

New future for Newcastle city centre landmark building Cathedral Square

A North East real estate company is set to transform empty space at a prominent office block in Newcastle city centre into new flats.

Cathedral Square, a 1970s office block built on the site of Newcastle's former town hall, looks out over the Bigg Market and Newcastle Cathedral and is known as the starting point for the annual Blaydon Race.

The building was [bought a year ago for £8m](#) by Newcastle regional property and investment specialists Monument Real Estate, which set out on securing its future with new plans.

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Now Monument has secured planning consent to develop 35 new residential unit at 2 Cathedral Square.

The firm has also completed a lease renewal at 1 Cathedral Square, which will see the Secretary of State – the Jobcentre on the ground floor and the Government offices above – remain in occupation of 37,000 sq ft of office space until at least 2028. Other occupiers across the two properties include Revolucion da Cuba bar, Photoline and the Co-op Bank.

Monument, which was established in 2016 and works out of offices in Newcastle and Leeds, acquired the building with the backing of a consortium of private investors. The firm is now working towards securing full planning consent before the end the year, with a view to starting conversion works in 2023.

Tom Wooldridge, executive director and founder of Monument, said: "On the first anniversary of our purchase we have

delivered both the lease renewal and residential consent which together make for a very promising and exciting future for Cathedral Square.

“Our proposed development of 2 Cathedral Square will see vacant offices repurposed under Permitted Development Rights for an alternative use, where there is genuine demand. Our designs for the residential scheme will have a positive impact on the building and continue the fantastic regeneration journey of this city centre location.”

Tim Bailey, partner at Xsite Architecture, who is working with Monument on the residential plans, said: “We are delighted to have helped gain this permission. Repurposing existing buildings is a key part of our sustainable futures and changing use to accelerate a vibrant mixed-use city centre aligns with Newcastle’s ambitions for a ‘15-minute city’.”

The ‘15 minute city’ concept forms part of the Net Zero Newcastle – 2030 Action Plan, and revolves around the principle that everyone has access to local goods, services and leisure within a 15-minute walk or cycle ride of their home.

Sam Earnshaw, senior surveyor at Cushman & Wakefield, who acted on behalf of the Secretary of State, said: “This is a great result for both parties, proving the effectiveness of a good landlord and tenant relationship. It’s been great to deal with Monument, thanks to their straightforward professionalism throughout the transaction.”

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