can judge as to the best timing or method of marketing. There is a need and hence a market for good quality properties of all sizes throughout the year, although the more remote ones may benefit from a spring / summer approach.

Preparation

'Fail to prepare and prepare to fail'. Purchasers and tenants are buying lifestyles and must be able to visualise themselves in their new home. Clutter is the enemy to all and strategic de-cluttering, redecorations, rearranging furniture or acquiring a piece that dresses a room to give its identity will all pay dividends.



De-cluttering is for many the chore they put off but once done it will pay dividends. We can introduce a 'de-cluttering helper' if you wish and thoroughly recommend storage at a *Barn Store* (www.barn-store.co.uk) near you. There are 9 different franchises and several in close proximity to houses we have to rent or for sale. We recommend putting just some of the excess from your home into storage to start the process of sorting before the big move.

Letting your home unfurnished will open up a large market of applicants needing room for their furniture and wanting to make it feel their home for a period of time.

Plan viewing times and days so the agent can view the property at the best time of day and without the vendors' household present, including pets!!. Time spent planning how and who will show a property is critical.

Legal

Agreeing a sale is only half of the process. Appointing the right solicitor early enough in the campaign will assure as many issues as possible are addressed rather than left to chance. The agents due diligence should help uncover matters such as un-registered title but boundaries, rights of way, covenants, easements and other conveyances affecting a property will need to be worked through, prior to marketing.

Many country houses are subject to the restrictions of listings, conservation areas and national parks. Land cannot necessarily be defined as simply garden or agricultural and rights must be handled correctly. Subsidies and tariffs are effectively fixtures and fittings but must be negotiated properly in a sale.



Tax cannot be ignored in a property sale and preparation for an anticipated liability should be made at the outset of a sale rather than after the event. Changes are expected next April to taxes effecting property, which again should be accounted for.

To the inexperienced rental landlord it can appear a minefield of Health and Safety and statutory obligations for owners letting their homes. Advice on the type of tenancy and its legal implications, length of term, mortgage and insurance details as well as fire and safety regulations, gas safety regulations, PAT tests,

the TDS, deposits and general tax implications is all available through The Country House Company. Your home or property maybe a small countryside estate, newly renovated cottage, converted barn or investment flat; our professional and much experienced expertise will help you get the best approach to marketing and ultimately the right tenant for the property. The Country House team promise a thorough and attentive service.

Town and Country Planning

It is important to assess the short, medium and long term development potential prior to a sale. The sea change to the planning regime post the localism bill has supposedly seen a presumption in favour of sustainable development; but what does that mean? And in particular in relation to your property?

Internet

Approximately 97% of property searches originate on the Internet. Yet property portals can be overly prescriptive in directing buyers to choose small bands of search criteria. Property purchases are perhaps the most subjective of all transactions, with buyers very often moving to a new home that is quite different from the one described in their initial enquiry.

Whilst The Country House Company is a main subscriber to all of the major property portals, our own website www.countryhousecompany.co.uk is increasingly popular, particularly in London. Buyers entering a Google search for a country house quickly find our website, particularly due to its high ranking. Of the 3 - 4,000 viewings our website generates monthly, around 1000 of these are consistently from London.

Our forthcoming mobile website future proofs our website for 4G and the latest generation of smaller tablets devices expected in 2013.

Service

The Country House Company consistently provides the highest standards of client care and personal service helping landlords and tenants, vendors and purchasers alike. By listening to the needs of all our clients we can help them reach their goals; be it to move to or out of their country house.

The Barn Store Group www.barn-store.co.uk equally gives a great service providing secure self storage for household and business.

Marketing

The quality of the photographic presentation of a property is everything. Buyers increasingly view properties on tablet devices and flick through images in a couple of seconds. Through our deep understanding of what is required to best present a property and by employing the right photographers, we can achieve the best result on behalf of our clients. Often contemporary photographic techniques are also used ranging from elevated and panoramic images to lifestyle and night shots.



Brochures are still important but in our increasingly paperless world, the PDF of the brochure for the website must be of outstanding quality, with close attention paid to the pagination and layout on a screen.

Floor plans are an absolute must. They must also be clear and represent the property as individual. The thickness of walls and the orientation needs to be accurate. Planning consents should be drawn in relation to the floor plans, to clearly show the benefit of the proposed space. Artist impressions and computer generated images (CGI's) should be commissioned where a proposed planning consent is being sold.

Land plans again must be clear. Outbuildings should be accurately drawn. Boundaries and rights of way must mirror the title plan.

Whilst our brochures do not constitute a contract, buyers and their solicitor will base their purchase upon them. They must be right to achieve the best result.

Rental particulars can use professional photographs in hand from a sale, plus we can take images relevant to the season presenting the property in the best possible way.

An EPC is needed and floor plans for rental properties are advised. We want to create interest in your property and invite people to view. Our team will know the house, guide people with their questions, inform them of any snags and most importantly be realistic as to whether your property is a good fit with the prospective tenant.

Pets are another consideration, many of our properties will consider taking pets but this has to be the right decision for the landlord, the property and the applicant and should be part of the marketing. As agents we are happy to meet the whole family including pets if requested by the landlord.

Joint sale and rental campaigns

The Country House Company can uniquely execute effective, joint sales and letting campaigns for our clients where required, allowing us to extract the best market result on the clients behalf at that time.

We can then act for our clients again, to continue to maximise their returns. We are very successful in the rare art of achieving good results in sales at the end of tenancies. We work closely with the vendor, their tenant and the buyer to this end.

Many of our sales are to tenants a year after they move out of London. This is not a coincidence and is one of strengths of The Country House Company.

Progression

Achieving the right result in a negotiation is where the other half of our work starts. By verifying the right buyer or tenant for a clients property and vigilantly, systematically progressing the transaction we have achieved an extraordinary success rate on behalf of our clients.

The Country House Company knows that their job is not done until the keys are handed over and all parties are happy with the move.

In conclusion

Whilst we can never guarantee results; we can promise an honest and open dialogue with all of our clients. We provide a truly client led service, working on our clients behalf to make their move as profitable and painless as possible.

For your next move – contact us

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