



Property Refurbishment: Case Study

An in-depth look at one of Limelight's recent, whole property refurbishments to create a superb-quality, high-performing 5-bedroom HMO

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About the Property and Location

The property started as a 3-bedroom family home located a 2-minute walk from the centre of Shotton and within easy reach of Deeside's industrial zones, Chester and the Wirral. All upstairs bedrooms and the bathroom were of a good size, while downstairs the kitchen and room layout gave scope for a range of options. Behind the house a good-sized enclosed rear yard gave room for bike storage or a place to socialise. The property's internal layout, capacity to make 5 good-sized bedrooms, 2 separate shared bathrooms and geographical location right in the middle of Shotton, made it a superb candidate for conversion to a functional HMO.



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Pre and During- Refurbishment Condition

The property although lived in had become too much for the owners to manage and to be suitable to let required complete modernisation throughout. A thorough analysis of the property was undertaken in conjunction with selected contractors and the following work scheduled:

- Double glazing throughout the property
- Full electrical rewire including specifying additional sockets in all rooms
- Fitting wired-in smoke alarm and sensors throughout the property
- Installation of gas central heating through the property including new gas boiler
- Refit full kitchen including all appliances, surfaces and floor
- Fitting of modern plastic water pipes throughout the property where feasible
- Installation of fibre broadband
- Refit 2 bathrooms with modern appliances
- Erection of internal stud walls to create separate rooms
- Repair and re-skim interior walls and replace skirting board and all interior doors
- Fix loose floorboards and fit new carpets throughout
- Full redecoration throughout
- Completion of gas, electrical and fire safety checks
- Room preparation of 6 bedrooms with bed, wardrobe, bedside cabinet and all soft furnishings

Kitchen

The original kitchen while functional was in need of complete renovation to create the storage, refrigeration, washing and cooking capacity required to accommodate 5 people.



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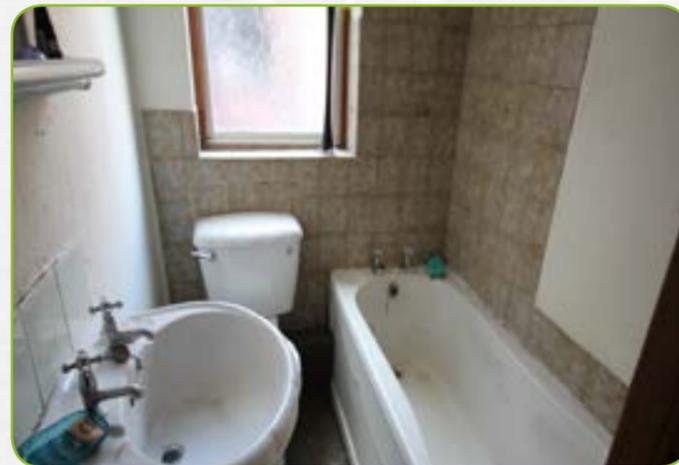


Living Room

The living room was basic and unwelcoming as a communal room. It was decided to retain the fireplace as an area in which to house the television and provide a focal point for the room.

Upstairs Bathroom

The upstairs bathroom's existing fittings were unsuitable and had to be removed. As the bath takes up most of the available space it was decided that only a shower would be fitted during refurbishment to create an impression of space.



Downstairs Bathroom

As can be seen, the property didn't include a downstairs bathroom. As 2 bathrooms were required, the archway that lead to a small study / storage area was partitioned off and a completely new full-sized bathroom installed in the space. The installation of a downstairs bathroom illustrates the value that can be added when experienced property experts working closely with professional tradespeople give care and thought to configuring older properties as modern HMOs.



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Post-Refurbishment and Room Preparation

Rooms and communal areas were dressed to appeal to working tenants wanting comfortable and modern yet affordable living. Furniture and fixtures that offered a compromise between affordability and longevity were chosen and rooms are representative of how Limelight can dress other landlords' rooms and properties under its 'Room Preparation' service.



Kitchen

The kitchen was completely transformed into a modern and fully-functional area complete with washing machine, tumble dryer, dishwasher and electrical appliances. Sufficient storage space was installed to allow each tenant a large cupboard, while 2 large fridge-freezers were discretely installed. 2 microwaves and 2 separate ovens were specified, allowing tenants to prepare separate meals at the same time.

A hard-wearing and easy-to-clean tiled floor was also fitted, with the result a versatile kitchen area that tenants can easily clean and manage.



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Bedrooms

5 lockable bedrooms were prepared and all included a range of functional and affordable yet long-lasting furniture, carpets and soft furnishings.

A modern and neutral yet welcoming colour scheme was chosen to appeal to male and female tenants.



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The proliferation of electrical appliances associated with modern living can place demands on older homes, so a number of additional plug sockets were included in each room.

A Freeview TV aerial socket was also specified in each bedroom.



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Bathrooms

The main bathroom (top left) was transformed into modern and functional space complete with shower, toilet, hand basin, mirror and towel rail / radiator. Storage for towels and toiletries was also provided. The downstairs bathroom (top right) housed in what used to be a small study illustrates what can be achieved with clever use of space and design, coupled with experience renovating HMOs to meet the demands of modern tenants.

Communal Room

The communal room (right) houses a 2-seater sofa and 2 modern chairs and uses the former fireplace to house the television. Communal areas are not always an option due to space but in this property it offers a distinct selling point that is proving popular with tenants.



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Summary

Refurbishment was achieved on schedule and within budget. The result is a modern HMO that will be able to command among the highest per-room rental prices in the area, while also achieving a high occupancy rate. The considered selection of appliances, furniture and fittings that will withstand heavy use should also help ensure that property maintenance bills are minimised, further helping the landlord / investor achieve an attractive ROI.

As an example of a 'turnkey' solution, this property illustrates the full range of services Limelight offers local, national or international landlords and investors looking to refurbish part or whole of a property or prepare rooms and communal areas for immediate let. If you require similar services or simply wish to discuss property letting, management or investing across the region, then please get in touch. I look forward to speaking with you.



I head Limelight Letting and have been involved in residential and commercial property in the private and public sectors for over 20 years. My and my team's knowledge of all things property, together with our resources within the larger letting, property and portfolio management network enable me to offer landlords and tenants expert guidance and support whatever their situation. I also host Chester's Property Investors Network (pin), a monthly meeting where anyone interested in property investing can come and add to their existing property knowledge and skills and develop their network.

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