



# AGENCY BROCHURE

## WELCOME TO SWORDERS' LATEST AGENCY BROCHURE

As an independent rural property consultancy, Sworders is well equipped to provide expert agency advice on residential, commercial and agricultural properties. Our planning experience, combined with dedication and enthusiasm, enables us to tailor our approach to suit the individual situation.

We have the expertise to guide you through the full agency process to generate the optimum result. We draw on our range of specialist skills to provide high quality advice and create bespoke, integrated solutions to enhance value and performance of property assets for our clients.

This brochure sets out our specialist approach to agency instructions and highlights some key issues to consider when selling, purchasing or letting property.



Page 2

FARM AGENCY

Page 3

RESIDENTIAL AGENCY

Page 3

RESIDENTIAL LETTINGS

Page 4

METHOD OF SALE

Page 6

RESIDENTIAL  
DEVELOPMENT LAND

Page 7

PURCHASING PROPERTY

Page 8

DIVERSIFICATION AND  
COMMERCIAL LETTINGS

Page 10

MAXIMISING VALUE  
PRE-SALE

Page 11

OUR OFFICES

# FARM AGENCY

Sworders has been successfully selling farms and estates for over a century. Our professionally qualified surveyors specialise in rural practice and have hands-on experience in dealing with a variety of assets and properties, including farms and estates, mixed portfolio assets, commercial enterprises, bare arable land blocks, smaller amenity parcels and development properties.

Our extensive market knowledge, combined with our rural background and multi-disciplined structure, enables us to achieve the best results in accordance with our clients' objectives.

Sworders understands the market drivers behind buying and selling land. Critical to our approach is understanding our client's short and long term objectives and therefore, advising accordingly.



We tailor our approach to provide solutions that match our clients' needs. Examples include letting of farm land under Farm Business Tenancies or setting up Contract Farming Agreements, enabling landowners to maintain control of the farming business, whilst retaining ownership.

For further information as to how we approach land sales, please refer to the article on Method of Sale, or contact one of our surveyors.



# RESIDENTIAL AGENCY

Sworders appreciates that there is much more to selling residential property than recommending a sale price and advertising it. Our team work together to look at the sale holistically. As a firm of chartered surveyors, planners and architects, we are well placed to look for opportunities to both improve value and increase the chances of achieving a successful sale.

Examples include applying for planning permission prior to marketing and the lotting of property in a specific way to optimise interest.

Our expertise primarily focuses on country and equestrian houses, and land with or without planning consent, farms and estates.



# RESIDENTIAL LETTINGS

Sworders let and manage a variety of properties for retained and new clients. Our portfolio of rural and village properties includes surplus farm or estate houses, cottages and barn conversions.

The letting of residential property is now governed by a raft of legislation and statutory requirements. Your property would be looked after by a professional team, who will guide you through the lettings process. Our service includes obtaining and verifying tenant references, income verification and protection of the deposit with a registered Tenancy Deposit Scheme. We are well equipped and qualified to manage this process and are experienced in letting a wide variety of properties and portfolios.

For more information on the services available, please contact one of our team.



# METHOD OF SALE

Sworders formulates a bespoke strategy for each individual property in order to gain full market exposure. We take a proactive approach, integrating online advertising with high quality particulars, bespoke advertisements and direct marketing. Combined with our tailored marketing approach, we advise on the most suitable method of sale and strategy for optimising the end sale result.

We appreciate that the sale of property may well seem a daunting process, but our team has the expertise and knowledge to cover all aspects of the sale and any related issues that may arise.

We set out below some key elements of the sale process and Sworders' approach.

## MARKETING

Marketing is an extremely important element of any sale, often providing the initial point of contact with potential purchasers. We create a high-quality set of particulars, with clear drawings prepared by our in-house design team, including design drawings, and lotting and location plans. We also utilise professional photography at ground level and aerial photography where appropriate.

Our online marketing includes all the major property portals such as Zoopla, Prime Location and Rightmove. Our own website includes a client dataroom area which allows us to distribute more detailed information about the sale along with legal documentation to potential purchasers for each individual sale.

Where appropriate, we will use local, national and industry specific journals in addition to our in-house databases, allowing us to carry out direct marketing. In close consultation with the client we seek to create a marketing strategy tailored around each individual instruction. This ensures that marketing is aimed specifically at the appropriate potential purchasers, rather than becoming lost amongst other property advertisements, which is often the case with high street agents.

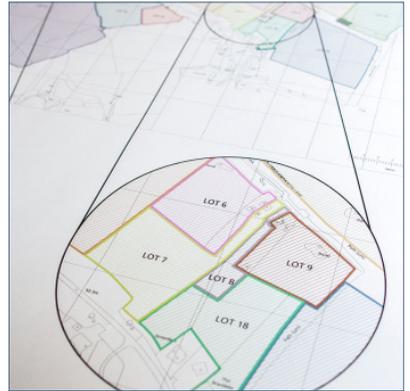


## PREPARATION

Sworders encourages its clients and their legal team to carry out an appropriate level of due diligence in advance of any sale. This can include carrying out searches, which will form part of the legal pack that is available to any potential purchaser or their legal representatives. The provision of detailed information before receipt of offers, minimises the risk of offeror's seeking to re-negotiate the terms of the sale. We believe it has a significant benefit in identifying any legal issues that may need resolving at an early stage. The control of this information greatly reduces the risk of failed transactions, in addition to speeding up the sale process, and it is likely in the long run to save clients' money and time.

## LOTING

The lotting of a property must be carefully considered, as this can have multiple benefits in relation to the overall sale price and conclusion of the sale. A well thought out lotting plan has the ability to build flexibility into the sale by encouraging a wide range of interest in the property, which in turn can increase competition and encourages negotiations. Offers on individual lots can often exceed the highest offer on the whole, or improve the chances of extracting the best possible value by negotiation.



## PRICING

The guide price of a property may be a sensitive issue, however, we believe it should be used as a positive marketing tool as part of the overall sales strategy. The primary consideration is to look to maximise the chances of securing a sale at the best possible price. From experience, Sworders considers the most effective approach is to set a realistic guide price to generate interest, encourages offers in excess of this, rather than to start with an unrealistic guide price, which can have the effect of starving interest and limiting the ability to maximise the final price achieved.

## CONCLUDING A SALE

Sworders takes a proactive approach by front loading the work undertaken prior to launch, in order to gain an in-depth knowledge of the property and iron out any potential problems at an early stage. We work closely with legal teams throughout the process and instruct searches and draft contracts in advance, which often results in significantly reducing exchange timeframes. This process also limits the risk of parties pulling out or 'chipping' the price. In the event that there are complications with the chosen purchaser, all the information is available to move forward quickly with an underbidder.

# RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT LAND

Sworders has had significant success in selling residential development land with the benefit of planning permission, both on a small and large scale. Sites include brownfield and greenfield land within or adjacent to development boundaries. In many cases we have created these opportunities through Local Plan promotion of sustainable land and/or planning applications where Local Authorities are under performing against housing delivery targets for their area.

As an independent firm, we are not associated with specific house builders, ensuring that we maximise the value of the site for the landowner and fully align the interests of all parties. As a result, the team at Sworders has established a reputation for providing impartial sales advice through personal recommendations and we sell an increasing proportion of sites where we were not involved at the planning stages. Sworders prides itself on landowner involvement during a sale process and has a wealth of experience of selling development land.

If you are interested in pursuing residential development or selling a site with the benefit of planning permission, we would be pleased to provide you with our thoughts on potential value and our marketing recommendations.

## Recent examples of residential development land Sworders has marketed include:

- Little Hadham, Hertfordshire. Brownfield redevelopment with planning for 5 dwellings
- Thornwood, Essex. Planning for 5 residential dwellings
- Clavering, Essex. Planning for 13 dwellings
- Great Bardfield, Essex. Planning for 37 dwellings
- Swavesey, Cambridgeshire. Planning for 30 dwellings
- Braintree, Essex. Planning for 136 dwellings
- Holt, Norfolk. Planning for 85 dwellings
- Walkern, Hertfordshire. Planning for 84 dwellings
- Newport, Essex. Planning for 84 dwellings
- Daventry, Northamptonshire. Planning for 450 dwellings



# PURCHASING PROPERTY

With a diversity of disciplines, we are able to offer a bespoke service to clients to assist in improving performance in rural property transactions. We outline below a number of factors to consider when making a purchase.

## FINDING THE RIGHT PROPERTY

Opportunities may be on or off market, so enquiries to local agents can improve your chances finding a property that meets your requirements.

## OFFERS

The presentation of an offer is key. Proof of funding and carrying out due diligence should improve the chances of success. It is also important to continue communication with the vendor/agent following the submission of an offer.

## TIMING

Early preparation and forward thinking ensures you can adhere to the sale process timeframes and do not miss any deadlines.

## VIEWINGS

It is important to satisfy yourself with all aspects of the property during a viewing, and a second viewing is usually prudent.



## FUNDING

Allow time to seek out the best rates from lenders and ensure that an allowance for SDLT (and VAT if applicable) is made in the funding calculations. It is important to have an understanding of the process from the lender's perspective, in order to increase the success of the transaction.

## RESEARCH

There are a multitude of factors to consider and many potential issues which are not always visible on inspection. This should be followed up through further research, for example, planning history, environmental factors, flood risk, access and title etc.

## ADVICE

It is worthwhile instructing professionals who are familiar with the type of property being purchased, to advise when making a significant investment.

# DIVERSIFICATION AND COMMERCIAL LETTINGS

The conversion and redevelopment of redundant buildings has long been an important form of diversification for many landowners. With our expertise in planning and farm diversification, we are well positioned to unlock the intrinsic value held within buildings that might otherwise be regarded as a financial burden to a holding. This can either be through generating new income streams or capital receipts following a sale.

We are able to assist in the full process from concept, through planning and redevelopment to ultimately identifying a suitable tenant. For example, we have implemented such a strategy for redundant

agricultural buildings, working alongside the owners to successfully achieve planning permission to storage, distribution and light industrial uses. Commercial schemes range from individual units, through substantial ranges of farmyard redevelopments to high-end office and commercial sites.

In many cases it is possible to identify a tenant in advance of committing to a project. This allows the landowner to reduce risk and can assist with project funding. It is important to consider who your likely tenants will be and provide buildings to suit the market. This also has the advantage of creating a space to suit the tenant's exact needs and requirements.





One example of this diversification project focused on a client's property close to Bishop's Stortford. The intention was to upscale the value of the existing utilitarian buildings to achieve a higher level of rental income and improvement in the profile of tenants on site. The redevelopment of the buildings into high quality, modern office and ancillary storage space achieved this increase in rent.

The property is now home to a number of local businesses including a charity, recruitment firm, structural engineers, retail, leisure and craft uses. The site offers other opportunities and Sworders' in-house surveying, architectural and planning teams are working closely together with the owner, in order to maximise the opportunities available.



Pre-development



Post-development



## MAXIMISING VALUE PRE-SALE

With our specialist planning team working closely with our surveyors, Sworders is well placed to provide advice and implement strategies to add value prior to the sale of an asset. We have successfully secured change of use from agricultural to residential by utilising Permitted Development Rights.

Examples include the change of use of two agricultural buildings located in Essex, to form three residential dwellings. A detailed understanding of the client's objectives enabled a Class Q prior notification application to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority. A subsequent planning application for a change of use to residential was permitted, with the earlier Class Q permission being used as a potential 'fallback' position. A second floor was added within one of the properties, increasing the floor area to well over what was initially

achieved with the Class Q approval and therefore increased the value of the site.

This approach was adopted at another site in Braintree. In both scenarios, the client's objective was to maximise the value of their assets that were effectively surplus to their requirements, prior to the disposal. The sales proceeds could then be reinvested back into the farm businesses or assist with other ventures.



Do you have any redundant buildings that you want brought back to life? If so, we are able to offer comprehensive support, from planning advice (often on 'no win no fee' terms) to valuation matters and sale and letting, ensuring assets are utilised to their full potential.

# OUR OFFICES:

We have four offices located in Warwickshire, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Somerset as below:



The Hall,  
Priory Hill,  
Rugby Road, Wolston,  
Warwickshire, CV8 3FZ

T: 01788 435 435



3 The Gatehouse,  
Hadham Hall,  
Little Hadham, Ware,  
Hertfordshire, SG11 2EB

T: 01279 77 11 88



11 Holkham Studios,  
Longlands, Holkham Estate,  
Wells-next-the-Sea,  
Norfolk, NR23 1SH

T: 01328 85 44 00



Rumwell Hall,  
Rumwell,  
Taunton,  
Somerset, TA4 1EL

T: 01823 426 500

If you would like any more information on any of the topics we have covered in this brochure, then please do not hesitate to get in contact with one of the members of the Agency team.



As rural property professionals, we advise across the agricultural, commercial and residential sectors on all aspects of rural property. We provide advice that seeks to maximise the value of clients' properties, often on a shared risk basis.

To be sure you are maximising the value of your asset, please contact us to discuss your opportunities.

Please note, the articles featured in this publication have been selected and prepared with a view to disseminating key information available at the time of publication and are not intended to be comprehensive nor to provide advice. It should not be acted upon or relied upon, and is not a substitute for seeking professional advice that is specific to your individual circumstances.

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