



Lots of love for halfway there

SOME MAY ONLY HAVE A FACADE OR BE MISSING PARTS OF THE ROOF, BUT PARTIALLY COMPLETE SYDNEY HOMES ARE FETCHING HIGH PRICES AS BARGAIN BUYERS LOOK TO PICK UP THE PIECES WHEN OWNER-BUILDERS WITH GRAND PLANS FAIL TO FINISH THE JOB, REPORTS **AIDAN DEVINE**

THEY'RE often sold just as roof beams and wall framing – but half-finished Sydney houses have still changed hands for up to double the price of some completed homes.

With detached house listing numbers near record lows across much of the city, the under construction houses have recently sold for as high as \$1.65 million, despite needing extensive work to make them liveable.

One of the latest to hit the market is a house on Camden St in Newtown (pictured above with Raine and Horne-Newtown's Sarah Rosario), which goes to auction October 22 with a guide of

\$900,000. The property is being sold "as is", midway through an extensive renovation project.

Apart from the front facade, much of the house is framing only: there is no back wall and sections of the roof need to be fitted out.

The owner, a builder, had embarked on an overhaul of the property, but couldn't finish the project, according to selling agent Michael Harris of Raine and Horne-Newtown.

Further west, an incomplete house in Auburn is on the market with price expectations of about \$800,000.

The owner had originally intended to erect a double-storey

house, but only got as far as the first level.

Starr Partners agent Steven Sanders said the property is being sold as a "shell that needs windows and a bathroom".

Completing the building work would require a further investment upwards of \$100,000, Mr Sanders said.

The properties have followed similar sales, which included a Gordon property sold earlier this year as a concrete slab for \$1.65 million.

Building work had only got as far as the foundations.

Completed houses in regions such as Penrith and Fairfield, by

comparison, sell for between \$620,000 to \$740,000, on average, Core Logic data shows.

One agent admitted that prices for incomplete homes "defy logic".

"These homes used to be hard sales," he said.

"Homebuyers mostly want finished homes and builders or renovators prefer starting projects from scratch. That seems to have changed."

Bradfield Cleary agent Sam Green, who recently sold a stripped out one-bedroom unit in Lane Cove for \$482,000, said the high prices were the result of strong demand for properties perceived as bargains.

"People think they'll get a bargain on these properties, so they attract a lot of interest," Mr Green said.

Homes often sold unfinished due to a mix of rising land prices and a lengthy development approvals process, Castlehaven Realtors' Colin Moss said.

"Builders are purchasing land at inflated prices, but by the time they get approval to start construction two years could have passed," Mr Moss said.

"In that time, the price of bricks or other materials may have increased, so the builder's original costing will be all wrong. Halfway through they run out of money."