

Selling the vision

*HOW PROPERTY STAGING FOR VIEW UNITS CAN SHORTEN
SALES CYCLES, IMPROVE BUYER ENGAGEMENT, AND
REDUCE MONTHLY HOLDING COSTS.*



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Introduction

WHY STYLING MATTERS IN TODAY'S MARKET

Selling a property in today's market presents some unique challenges before us: buyers are no longer turning up at sales suites as their first step but they're scrolling through listings online. In our digital-first environment, a property has only seconds to grab attention and if the photography looks flat or uninviting, buyers simply move on.

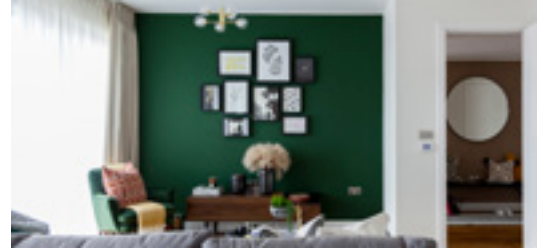
This is where professional staging makes a real difference. A styled sale unit doesn't just look beautiful but it tells a story. It allows potential buyers to picture themselves living there, with a clear sense of how the space can look and feel when furnished.

For developers, this is more than just an aesthetic decision. Bare units start to cost money the moment construction finishes. Finance charges, council tax, estate charges, utilities, and ongoing marketing spend all take a share from the profits. A faster sale doesn't just improve cash flow; it also directly helps reduce these carrying costs. Styling is therefore not decoration but a strategic sales tool.



A Financial Insight

What costs does a developer carry on completed but remaining units?



FINANCE

Loans don't stop costing money once the building is finished. In 2025, senior development loans are priced at about SONIA + 3.5% to 5.5%, which means around 7.5%–10% per year. If mezzanine finance is used, that's even higher, often 10%–20% per year, with many lenders advertising 12%+ rates. On top of interest, slow sales can mean extra charges: lender extension fees, exit fees, surveyor visits (still needed after completion), plus legal and broker costs.



LOCAL TAXES

Council tax starts as soon as the home is complete, not when it's sold. In England, the average Band D rate for 2025/26 is £2,280 per year, though London varies by borough. If the property sits empty for one continuous year, councils now charge an "empty homes premium". View homes and sales suites are treated as commercial, so they pay business rates instead of council tax.



SERVICE & ESTATE CHARGES

For flats, developers cover service or estate charges on view units and often top up shortfalls until the building is fully occupied. Typical London charges run £2–£10 per sq. ft per year, depending on amenities like a concierge, gym, or energy-efficient systems.

A Financial Insight

What costs does a developer carry on completed but remaining units?



UTILITIES & INSURANCE

Even empty homes cost money to keep connected. Ofgem's cap shows standing charges of about 51p/day for electricity and 30p/day for gas. Water companies also apply fixed charges, plus metered usage where relevant. Insurance is usually part of the building's service charge for apartments, but single houses may need special void or unoccupied cover, which is more expensive.



SALES & MARKETING

Ongoing spend includes property listings (Rightmove, Zoopla), paid ads, on-site sales staff, and running show homes. Rightmove has reported steadily rising average monthly fees.



OPERATIONAL EXTRAS

Even after completion, homes still create smaller running costs like fixing snags during the defects period, security and cleaning for empty units, and compliance checks like legionella flushing or alarm testing. Cashflow linked to Section 106 or CIL may also overlap with slow sales, bringing interest charges or penalties if payments are delayed.

An Example

For Illustration Only

Every month, a completed property that remains in the market quietly adds to the costs for developers.

Here's a hypothetical example of a scenario

Imagine a £600,000 two-bed flat in London. With a £400k loan at 9%, plus an optional £100k mezzanine loan at 15%, here's what the monthly costs might look like:

Loan Interest: £3,000 on the main loan, plus another £1,250 if the mezzanine is used

Council Tax: about £199 a month (Band E example)

Service Charge: roughly £233 a month (for a mid-amenity building)

Utilities: around £25 a month in standing charges

Total (if mezzanine is included): £4,707 a month (£154 a day)

Total (without mezzanine): £3,457 a month (£114 a day)



The Case of Staging View Units



Many developers assume that once a view unit is established, their marketing work is done. This misconception becomes costly when early buyer momentum slows and units start accumulating carrying costs.

WHY STAGING MATTERS AFTER LAUNCH

As you progress through sales phases, you encounter different buyer profiles, those who need more convincing and emotional connection. Empty view units leave too much to the imagination. UK market research shows unstaged properties take 199 days to sell versus just 32 days for staged units. (Based on pre-pandemic period vs. the post-pandemic period)



VISUAL REPOSITIONING WITHOUT PRICE CUTS

Professional staging allows you to reposition challenging units without changing fundamentals. A compact layout becomes "efficient modern living" for optimal functionality. Staging provides buyers with a clear lifestyle vision rather than asking them to imagine possibilities.



The Case of Staging View Units



SUPERIOR TO PRICE INCENTIVES

When sales slow, developers often resort to stamp duty contributions or price reductions. These tactics reduce margins and signal market weakness. Staging works differently, it increases perceived value. Professional staging costs 1% of unit value but can add about 8-25% to sale prices, as per industry reports.



MAKING THE PUSH

A staged show unit lets buyers picture the life they could have. Once they feel that connection, the urgency is real, and they're far more likely to move fast to make it theirs.



The Psychology of First Impressions



The property industry often talks about location and specification, but in reality, emotion drives most purchase decisions. Buyers typically form an impression of a property within seconds of seeing it, whether online in a portal listing or in person at a viewing. They like to envision their personal lives in the space and if it'll fit into that idea.

According to a study by Zoopla, 84% of UK movers believe that staging a property is important, while over half believe their property sales would've benefited from professional staging.

A styled show home or a dressed view unit guides that first impression. Through balanced layouts, thoughtful colour palettes, and the right finishing touches, styling helps create a sense of "home" before any logical consideration of square footage or EPC ratings takes place.

The Psychology of First Impressions



It is important to note that the impact is beyond visual. Professionally dressed properties photograph better, which increases their online presence and ratings, with various data suggesting that better photographed properties sell 30-32% faster and receive triple the number of enquiries.

“Styling isn’t just about decoration, but it’s about creating a vision, an emotional connection for viewers and buyers. When a buyer can walk into a space and they begin to imagine their life unfolding within the walls, colours, and furnishings in the space, the sale is half done.”
— Mansi Mehra, Director, InStyle Direct

By engaging buyers emotionally, styled properties convert interest into action. They encourage longer viewings, stronger attachment, and faster decision-making.

Styling vs. Furnishing

What's the Difference?



Regular furnishing means the must-have pieces that make a space liveable and comfortable; for example, adding functional furniture like a sofa, bed, or dining table. Styling is a strategic and creative process that involves ensuring every corner of your room looks desirable, comfortable, and visually compelling while also complementing all the main furniture. It essentially involves sourcing and aesthetically arranging design elements and products with a lot of attention.



Styling vs. Furnishing

What's the Difference?

Take a look at some of the key differences between these two styling approaches.

Standard furnishing approach:

- Lack of cohesive design theme
- Minimal or no attention to supporting elements like artwork or accessories
- Space and layout are not optimised to their potential
- Standard colour scheme that lacks personality
- Provides little emotional engagement

Professional styling approach:

- Carefully curated spaces that take the target demographic into design consideration
- Cohesive look with mood boards and curated palettes throughout the property
- Strategic placement of artwork and supporting accessories to create a lived-in appeal, and add lifestyle narratives
- Layouts are optimised for maximum space and lighting
- Careful placement to ensure photography angles and marketing requirements

Buyers notice the difference right away. A styled space feels thoughtful, inviting, and ready to live in. It looks great in photos, works perfectly for marketing, and creates those picture-perfect moments today's buyers love to see.



The Benefits of Professionally Staged Property

Professional styling strengthens every part of a sales and marketing programme:

FASTER SALES CYCLE

Professionally staged properties sell 30% faster than unfurnished ones. Their strategic furnishing and styling help them during the marketing and viewing stage, significantly speeding up sales. For developers incurring costs of £3,000–£4,700 per unoccupied unit, this time reduction directly impacts profitability.



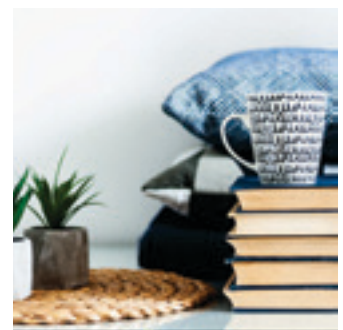
BETTER MARKETING ASSETS

Professionally styled properties create compelling content across all marketing channels, from making a strong visual impact for brochures and online listings to garnering high engagement on social media during photography, videography, and virtual tours.



JUSTIFIED PRICING

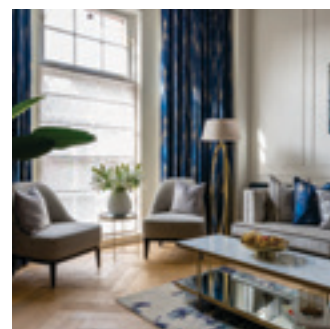
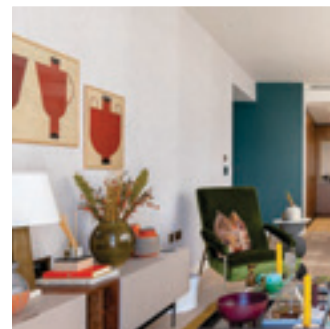
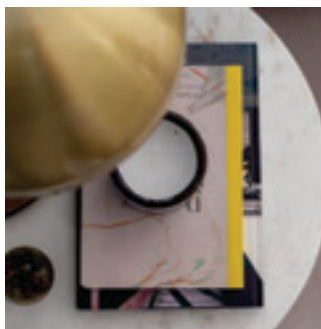
As per Property Reporter data, styling can boost property value by around 10%, sometimes even up to 25%. The high-quality furnishings, thoughtful layout, and close attention to detail make such spaces worth a premium price.



The Benefits of Professionally Staged Property

EARNING BUYER'S TRUST

For prospective buyers, styling is a sign that developers truly care about quality and want to give them a unique experience. This builds trust among buyers, extending beyond the individual property to the entire development, making buyers more likely to recommend it to others. For developers with multi-phase projects, early sales build momentum. They set the tone and give later buyers more confidence to commit.



THE MEASURABLE RESULT OF STYLING

3x
FASTER
SALES

Multiple industry reports note that professionally staged properties sell 3X faster. (Source: Estate Agent Today, The Home Staging Association UK & Ireland, Neilsons Solicitor & Estate Agents)

75%
LONGER
VIEWINGS

Estate agents in the UK say people spend about three-quarters more time inside a staged home, taking in the details and imagining themselves living there. (Source: Estate Agent Today)

10%
PREMIUM
PRICE

Staging increases property prices by 10%, with the potential of a 25% increase. (Source: Property Reporter data)

1000%
ENGAGEMENT

When a property is styled well, it becomes a thumb-stopping moment. Photos of staged properties increase online engagement from 2 seconds to 20 seconds, as many market research studies show. (Source: Home Staging Association UK)



SUCCESS IN ACTION

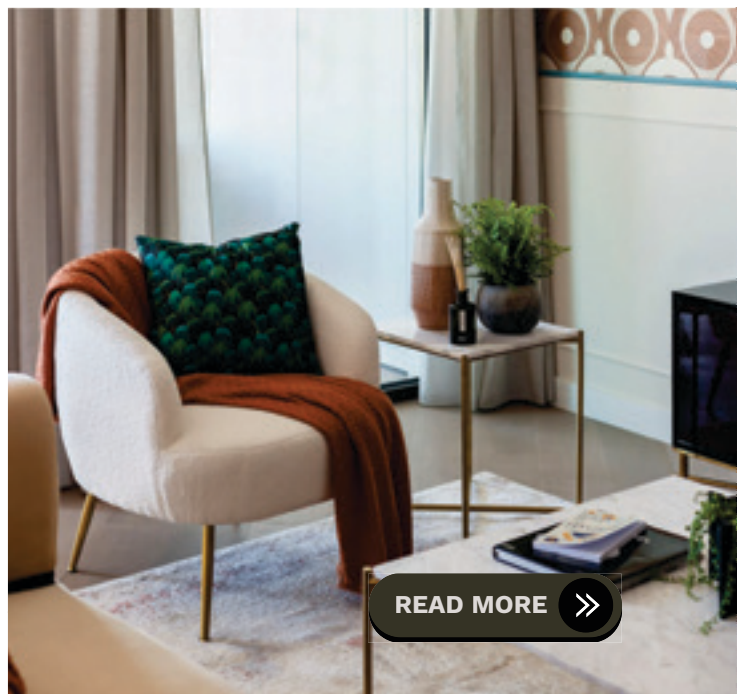
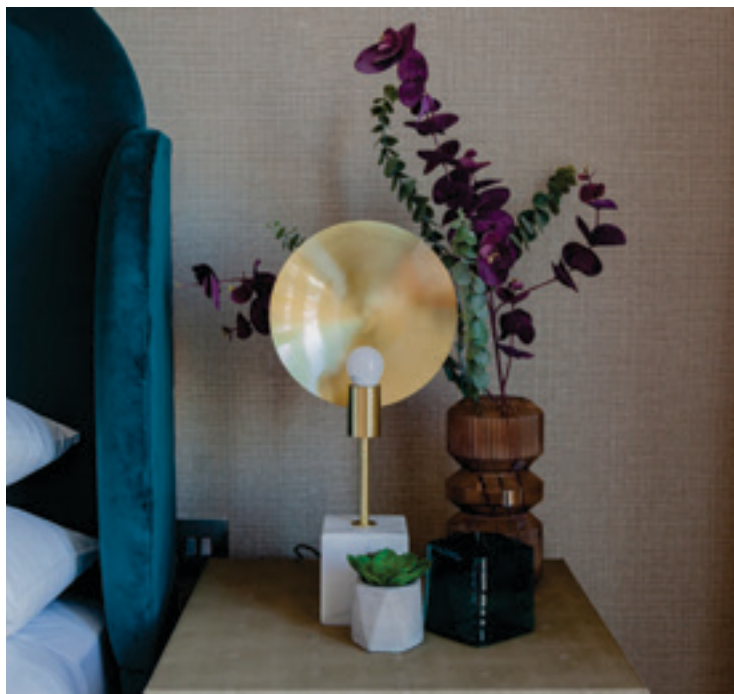
Evidence points to professionally styled homes selling up to three times faster and attracting more buyers. InStyle Direct's recent staging successes echo this trend—units sold swiftly.





BERKELEY'S WEST END GATE

At Berkeley's prestigious W2 development, InStyle Direct styled the view unit with a tailored furniture package that made an instant impact. The property received an offer right away and sold within just four weeks, which is much quicker than the London market average, leaving the Berkeley team thrilled with the result.

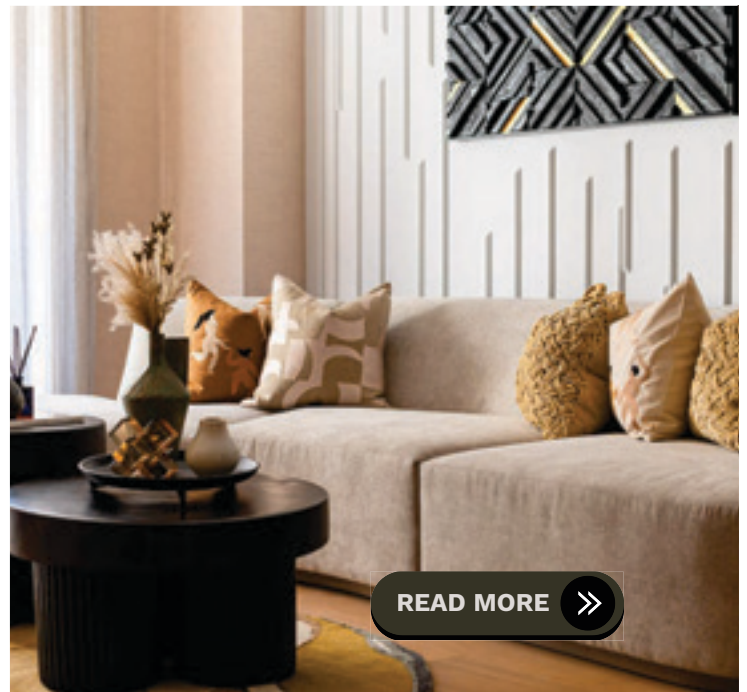


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LINCOLN SQUARE

Lincoln Square by Lodha UK is a luxurious development in central London. The InStyle Direct team staged eight units, employing various strategic approaches – from Japandi themes to bespoke 3D walls – to bring out the uniqueness of each unit, resulting in each unit getting quickly sold.

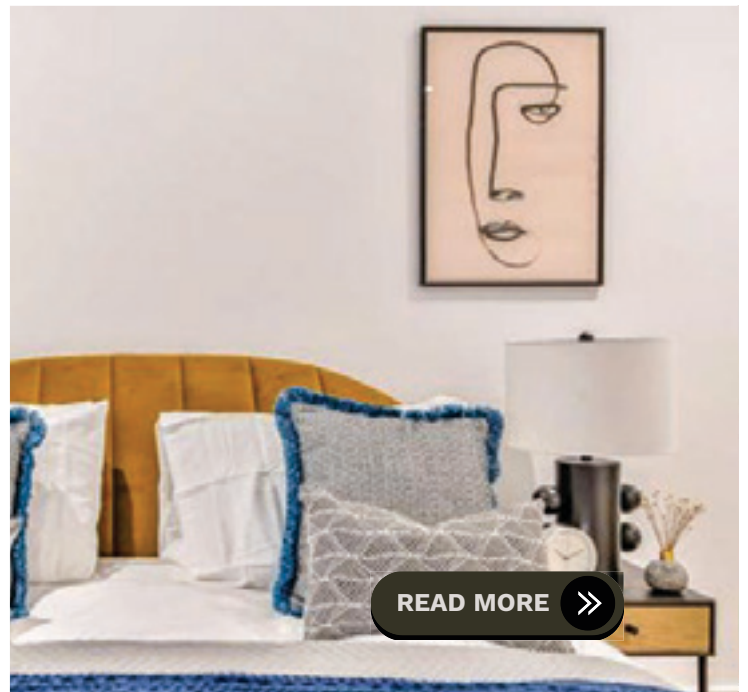
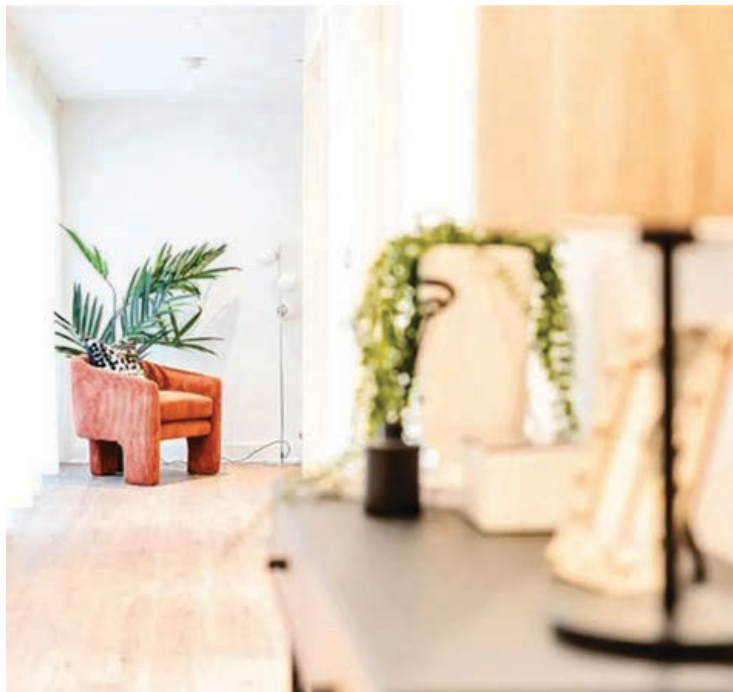


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MCGRATH GROUP

For this beautiful development, we handled full furnishing and space planning with a smart, cost-effective approach. By combining modern design with clever space solutions, we made the most of every inch of the property. As a result, the show homes' success led to the sale of many units using tried-and-tested solutions customised for McGrath. Our transformation was well-received by buyers and investors alike, proving our creative ability to work with multiple budget options while not compromising on quality.

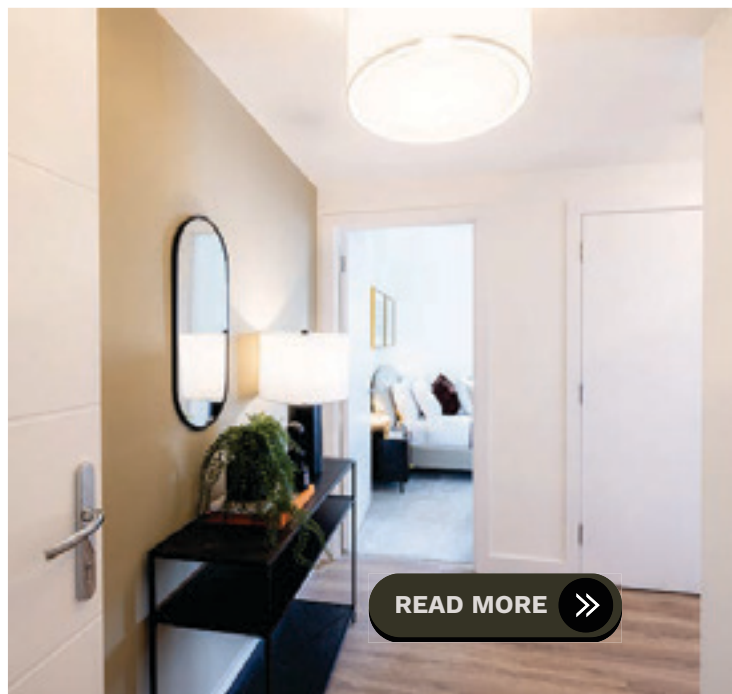


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SQUARE ROOTS' PINTAIL HEIGHTS

Our longstanding partnership with Square Roots has consistently driven exceptional results. The show unit at this new development was made to attract young professionals and first-time buyers. InStyle Direct rose to the challenge by delivering a contemporary design and a cohesive look that resonated with the target audience. It resulted in the quick sale of four flats within the development.



[READ MORE](#)



The Process

STEP 1

CONSULTATION

Our project managers and design team work closely with developers to understand the reason behind the remaining inventory. We often visit the property, review the layout, and suggest the best staging approach to bring out its full potential.

STEP 2

PROPOSAL & PRESENTATION

After the first consultation and a walkthrough of the unit, our designers prepare a tailored furnishing plan to bring the property to life and make it more appealing to buyers.

STEP 3

DELIVERY & INSTALL

With our in-house design team, we specialise in fast turnarounds—our furniture packs can often be delivered and installed within 24 to 48 hours, depending on availability. We also take care of all packaging and waste, making sure it's disposed of responsibly and sustainably.

STEP 4

FINAL TOUCHES

From attractive window dressings to cosy cushions, statement items and more, our team adds the final touches after installing the primary furniture to ensure you have a professionally styled unit ready for sale. We also offer add-on photography and videography to help market sale suits at their best.

Because everything is managed in-house, developers and agents benefit from speed and simplicity. Many installations can be completed within 48 hours once stock is agreed.

Why Partner with us?



Professional expertise

A team of talented designers and skilled professionals with over 100 years of combined experience in the residential space help keep void periods to a minimum while maximising potential rental income.



Hassle-free solutions

With a dedicated team to manage everything - from the initial consultation to final delivery, installation and waste removal, landlords and homeowners get end-to-end service.



In-house fleet

While the company's in-house fleet ensures fast deliveries of all packages, the absence of sub-contractors makes their services stand out on quality and promise.



1000+ property furnishings

Completed every year since 2004.



20 years in the business

As a family-owned company established in 2004, InStyle Direct has completed over 1,000+ furnishing projects with over 2,000 developments furnished to date.



Overseas client and quick turnaround

With 75% of its clients being overseas landlords and homeowners, InStyle Direct boasts an exceptional track record of furnishing properties within 24 to 48 hours (subject to stock availability), often managing the entire process remotely.



10,000 sq.ft

London warehouse facilities.



90%

Properties staged by us sell within target timeline.



85%

Properties furnished by us let within a week.



Get in Touch



Professional staging is a practical and measurable tool that helps sell homes faster, reduces carrying costs, and strengthens marketing impact.

If you're launching a development or looking to realise the full potential of your view unit, discover how our professional guidance can maximise your investment.

Let's discuss how we can help transform your properties from spaces into homes that buyers can't wait to own.



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