

Trend-buster

York house prices hold up against regional fall

by **Mike Laycock**

Chief Reporter

ESTATE agents say York is bucking a nationwide and regional trend for falling house prices.

According to the latest housing market survey from the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), prices in the Yorkshire and Humber region have fallen for the seventh month running.

It says they declined at their fastest pace in the survey's history in February.

Nationally, 64.1 per cent more chartered surveyors reported a fall rather than a rise in house prices and in Yorkshire and Humber, 79 per cent reported a fall rather than a rise. However, new instructions to sell property increased at their fastest pace in Yorkshire and Humber since May 2007.

Local estate agents say the general picture in York is considerably brighter than the national situation.

David Beattie, director of Quantum, said: "York is bucking the trend. I don't think the city has seen anything like the decline that has been experienced elsewhere. We still have a lot of people wanting to come into the city, and also local



MARKET FORCES: York is bucking the national and regional trend on house sales. Above, Denise Howard of Smiles Allround

people that have confidence in the market."

Denise Howard, director of Smiles Allround, said that while market conditions were sluggish and difficult, and people were cautious, there was still a strength to the "mini-market" in York. She said the city was second only to Cambridge as a place to invest in buy-to-let

properties. In addition, she pointed out the University of York was to double in size, and some parents would be buying their sons and daughters properties to live in during their time as students.

"People still have to live, to buy property and to rent," Denise said. "We have just sold a property in Osbaldwick very

quickly, that we could have sold four times over."

Colin Cain, director of Otisdale, said: "On the whole, the market in York is holding its own.

"York has always done very well in difficult times.

"If you are looking out of the window and it's raining, you cannot change the weather, but you can change your attitude towards it.

"Estate agents are having to work a lot harder to maintain the level of sale."

The news comes after The Press reported yesterday how York's rental market was booming. We featured a luxury apartment at Mill Mount House up for rent at a staggering £2,495 a month. The fully-furnished Grade II listed apartment is the most expensive currently on offer from the Micklegate office of Linley & Simpson.

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Is York still a good place to buy or rent a property?
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'Cities like York are still the place to be'

WHILE the national housing market may be mired in doom and gloom, that's certainly not the case for delighted first-time York buyer Sonia Archer.

The 23-year-old occupational therapist at Leeds General Infirmary is now the proud owner of a new two-bedroomed mid-terrace home in Pottery Lane, which she found through The Press Property.

And she's confident her purchase, handled through Fossgate estate agents Smilesallround, will prove to be a wise one. Sonia said: "If

things do go badly for the housing market, I believe cities



such as York, which are strong tourist areas, are still going to be the place to be.

"Looking back on it, I'm really pleased with how smoothly the move has been. I was gazumped on one property last year, but had an offer accepted on this one just before Christmas and now I have got my own space with a nice

garden and I'm just ten to 15 minutes from town.

"I've always wanted to live in York because it's such a lovely town, as well as being where I went to university and where all my friends are.

"I've got the house I was looking for the price I wanted to pay without it being too daunting or having a struggle to find a mortgage lender, so I'm really happy."

● See tomorrow's The Press Property supplement, the top local guide to buying and selling your home.

Residents in waste incinerator fight

RESIDENTS are determined to fight plans for an £18 million waste incinerator on the edge of a village near York.

More than a hundred people braved the weather last night to pack into Tockwith church to voice their concerns about an application to North Yorkshire County Council for permission to build an incinerator at BCB Environmental Management's site on Marston Moor Industrial Estate, at Tockwith.

Earlier this month, The Press reported the plan had been backed by the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly.

But at last night's meeting, Harrogate councillor John Savage said: "A lot has been made by BCB about the support they have received for this application from the Assembly. This was a response from a planning sub-committee which, in my opinion, failed to fully consider the environmental

implications of the proposal."

When operating, the plant would generate an estimated ten megawatts of electricity through its combination of gasification and oxidation to destroy waste and recover its energy.

The company will use the energy it needs to run the plant and the excess will be sold to the National Grid.

The majority of local people are strongly opposed to the

scheme, citing potential problems with smells, health and increased traffic.

Last night, Harrogate Borough Council leader Mike Gardner said: "I have noticed that far less has been said about the objection to the proposal lodged by the Environment Agency."

Harrogate Borough Council will meet to decide its response to the application after Easter.

UK & WORLD news

Serial killer link to French murder

THE father of an English student murdered in France in 1990 said a decision to make a serial killer the chief suspect should have been taken three years ago, but police preferred to work on "easier cases".

Joanna Parrish, 20, was killed in Auxerre in May 1990, but French police never caught the man who left her naked body in a river.

They yesterday named Michel Fourniret, 65, who has admitted killing in the past, and his wife Monique Olivier as formal suspects in connection with the kidnap, rape and murder of Ms Parrish, from Newnham-on-Severn, Gloucestershire.

Booze risk ignored

BRITONS are unaware of the risk of brain damage from strokes caused by binge drinking, health campaigners say. The Stroke Association said an estimated 60 per cent of people were not aware that strokes can be caused by drinking six or more units of alcohol at a single sitting.



Bag fashion wanes

THE celebrity-endorsed It bag is on the way out, according to research published today. Market research firm Mintel predicts that while sales should hit the £553 million mark in the UK handbag market this year, that is just 18 per cent up on 2007 figures.

Card fraud on up

FRAUD on credit and debit cards soared by 25 per cent last year to reach a record high despite the introduction of chip and pin, figures showed today. The cost of fraud on UK cards totalled £535.2 million during 2007 according to payments body Apacs.

Bombing tribute

SPAIN'S King Juan Carlos laid a wreath at a glass monument to the victims of the Madrid train bombings on the fourth anniversary of the terror attacks. He and Queen Sofia and a crowd of several thousand, observed two minutes of silence as a choir, dressed in black, sang a piece inspired by the massacre.



Snake bite horror

A BRITISH wildlife student has died in South Africa after being bitten by a deadly black mamba. Nathan Layton, 27, of Wing, Buckinghamshire, was bitten by the snake as he walked in long grass with a group of teachers and fellow students.

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