

New to the Market

ON VIEW THIS WEEKEND



Above: 18 Cairn Hill, Foxrock, Dublin 18 – €845,000 for modern five-bed. Below: 6 Seafort Villas, Sandymount, Dublin 4 – €465,000 for two-bed

ORNA MULCAHY
Property editor

A Crampton-built semi in Dublin 4, a penthouse, a cottage in Sandymount or a redbrick in Clontarf are on view this weekend

■ THERE'S sure to be strong interest in a four-bedroom semi-detached house at Argyle Road in Donnybrook, Dublin 4 that has come on the market priced at €2.2 million through Knight Frank. Located off Herbert Park, Argyle Road is a quiet enclave of Crampton-built houses. Number 13 has kept many of its early 20th century features such as carved timber fireplaces – including one in the hallway – and it also has a good-sized back garden. There are two good-sized reception rooms, an Aga kitchen, family room and study.
On view Saturday, noon-1pm



■ IN SANDYMOUNT, one of the pretty Victorian cottages in the village is on the market through Savills, asking €465,000. The two-bedroom house at 6 Seafort Villas has 60sq m (650sq ft) of living space, that includes a pretty, country-style kitchen opening onto a patio garden. There's a 19ft livingroom with hardwood flooring, and both bedrooms are doubles. The shops are close



Above: 13 Argyle Road, Donnybrook, Dublin 4 – €2.2m for Crampton-built four-bed. Below left: 16 Vernon Grove, Rathgar, Dublin 6 – €750,000 for three-bed; right, 19 Ballintyre Demesne, off Ballintyre Avenue, Dublin 16 – €775,000 for 227sq m (2,450sq ft) three-bedroom apartment



By, O'Reilly's pub is just opposite. **On view Saturday, 2pm-3pm**

■ A THREE-BEDROOM house at 16 Vernon Grove, Rathgar, Dublin 6, is in the network of streets off Highfield



Road and Upper Rathmines Road. The 144sq m (1,551sq ft) house, which could do with an update, has a 70ft garden and is for sale at €750,000 through Lisney
On view Saturday, 2pm-3.30pm

■ SPACE is the name of a brand new estate agency in south Co Dublin run by ex-Savills negotiator Rowena Quinn. One of the first houses on her books is 18 Cairn Hill, a modern five-bedroom house set in a cut-de-sac off Westmin-

ster Road. For sale at €845,000 it's a spacious house of 181sq m (1,950sq ft) in immaculate condition.

There's good off-street parking in front and scope to extend with a good-sized walled back garden.
On view Saturday, 2.30pm-3.30pm

■ Greenwood Property Consultants, run by Catherine O'Connor is selling a large three-bedroom apartment in Ballintyre Demesne, off Ballintyre Avenue in Dublin 16.

Number 19, priced at €775,000, is a second-hand unit and has been let to corporate tenants for the last four years.

It has 227sq m (2,450sq ft) of living space that includes a very large living-room with sloping ceilings. The apartment comes with two underground car-parking spaces.
On view Saturday, noon-1pm

Q&A

Can we stop mortgage payments and wait?

Q One pay cut (him), reduced working hours (me) mean that we are really struggling with bills – including our mortgage. We have never missed a payment but if my hours are further reduced, we will. We heard the announcement that the Government will be introducing ways of helping homeowners with mortgage payments. Would we be better to cancel our payments and wait for whatever scheme is announced?

A You are right that the Minister for Communications Eamon Ryan announced this week that the Government is committed to helping homeowners struggling with mortgage payments but most of the mechanisms mentioned are already available anyway with the main lenders (although not with subprime lenders). There is no talk of debt cancellation (which I think you are getting at in your e-mail), so no matter what scheme the Government comes up with you will still owe money to your lender. Some of the ideas that may emerge from Government are ones you can't currently easily manage yourself, such as equity for debt swaps, but others, such as reducing repayments, lengthening the term of the mortgage, etc are things you can negotiate with your lender now.

Never cancel a loan, particularly a mortgage repayment without a plan being in place. One missed payment (of any loan) sets alarm bells ringing at the lenders and puts you on the back foot during the inevitable negotiations. Talk to your lender on ways to reduce your monthly repayments; they will request information on your total incomes/outgoings and should be able to work out a new repayment plan. Once that has been established, stick to it. If you feel unable to negotiate with your lender, contact your local MABS office for advice.

Builders making noise at midnight

Q From what we can see – and hear – there is significant building work going on in a derelict house at the far end of our estate. To my certain knowledge no planning permission was put up. Anything will be better than the derelict house but the problem is the noise. Last night the builders with heavy digging equipment worked until close to midnight. My husband talked to the builders but was told it was none of his business. I thought builders had to stop by 7pm.

A Planning permission in built-up areas frequently comes with working time restrictions, e.g. work can start no earlier than 8am and must finish at 8pm. The problem here is that there is no planning permission so the builder is doing what he likes. Contact your planning office in your local authority to request a site visit to explore what could be an illegal development. It will be up to the local authority to explore methods of planning enforcement, etc. Also contact the Health and Safety Authority (hsa.ie) to inspect the site because the builder may not be giving his workers appropriate site protection. Get your local residents' association involved.

Your questions

Send your queries to Property questions, The Irish Times, The Irish Times Building, 24-28 Tara Street, Dublin 2 or email propertyquestions@irish-times.ie. This column is a readers' service and is not intended to replace professional advice.

SOCIAL HOUSING

New report will show number of empty homes well above 300,000

FRANK McDONALD

Environment Editor

With so much vacant property about, councils are now actively seeking homes to rent from a minimum of 10 years for those on waiting lists

A REPORT being finalised by planners at UCD for publication this month is expected to conclude that the number of empty houses or apartments in the State may be even higher than the 302,625 figure suggested recently by their colleagues in

NUI Maynooth. Dr Brendan Williams, lead author of the UCD report, told *The Irish Times* that "our figures might be higher".

He had also visited some uncompleted housing estates last weekend and they painted a "bleak picture" of the current levels of vacant housing.

The 300,000-plus figure, calculated by the Maynooth-based National Institute of Regional and Spatial Analysis (Nirsa), took a lot of people by surprise – especially as the Construction Industry Federation had been sticking to a vacancy rate of around 40,000.

It was also way above the Department of the Environment's estimate of between 122,000 and 147,000 – figures that exclude abandoned homes, which Nirsa's didn't. Relying on a DKM report, it said this was a more reliable measure of the excess stock over "normal" levels.

One large firm of estate agents complained that the Nirsa figure was based on a "sweeping assumption" that over 50 per cent of all housing units completed since April 2006 were now vacant – on top of the number recorded as being vacant in the 2006 Census.

Nonetheless, it is clear that there is a very significant overhang especially in rural counties such as Leitrim, where construction was fuelled by the Upper Shannon Rural Renewal Scheme of tax incentives, introduced in 1998 by then finance minister Charlie McCreevy.

Housing minister Michael Finneran has said he wants to see some of the vacant houses or apartments being used to provide homes for the 56,000 applicants currently on local authority waiting lists – under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (Ras) run by his

“We will not accept whole apartment blocks under the leasing scheme”

department. The Dublin local authorities are actively seeking to lease "suitable residential property" for occupation by their social housing applicants. All types and sizes of dwellings are required in all areas, with leases running from a minimum of 10 years to a

maximum of 20. South Dublin County Council is also implementing a policy of social integration by carefully managing tenure mix so that the quantity of social housing in any apartment block or street will not exceed 10 to 15 per cent of the total number of homes in that location.

"To this end, we will not accept whole apartment blocks under the leasing scheme. We would also prefer, where we are taking a multiple of homes in one development, that they be scattered randomly throughout the development rather than clustered together," Mick Fagan, Ras leasing programme manager for the Dublin region, said the terms of leases are a matter for negotiation. "The council will maintain and insure the properties for the full lease term and manage the tenancies" – thus taking over the landlord's responsibilities.

A new online service, Click2.ie, has been set up to assist property owners who wish to make houses or apartments available under the Ras programme; it is already running a pilot scheme in the South Dublin area and will be rolling it out to other areas.

Conor Mohan, who established the new service, said it was intended to become the premier website for landlords wishing to let their properties for social housing applicants as well as local authorities seeking to procure vacant properties for social housing.

Landlords have the option to list their property on Click2Rent, which is targeted at tenants on social welfare and/or in receipt of rent supplement. The listing fee is €24 per property, and there is also a service charge of €42 per month – deducted from rents collected.

■ Click2.ie

TAKE FIVE FOR €850,000

Barry Auctioneers is seeking €850,000 for this four-bed in its own grounds (with planning permission to demolish and build anew) at Maryborough Hill, Douglas, Co Cork



Emma Cullinan finds properties at a similar price in Greece, Mauritius, France and England

GREECE: Patmos

Home in historic, car-free Chora with its traditional houses and small churches on a hillside at the foot of a Byzantine monastery. This whitewashed stone house measures 261sq m (2,800sq ft), and has a livingroom, diningroom, country kitchen and three bedrooms. Garden has flowers, fig and olive trees. Sea views from roof terraces.
Price: €775,000
Agent: Ploumis Sotiropoulos, 0030 210 364 3112



MAURITIUS: Savanne

A two-bedroom home of 232sq m (2,497sq ft) at the Villas Valriche resort in this island off the coast of Africa. The villa has an infinity pool, veranda and views over a golf course. The scheme, on a former sugar estate, is in the Savanne region 40 minutes from the airport. The plantation-style villas are in tropical landscaped grounds overlooking the Indian Ocean.
Price: €800,000
Agent: Cluttons, 0044 20 7584 3050



FRANCE: Aix en Provence

This 18th century 110sq m (1,184sq ft) renovated apartment is in Aix en Provence town, in a four-storey building with a courtyard. It has high ceilings (3.70m) and includes a 32sq m (344sq ft) livingroom with fireplace, a kitchen with dining area, two bedrooms and marble bathroom. The building is home to one of the town's 26 public fountains.

Price: €800 000
Agent: Emile Garcin, 01-663 6363



ENGLAND: London

This three-bedroom house, measuring 131sq m (1,410sq ft), is in a dinky road near Kings Cross (close to the junction of Euston Road and Grays Inn Road) in Islington. It has two reception rooms and one bathroom. One of the bedrooms is up in the roof space and there is a tiny garden out back.

Price: €799,950
Agent: Winkworth

