

## Ask the recruitment doctor

## I'm a commercial valuation surveyor looking for a new challenge

Avril Clare

Property recruitment specialist Avril Clare offers one reader her top tips on how to prepare for a competency-based interview



## QUESTION

I am a commercial valuation surveyor who has been working in the same company for over ten years. I am now ready for a new challenge and am starting the process of applying for new roles. I am, however, nervous about how to prepare for interview, as it has been so long since I have had to attend one. I know that things have changed over the years and that many companies now use competency-based interview techniques.

Can you give some advice on how best to prepare for this style of interview?

## ANSWER

This is a common concern, however, the competency-based interview favours candidates like you, who can draw on their wealth of experience.

While it is difficult to predict exactly what questions you will be asked, the best approach is to provide real, tangible examples of your expertise. If possible,

have two examples prepared for each competency.

Remember, the interviewer will have decided the questions based on the job specification. It is also imperative to know the content of your CV and keep it honest and to the point.

If I were the hiring manager interviewing for the role of a commercial valuation surveyor, one of the key competencies I would look for would be attention to detail. An example of a question on this competency is as follows:

Q: Can you give us an example of an occasion when you were required to produce a body of work within a challenging timeline, where accuracy and attention to detail in output was imperative?

In answering this question, and all competency-based questions, I would suggest using the four-step approach commonly referred to as the STAR format – STAR stands for Situation, Task, Actions, Result.

## Situation

**Top tip:** Situation allows you to frame the time, place and circumstance of your chosen answer to the question.

**Example:** I was employed as a commercial valuation surveyor, leading a



team working on a portfolio of valuation assignments across multiple asset types on behalf of a financial institution.

## Task

**Top tip:** Outline what task you were responsible for and the challenges it posed.

**Example:** I was instructed that a portfolio of commercial property loans was being sold by the financial institution to a fund and that the properties secured by these loans needed to be revalued within a three-week period.

The accuracy of the valuations is par-

ticularly important in this scenario, as they directly feed into the price being paid for the loans by the fund, so providing an accurate report within time and on budget is imperative to getting the assignment completed for the client.

## Actions

**Top tip:** I cannot stress enough how important this part of the answer is, as it showcases the steps you took to achieve a result-driven outcome. It is particularly important to focus on your personal actions, as opposed to just those of the team.

**Example:** In order to achieve the desired outcome I used our valuation software technology to conform to the highest and most accurate standard in conjunction with RICS, to prepare a project timeline whereby it was clear to all parties involved who was responsible and what the deadline was.

I circulated the timeline as appropriate, while always obtaining both input and buy-in from the team. I set up a daily conference call for all parties to report on progress, so that any issues that arose were addressed and dealt with immediately.

In order to ensure accuracy of output, I put in place a peer-review structure, where every valuation was signed off by at least two members of the team. I also ensured that any differences of opinion were escalated to me for final sign off.

## Result

**Top tip:** It is particularly important to finish with a clear outcome. It is not always necessary to have a positive outcome. However, if the outcome is negative, you should describe how you have learnt from it and outline what you would do differently going forward.

**Example:** The result was that the valuation assignment closed on time and on budget providing a prompt, accurate portfolio of valuations, which could be used by both the client and purchaser to accurately value the loan sale. Both the team and I received positive feedback from the client. This resulted in a strengthening of the relationship and the securing of further similar valuation contracts by the company.

More and more companies are using competency-based interviews. This interview style tends to be more aligned with their diversity and inclusion policy, as all candidates, regardless of gender, race or age, are asked the same questions, thereby removing interviewer bias.

We are also seeing more companies removing candidates' names, schools, colleges and addresses, prior to interview, to avoid unconscious bias. The competency-based approach is more focused and beneficial for clients and candidates than the traditional biographical style, especially those who have strong relevant experience for the role.

Email Avril Clare with your property recruitment questions at [questions@recruitmentdoctor.ie](mailto:questions@recruitmentdoctor.ie)

## Mixed-use property with parking and creche in Malahide for €9.4m

BY TINA-MARIE O'NEILL

Commercial specialist TWM is offering for sale a mixed-use property with underground parking and scope to extend in the sought-after suburb of Malahide in north Dublin for €9.4 million. The guide reflects a net initial yield of 5.61 per cent and a net operating income yield of 4.58 per cent.

Known as Abington Wood, the property comprises 22 two-bedroom apartments, basement parking for 49 cars, and a large creche and Montessori.

It is located off the Swords Road and beside the entrance to the private, high-end Abington residential development. It is also 750 metres from the entrance to the 260-acre Malahide Castle and Gardens estate.

All apartments at Abington Wood are two-beds with an ensuite and bathroom and 17 of the units have either dual or triple aspect.

The scheme is currently



Abington Wood, a mixed-use property for sale in Malahide, Co Dublin

managed by Boland Hyland which reports constant strong rental demand, with vacancies taking no longer than about two weeks to re-let (outside of Covid-19 lockdown).

Annual gross income from the apartments (one apartment has been kept vacant to facilitate viewings) and the commercial element is €555,140 with a net operating income of €452,758. The gross income assumes the

vacant apartment has been let at €1,800 per month.

Links Crèche & Montessori Limited pays an annual rent of €110,000 until lease expiry in May 2025.

Subject to planning permission there may be potential to increase the number of apartments by increasing the height of the building.

Fingal County Council granted planning for the addition of two two-bedroom penthouses of 148 square

metres each with balconies of 77 and 80 square metres. However, the permission, (Ref F09A/0443), has since lapsed.

Ryan Tyrrell of selling agent TWM said: "Interest is expected from private buyers looking for an easy-to-manage residential investment in a superb location - with scope to add another floor, subject to planning."

More details are available from the agent at 01-6766566.

## Ranelagh property with shopfront for €800,000 has room to live in

BY TINA-MARIE O'NEILL

Buyers in the market for an interesting opportunity, whether they are owner-occupiers, investors or considering living above their own business in a trendy, busy south Dublin suburb, might consider a property for sale with Knight Frank in Ranelagh in Dublin 6.

No 18 Sandford Road is a terraced building comprising an original shopfront with independent access and a front door providing access to the sizeable residential accommodation beyond. The property extends to about 178 square metres over three storeys, is in need of modernisation and the agent is guiding €800,000 for it.

The property comprises an entrance hall opening left into a kitchen overlooking the rear patio area. The shop area at the front (which is no longer in commercial use) has its own front door and is fitted out with shelving and storage



No 18 Sandford Road extends to 178 square metres



The three-storey property has a living room upstairs

cabinets. At the rear is a shower with separate WC, a double bedroom and a door to the garden.

Upstairs, a living room

and ceiling cornice spans the width of the property on the first floor, overlooking Sandford Park School. There is a double bedroom adjacent, a kitchenette opening

onto a sunny roof terrace and a shower room.

There are two rooms at second-floor level in the eaves with sizeable dormer windows which could be configured as two double bedrooms.

There is also a useful rear patio area with rear pedestrian lane-way access.

Ranelagh Village offers an extensive choice of restaurants, cafes, bars and specialist boutiques. For those commuting to the city centre, it is less than a 30-minute walk or you can opt for the Luas Green Line stop at Ranelagh or Beechwood, which arrives at St Stephen's Green in five minutes.

A number of frequent Dublin Bus routes also provide easy access to and from the city centre. Prestigious schools close by include Gonzaga College, Sandford Park, Alexandra College and St Michael's College. UCD Belfield is a few minutes' drive away.

For more details contact Knight Frank's Guy Craigie at 01-6342466.

## Northwest Logistics Park units sold for €47.9 million to Savills fund

BY TINA-MARIE O'NEILL

Park Developments has agreed the sale of a portfolio of prime logistics units at Northwest Logistics Park to a fund managed by Savills Investment Management (Savills IM) for a price in the region of €47.9 million.

The portfolio comprises four modern, high-spec buildings extending to over 22,483 square metres in total and let on long-term leases.

Northwest Logistics Park is one of Dublin's premier logistics locations, ideally positioned convenient to the M50, Dublin International Airport, Port Tunnel and all of the main arterial routes from Dublin city.

The sale demonstrates the continued success of Northwest and its attractiveness to both occupiers and investors.

The park has a strong track record of attracting high-cal-



A portfolio of prime logistics units at Northwest Logistics Park sold for €47.9 million

ibre occupiers. Also, further opportunities are available with 80 acres of undeveloped land and planning permission in place for three new industrial and logistics facilities, ranging in size from 3,715 to 11,150 square metres, two of which are currently under construction. The portfolio will be acquired by Savills IM's European Commercial Fund – a pan-European, multi-sector

fund focusing on office, retail and logistics assets. Savills IM has more than €21.2 billion assets under management globally. The purchase represents another significant investment in the Irish market for the fund, which is actively seeking further investment opportunities in Ireland.

Park Developments is one of Ireland's most respected and long-established devel-

opment and building companies. Established in 1962, it has forged a reputation for building high-quality residential and commercial properties.

Park Developments was represented by joint agents Savills and CBRE along with legal advisors Gore & Grimes solicitors. Savills IM were advised by law firm A&L Goodbody.

## Kilcock site on market for €4m

BY TINA-MARIE O'NEILL

Savills has launched lands for sale at Branganstown in Kilcock, Co Kildare on the instructions of Ken Fennell, the statutory receiver of certain assets of construction firm Chesford Developments Ltd.

The site is being offered for sale at a guide price of €4 million subject to contract.

Located beside the well-established residential developments of Oughterany Village (Phase 1), Royal Meadows and Chambers Park, these greenfield lands, which extend to about 7.97 acres, have the benefit of a full grant of planning permission for 66 dwellings (12 detached and 54 semi-detached).

The lands are conveniently situated 1km south-east of Kilcock town centre



A site for sale at Branganstown near Kilcock, Co Kildare

close to all local amenities and services. Three local primary schools and a local secondary school are located within a short distance, while sporting amenities are also plentiful in the area.

A popular commuter town, Kilcock is located

some 35km west of Dublin city centre and has a direct train service to Dublin and easy proximity to the M4 (Junction 9).

The lands are located along the proposed route of the Royal Canal Greenway, which is due to be extended by 2023.

On the back of several recent successful transactions and due to the high demand for ready-to-go sites with planning permission in the Greater Dublin Area, particularly in locations such as this one, which is well served by public transport, Savills is confident that this opportunity will attract a considerable level of interest.

John Swarbrigg of Savills said: "This provides an excellent development opportunity with planning permission for an attractive scheme of 66 houses, comprising three- and four-bed semi-detached and detached family homes in a well-established residential location in Kilcock. Ready-to-go residential sites such as the Branganstown lands have traded well in recent times, and we are confident this sale will generate a high level of interest."