

Moderator's residence is on the market

The Church of Scotland is selling the official Edinburgh residence used by the Moderator of the General Assembly during their year in office, with offers invited over £890,000.

The elegant two-storey conversion at 2 Rothesay Terrace is part of an historic townhouse in the capital's West End.

It has been put up for sale as the cash-strapped Kirk continues to cull churches, halls and former manses in a bid to become "lean and fit for the 21st century".

The Church of Scotland purchased the "truly exquisite" property for use as the official residence for the Moderator in 1998.

The sale of one of the most notable residential properties in the Kirk's portfolio could now potentially raise around £1 million.

A spokesperson said the sale had sparked considerable interest with several viewings having taken place and more scheduled, adding: "We have had a lot of interest in the exquisite Rothesay Terrace property and viewings are still ongoing. No date has been fixed for a closing date as yet."

The property is one of 106 addresses currently being offered for sale around Scotland, ranging from tiny village kirks to

grand cathedral-style churches and a variety of residential properties.

The sales are part of a major restructuring exercise that has already seen some of Scotland's best-loved churches disposed of to release equity tied up in a portfolio that at one time numbered more than 5,000 properties.

Number 2 Rothesay Terrace is described in the sale brochure as a "truly exquisite ground and first floor conversion providing an excellent home in... one of the most desirable residential addresses in the capital."

Once owned by 19th century philanthropist and newspaper owner John Ritchie Findlay, in recent years the property has been the official and primary residence of the Moderator.

Located within walking distance of the Church of Scotland's HQ in George Street, it has also been used to host events and receptions with invited guests and dignitaries ranging from presidents to missionaries from around the world.

The three bedroom property with access to private gardens offers "stunning" views over Dean Village and the Firth of Forth, while also boasting proximity to the city centre's shops, theatres, and restaurants and a number of leading schools.

The most recent resident was the 2023-24 Moderator, the Very Rev Sally Foster-Fulton. Her successor, the current Moderator, Rev Dr Shaw J Paterson, now resides in a more modest Church of Scotland flat in the city.

It is unknown whether there will be an "official residence" in the future. However, it is understood the Church, which is trying to reduce the number of properties in its portfolio, will not seek to buy a replacement. A neighbouring property sold for £925,000 in March.

Soaring costs, falling congregations and dwindling ministers forced the Church of Scotland to set in motion a range of reforms in 2019 in order to recalibrate its dire financial position and stimulate the rebirth of community worship.

The spokesperson said: “Reducing the number of buildings we own has been one part of a raft of radical reforms being undertaken by the Church in recent years aimed at ensuring we are lean and fit for mission in the 21st century and have well equipped spaces in the right places.

“In the majority of cases, the money that is received from the sale of Church buildings is returned to local congregations or held centrally for their benefit and therefore does not reduce the national Church’s budget deficit.”

They added: “The Moderator’s role lasts for one year, during which they would have normally stayed in the official residence full time, and received guests and visitors there.

“The property is now being marketed for sale. We are reviewing plans as to where the Moderator might reside during their term in office in the future.”



Church of Scotland Moderator's official residence 2 Rothesay Terrace View



Church of Scotland Moderator's official residence 2 Rothesay Terrace for sale



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