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Ability to move fast on acquisitions rewarded in commercial property market

According to leading names in commercial property, the current market is a feeding frenzy, with investors needing to act quickly and diligently when property comes to market in order to secure the best investments. Acting on behalf of a number of high profile clients, property consultants Tuffin Ferraby Taylor, says that the market is currently operating on an 'act now or miss out' basis, with vendors being able to pick and choose who to sell to and the most astute purchasers needing to rapidly deploy their team in order to secure the best deals for their stakeholders.

At the end of December last year, Tuffin Ferraby Taylor LLP oversaw the technical due diligence team that assisted Legal & General Property in securing the purchase of ING's £120 million Covent Garden portfolio. Gordon Aitchison, Head of Transactions at Legal & General Property, suggests that investment managers need to be in a position to complete a sale within weeks of a property going to market. Discussing the portfolio acquisition, he says: "This was prime real estate and a unique investment solution for capturing value from larger volume trade. With fierce competition from a number of investors, conditions of purchase depended on the ability to move fast and complete the purchase in an incredibly short timescale, without compromising on the highest standards of complex technical due diligence. Surveys were cleared within 5 days of instruction."

Seth Love-Jones, a Partner at Tuffin Ferraby Taylor LLP, who oversaw the technical due diligence team that operated on the Covent Garden portfolio, warns that speed must not be an excuse for a lack of diligence. He says: "During the boom years there was a belief from some investors that property prices only go up - and this led to a gung-ho attitude towards buyer due diligence. In these early stages of recovery, almost every property that comes to market will generate significant levels of interest. Traditionally high levels of interest lead to long drawn out transactions, however, with the majority of assets being sold to raise cash and reduce borrowings, vendors are now prioritising investors who can handle quick transactions. In the case of the large Covent Garden portfolio for Legal & General Property, completing due diligence to the high standards required, and in the timeframe available, meant having a team of 25 surveyors working on site around the clock for seven solid days."

In the two months of December 2009 and January 2010, Tuffin Ferraby Taylor has carried out transaction led technical due diligence on over one billion pound's worth of properties, for clients including Legal & General Property, Tesco and a number of private investors.

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Notes for editor

Contact details: **David Martin** - 07501 224 883 / dvmartin@tftconsultants.com
Tuffin Ferraby Taylor, The Tower Building, 11 York Road, London SE1 7NX
t: +44 (0) 20 7928 7998 f: +44 (0) 20 7928 2779

Image(s):

Tuffin Ferraby Taylor is a leading property and building consultancy offering commercial building solutions to clients in both the UK and overseas. We offer clients an expanding range of property services from a team that includes; building surveyors, project managers, architects, interior designers, conservation specialists and property management consultants.

With over 30 years in the property business, in both the private and public sector, TFT has unrivalled expertise, experience and enthusiasm in providing appropriate services for all types of property and on projects of all sizes. Our partners are considered experts in their field, held in high regard by colleagues and competitors alike and are **available to provide expert comment to the media** on a variety of property issues.

Established in 1973 the practice has grown to be one of the largest independent practices of its kind in the UK. TFT has 120 partners and staff operating from a network of regional offices in Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Kingston-upon-Thames and London.