



www.stratton-holborow.co.uk Stratton & Holborow launches its new website

Online corporate brochure, interactive communication, commercial portal, client and company intranet, forum for business commentary, system for customer relationship management.....the web site is a versatile and mighty tool for any modern business, performing, as it does, all of these and many other functions.

Stratton & Holborow's web site has been ready for renewal and upgrade for some time, and we are pleased to announce that the new site has now gone live and can be viewed at the same web address.

It now contains many new features, and importantly in these days of rapid change, enables us to manage the site content. This being so, we expect to keep the pages fresh and regularly updated with news, response to new regulation or policy information, industry comment, services and so on.

The four distinct business areas (RURAL, COMMERCIAL, BUILDING AND DESIGN, SALES AND LETTINGS) across which Stratton & Holborow operates is now clearly visible within the site and the discrete services within those areas should be clear. You can easily contact any one of the three offices directly through a number of pages.

The site will also provide Stratton & Holborow with a renewed capability to advertise sales and lettings for retained clients. We have also recently obtained membership access to rightmove.com a powerful property brand whose site we also use to advertise residential properties to let. Our own site's advertising capability continues to enable us to reach additional people looking to buy or rent houses, land, commercial or agricultural properties.

We should be pleased if you would take a look at the new site and visit us regularly.

Phil Sara
Exeter

Lots of Interest - Truro Office Property Auction News

One of the 7 lots in Stratton and Holborow's September property auction was an old mine engine house, known as Michells at Trencrom, St Ives, Cornwall. Mine buildings are now of some historical significance and this one which is grade 2 listed attracted a great deal of interest with over 100 enquiries prior to the sale. The redundant mine engine house, which has become something of a local landmark, is in need of considerable restoration works and yet still beat the reserve to make £15,000. It was bought by a local, Cornish couple who plan to restore it as part of Cornwall's mining heritage.



A busy auction room and excellent results achieved show the demand for land holding up: a farmhouse in need of refurbishment and renovation set in about 30 acres of land on the Lizard Peninsula sold for £365,000 reflecting the amount of work needed on the farmhouse; Three parcels of land close to Reskadinnick, at Camborne were subject to intensive bidding, with 12.96 acres finally selling for £82,000 and 7.97 acres going for £32,000; A smaller parcel of land of about 0.57 acres adjoining the entrance to Duchy College sold for £17,000 - equivalent to £30,000 per acre.

A Guide to Buying and Selling at Auction

Auctions are a very good way of selling properties that are unusual or whose market value is not always easy to predetermine. In addition, other particularly attractive auction propositions include those for properties for conversion and refurbishment, investment properties, agricultural land, land for development, vacant commercial property, and tenanted houses. All can achieve some very good results for sellers, when competitive bidding takes a hold. Stratton & Holborow are well versed in the business of conducting property auctions and welcome any expressions of interest from people thinking of selling by this method. The next auction is to be held in March 2009.

Stratton & Holborow publish a brief guide to buying and selling at auction. This is shortly to be posted on the new website, but if you would like to receive a copy now, or if you have any enquiry about buying or selling at auction, please contact the
Truro office:
truro@stratton-holborow.co.uk.
01872 274646

Neil Sargent
Truro





Shoebrooke Barton - a rental opportunity through Stratton & Holborow

Can't Sell, Can't Buy? Renting or Letting May be the Answer

The downturn in the residential property market has boosted rental demand

The great slow down in the residential property sales market has had an inevitable knock-on effect on that for residential lettings. That these two markets are closely linked shouldn't surprise anyone.

This latest downturn in the residential sales market is a relatively new phenomenon, and the buoyant market and prices that properties used to command appear still alive enough in vendors' minds to make them reluctant to sell for too much less than what they might have expected when times were better. Buyers, in turn, are biding their time in the wings, waiting for the bargain. Tomorrow's decrease in prices is incentive enough for delaying domestic plans. So, in this scenario, buyers have evaporated and vendors unable to sell their properties turn to letting as means of freeing themselves to move. Life has to go on even in a difficult market.

It is a particularly British notion that sees rental of the family home as second best to ownership. (France, for example, has a much higher proportion of residential rental to ownership). But arguably, renting a property has many more attractions. Not least among these is the greater flexibility of rental over ownership.

You can relocate relatively quickly. In practical terms (though many landlords prefer longer, more stable lets to the right person) short hold leases do not tie lessees in for long periods, allowing this agility of movement. Typically, people see rental as a step to buying. It gives people the opportunity to get to know an area before committing to it – or not; rental also provides would-be investors with an opportunity to time their entry into the property market balancing their needs with a perception of the market.

At a practical level, it can be a lot less hassle being a tenant than being an owner as you won't need to pay for property maintenance - most of that will be done for you. For this reason, renting can be cheaper than owning with outgoings being more predictable too. Fewer outgoings may mean more savings. Certainly, greater stability in domestic finances in a time of credit shortage or punitive or rising interest rates is attractive, and property rental can help mitigate uncertainty.

Many of these reasons for people renting are current in today's market. They do not always exist in isolation of the residential sales. An increasing number of people are renting and the quality and range of rented accommodation is better than ever.

All sectors of the rural rental market are active and Stratton & Holborow has recently received a number of instructions from its retained client base of land and estate owners as well as from outside. These range from the modest attractive cottage to quite substantial and well appointed farmhouses and Bartons. In some locations, where estate ownership dominates, renting may be the only option, in any case. Rose Cottage, a newly thatched and completely renovated detached 3 bed roomed house with large garden and grounds in private location on the highly sought after Powderham Estate is just such an example of this. In many cases, property owners prefer to secure long-term tenants.

In respect of more substantial properties, supply is in keeping with demand, and Stratton & Holborow also has several large, traditional rural properties on its books. Shobrooke Barton is an example of this: a 6 bed roomed Grade 2 listed property situated in a quiet rural location yet close to all amenities and within easy reach of Exeter. We have recently let Meadhay, a five bedroom Georgian farmhouse in Dunsford against a guide rent of £2,200; and have recently taken instructions to let Hays Farmhouse on the Flete Estate, at a guide rent of £2000 pcm. The residential sales market may, having fallen, lie dormant. Property prices may not begin any upward climb again for many years. One consequence of times such as these is that home rental achieves greater recognition for its advantages and a stronger trend in property rental as a norm emerges.

Peter Thomas
Exeter

For further details on information of rented properties please call Stratton & Holborow 01392 278466

NVZ (Nitrate Vulnerable Zones) New Regulations

The new regulations for Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) come into effect on January 1st 2009 for those holdings within an area already designated in 1996 or 2002 - and designated again in 2008.

The agricultural land area of England designated as an NVZ has now increased to about 68%, and anyone can determine whether their land is to be affected by logging on to the Defra website and finding their way through to the interactive field scale mapping (which is actually on the Magic website – instructions for access and use on the DEFRA website!)

These regulations set out to achieve compliance with the Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations 2008, which, in turn, implement the EC Nitrates Directive, and thereby to reduce nitrate pollution from agriculture to water. Nitrate Vulnerable Zones, broadly speaking are areas in that have been assessed as polluted or are likely to become so unless preventative action is taken. All landowners or occupiers are responsible for complying with the rules, which will be enforced by the Environment Agency. Compliance with the rules is a Statutory Management Requirement (SMR) for cross compliance under the rules governing claims for SFP. The penalties for non-compliance with the NVZ rules could therefore lead to a reduction in this payment.

Guidance

DEFRA has produced a series of 9 guidance leaflets that set out the new rules, and these are downloadable from their website. A list of titles of these leaflets is sufficient to indicate the scope of the regulations: Leaflet 1 provides a summary of the guidance; L 2 is about implementing the rules – scope timing and enforcement; L 3 is about reference info – standard values, manure sampling, protocol

and glossary; L4, Storage of organic (meaning those produced by livestock) manures; L5, The Livestock manure N farm limit; L 6 Planning nitrogen use; L7 , The crop nitrogen limit (Nmax); L8, Field application of organic manures; L9 Field application of manufactured nitrogen fertilisers.

Impact on Landowners

How will these new regulations impact on landowners? It'll come as no surprise to know that as with many agricultural regulations, they are accompanied by a requirement for record keeping under the shadow of an inspection to ensure compliance. This is perhaps at very least. For many others the burden will be greater, for example, with the need to upgrade to farm machinery that spreads manure at a compliant trajectory.

Benefits

The benefits will be a cleaner, better quality ground water, freer from nitrate run-off and the eutrophication of still waters with a resultant improvement in natural habitat that will encourage and support a greater diversity of flora and fauna. The Nitrates Directive will work, therefore, in tandem with, and support, the Water Framework Directive, made law in 2003 and in the process of being implemented. This latter directive requires that all inland and coastal waters within defined river basin districts must reach at least good status by 2015 and defines how this should be achieved through the establishment of environmental objectives and ecological targets for surface waters.

The result will be a healthy water environment achieved by taking due account of environmental, economic and social considerations.

Charles Dixon
Exeter



Three building and design projects

The Building and Design practice at Stratton and Holborow is always involved in many kinds of projects. Here are three that show just how diverse the range is.

project 1

With respect to house extensions in the current climate no doubt we all consider the option of extending our house as an alternative to moving and this can be a more complex proposal than it may seem at first sight particularly when dealing with Listed Buildings and potentially National Park Authorities. We have recently completed an extension to a Listed Building on Dartmoor.

Initially, the planners reaction to the proposal was to remark that the former mid-20th Century rear extension should be removed returning the house effectively to a 2 1/2 bedroom house.

Following extensive negotiations Planning and Listed Building



detailing of the thatch.

The sensitivity of the use of materials, detailing of external joinery and a complex internal plan posed a demanding project from the design point of view. We hope that you may agree that the end result is a well balanced and proportionate addition and a contemporary contribution to the evolution of the building.

Consent were eventually achieved for rebuilding the mid-20th Century extension and extending it, which represented the construction of around 30% of the original volume of the building. Great care has been taken over the selection of materials. The proportions, size and detailing of window openings surface finishes and in particular the use of "soft" render and appropriate

Mark Ledgard
Exeter

project 2

Caerhays Village Hall

An imaginative and sensitive approach to the conversion and refurbishment of a bespoke community building to a high quality residential unit, the work comprised stripping out the old interior before introducing a floor within it, renewing the windows, cleaning brickwork, reslating with matching slates and various other external repairs and the fitting out of the building. The work demonstrates the appropriate selection of materials and, the introduction of a dormer window on the rear elevation which is sensitive to the original architecture.



project 3

Hotel Regina

The Hotel Regina in Torquay demanded the refurbishment of the front elevation. The work involved the replacement of windows, the reconstruction of the front elevation at ground and second floor levels in the main building and the reinstallation of window openings at ground floor level replacing 1960 fibreglass covers.

You will notice if you examine the photos carefully that the front elevation at upper floor level on the main building has been rebuilt to match what might have been there (in fact the upper floor was added in the 1920's).

The second part of the project involved the repair of 1 Beacon Terrace (Grade II* Listed) which is at the right hand side of the drawing and there we reinstated missing joinery, reinstated a balcony and balcony cover and removed unsatisfactory signage and poor detailing.

Mark Ledgard
Exeter





Brian Armstrong Retires after 36 years with Stratton & Holborow

Brian joined Stratton & Holborow in 1972 when he was employed by Tim Key as a Building Surveyor, and the offices were then at 5 Barnfield Crescent, Exeter. At a

dinner held to mark the occasion of Brian's retirement, Tim Key reviewed his career and highlighted his enormous achievements during the course of his long service to the firm and his clients.

Brian did an enormous amount of work for all the Estates which Stratton & Holborow managed and in particular the Huntsham Estate. At that stage in the 1970's, his work involved building farm buildings, providing basic facilities including bathrooms and kitchens in farm workers' cottages and carrying out essential repairs. Brian also developed and applied his growing expertise in farm building construction, which culminated in the CLA Award for the farm buildings in Bradninch for the Duchy of Cornwall, completed in 1994.

In another marked phase of his career, Brian established his expertise in RSPCA Animal Centres, and became involved throughout the South West in their buildings taking specific responsibility for their Animal Centres in Cornwall, St. Columb, West Hatch, nr Taunton and Brent Knoll. (We are currently reviewing the possibility of further work for the RSPCA at the Brent Knoll site).

More recently, Brian has been intensively involved in the restoration of Geevor Mine, a major project that has been ongoing for many years. This project which has been completed in the last four months amply demonstrates Brian's attention to detail in the specification and the management of repairs to mine buildings which required Ancient Monument Consent and are located on a World Heritage site.

Mark Ledgard Wins Commendation from the Georgian Group

At an award ceremony given in London recently, Stratton & Holborow's Mark Ledgard, was presented with a commendation by the Archbishop of York for his work on The Vean, a fully restored Georgian Country House on the Caerhays Estate near St Austell.

Both the client and Mark were commended for the thoroughness and the detailing of The Vean, a conservation project whose scope and scale is well exemplified by photographs of the building before the work started and on completion.



New face - Stratton & Holborow welcomes Rosanna McCorkell

Rosanna joins Stratton & Holborow's Rural Practice as an Assistant Land Agent, having graduated from the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester. She was brought up in Northern Ireland and is a



newcomer to the South West, although she has done work experience for the Duchy of Cornwall on Dartmoor. Rosanna is a keen horsewoman and is hoping to get some hunting locally this season, if she can find someone to lend her a horse! She enjoys getting out in her wellies and looks forward to exploring the Devonshire countryside.

Yours for £21 a month!

We are currently living through some difficult and interesting times, with the financial and property markets being particularly affected. Stratton & Holborow has been faced with devising a novel solution for the upkeep of one of our clients' properties.

Tregenfer Cottage is situated on a beautiful estate deep within the Cornish countryside. This cottage was once a traditional farm worker's cottage which has been left abandon for decades. With no money in the pot for reinstating the property, it was left to Stratton & Holborow to find a way of saving and maintaining this asset generating some income for the estate in the future.



Necessity being the mother of Invention, the St Mellion office came up with the idea of renting the cottage on an Assured Shorthold Tenancy for 20 years at £252 per annum with the tenant being responsible for renovating the property. After the 20 year period is up, Tregenfer cottage will be available at an open market rent, with the successful applicant having first refusal to re-rent the cottage.

This approach generated a large amount of interest once advertised with over 70 letting details sent to interested parties and as many phone calls from intrigued enquirers. We currently have 3 serious candidates negotiating with the St Mellion office to take on this exciting project.

This successful idea is readily applicable to other properties and for anyone who finds themselves with dilapidated properties with which to deal. Stratton & Holborow prides itself in finding novel approaches to achieving the right result!

Richard Morris
St Mellion



Chartered Surveyors, Construction & Property Consultants

OFFICES

Lemon Villas, Truro, Cornwall, TR1 2NU. Tel: 01872 274646
Fax: 01872 222180 Email: truro@stratton-holborow.co.uk

8 Southernhay West, Exeter, Devon, EX1 1JG. Tel: 01392 278466
Fax: 01392 412467 Email: exeter@stratton-holborow.co.uk

1 Briston Orchard, St Mellion, Saltash, Cornwall, PL12 6RQ Tel: 01579 351908
Fax: 01579 351605 Email: stmellion@stratton-holborow.co.uk

www.stratton-holborow.co.uk

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