



# Downton Shabby

## Lady Rosamund's Belgravia home in TV drama to be turned into a £90m mega-mansion ... after a little updating

Adrian Hearn

A BELGRAVIA townhouse named as the home of a Downton Abbey character could be transformed into a £90 million mega-mansion after being sold in one of the biggest deals of the past 12 months.

The imposing building, at 35 Belgrave Square, was bought for £40 million despite needing complete modernisation. It was sold quietly last year and details have emerged only after plans were submitted to transform it from tired offices into one of London's finest homes.

The property, built by Thomas Cubitt, is named as the home of Lady Rosamund Painswick in Downton Abbey.

But while the stucco-fronted property would have been one of the finest homes during the period Downton is set, the reality is the once-stunning Grade I-listed mansion is tired and dilapidated after years of commercial use.

As a result, ITV used a stately home in Buckinghamshire to film scenes featuring Lady Rosamund, who is played by Samantha Bond.

Lady Rosamund is the sister of Hugh Bonneville's Earl of Grantham, and aunt to Lady Mary and Lady Edith, portrayed by Michelle Dockery and Laura Carmichael.

The property features in season four of Downton, when Lady Edith stays with her aunt to avoid scandal after becoming pregnant.

Jersey-based company 35 Belgrave Square Limited owns the home and has submitted plans to restore it to its former glory. It wants to "reinstate the original grandeur" of the Regency townhouse along with the most significant original features. When com-

**Imposing:** 35 Belgrave Square, above, is named as the home of Downton Abbey's Lady Rosamund, played by Samantha Bond, above right, the aunt of Lady Edith, played by Laura Carmichael, left

"It's a very, very tired building but the rooms are fantastic. It has one of the finest addresses in London"

Estate agent Grant Wellbelove

pleted, it will be a £90 million home on one of London's finest and most exclusive squares. But first severe damp and dry rot must be fixed and the "most harmful alterations" of the mid-20th century removed.

There are also plans to excavate a new basement and sub-basement to make space for a gym and swimming pool.

Architects Quinlan and Francis Terry are behind the plans, which have been submitted to Westminster Council.

The ground floor will have a reception room and dining room while the first floor will feature huge sitting and drawing rooms. There will be six bedrooms with en-suites, a seventh bedroom and nanny quarters.

The lower ground floor will have the main kitchen, family room, billiards room and separate staff quarters.

Grant Wellbelove, from estate agency Wellbelove Quested, said: "35 Belgrave Square is a very, very tired building and some of it has been used as an office. But the building is fabulous and the rooms are fantastic.

"I think that when the work is completed it will be one of London's finest private homes.

"Belgrave Square is the jewel in the crown of Belgravia. It is without doubt one of the finest addresses in London."

Belgrave Square, a short distance from Buckingham Palace, is one of the capital's most historic garden squares.

Number 35 was built between 1826 and 1828 by Thomas Cubitt for the Grosvenor Estate, as part of the overall development of the square, to the designs of the architect George Basevi.

The first person to live at 35 was Sir John Shelley, the uncle of Mary.

It was taken over by The Royal Agricultural Society of England in 1955.

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