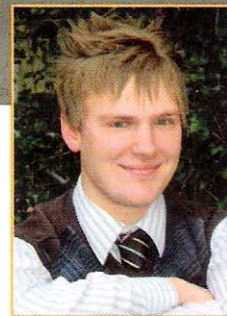




LOSELEY'S NEW HOME Former Panasonic facility

Agents of change

In part of one of *Insider's* investigation into the world of the secret agents, **Kristian Dando** looked at the services property agents offer to developers. In this issue he discovers the functions they offer to regular business clients



PROPERTY EYE

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Securing big lettings and acquiring properties are the public face of property agents and chartered surveyors. But the backroom boys of your local surveying firm can do a lot more than that for regular clients and occupiers if you know what to ask for. "Surveyors are pigeonholed in what they do," says Cathy McLean, director of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) in Wales. "There's a lot more to the role of the surveyor than people think."

That can include saving companies a great deal of money and identifying properties that meet client needs with a bit of creative thinking. Cardiff's Robert Chapman & Company has forged a name for itself for occupier-driven answers to property conundrums, helping companies from broadcast production outfits to industrial companies get re-housed and add to their bottom line, to boot. The company moved Cwmbran's Loseley Ice Cream

into the nearby former Panasonic facility – not an obvious move, but one that helped the company grow.

The firm is also known for getting owner-occupied companies to get properties to work harder for them – as it did with Caerphilly-based Corus Catnic, which sold its non-performing property assets for residential use, arranged a sale-and-leaseback of its premises, then moved into more modern amenities while freeing up capital to pay off debt.

Swansea law firm John Collins & Partners was well settled in to modern premises on Swansea Enterprise Park, but needed a new home to grow its corporate division. As the business expanded, the firm moved into more commercial areas, but remained positioned as a general legal practice.

To establish its commercial division, there was a need to change the perception of the company and, as part of that change, to seek larger, more modern commercial premises. Chapman came up with a way of planning this move without breaking the bank – and at the same time landing a business improvement grant worth 50 per cent of the cost.

Meanwhile, Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH) was called in last year to provide witness evidence for a legal dispute over the purchase price of the freehold interest of fourteen purpose built flats at Britway Court in Dinas Powys. LSH provided specialist valuation advice under the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act to ensure a settlement

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