

'Eyesore' listed buildings set to be turned into flats

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TWO listed Aberystwyth University buildings labelled an "eyesore" by neighbours could be converted into flats after redevelopment plans were approved.

The two Grade II listed buildings, number 1 and number 9 Laura Place, have not been used by the university for several years and the university came under fire from local residents unhappy that the institution had allowed the buildings to fall into disrepair.

The university has now confirmed that the buildings have been sold, subject to contract, to developer AVB Properties. The company has been granted planning permission, subject to conditions, to convert the buildings into flats.

Approval of the plans, which would see 1 Laura Place turned into five flats and 9 Laura Place being converted into six flats, is still required by heritage body CADW.

The development of both buildings will require internal work.

A university spokesperson said: "The properties in Laura Place served the university well during the decades when Old College was the main focus of our activities.

"As teaching, research and administrative functions have moved to Penglais and our other campuses, these properties have become surplus to requirement and we do not unfortunately have the resources to maintain buildings which are no longer needed for core business purposes.

"They were independently valued and put on the open market as part of a wider strategy to dispose of empty properties which has been approved by the University Council.

"Both buildings have now been sold subject to contract."

Although the amount the two properties were sold for is not known, the university had initially marketed them at £630,000 in December 2017 with an asking price of £335,000 for 1 Laura Place and of £295,000 for 9 Laura Place.

If either of the properties are sold again within 12 months the university has inserted



Grade II listed 1 and 9 Laura Place have been sold by Aberystwyth University

an 'overage' clause which means it can claw back 50 per cent of any profits.

Developers said that no external work will be carried out except painting, and "original features will be cleaned and enhanced to their former glory" internally.

In a statement for listed building consent, developers said: "The proposal does not materially impact the appearance of the listed building but it does allow the building to adapt and become useful to potential occupiers.

"The proposed re-development will not have a detrimental impact on the setting of this or adjoining listed buildings or conservation area in general.

"The only changes from a visual perspective will be internally where access will be for residents and visitors only."

The sell off of the university's empty buildings comes as up to 100 jobs are at risk with the institution needing to make savings of £11.4m by 2020 to stave off "serious financial problems".

The university is also planning to sell 1 and 2 Marine Terrace, a pair of seafront Grade II listed buildings; and 2 King Street.