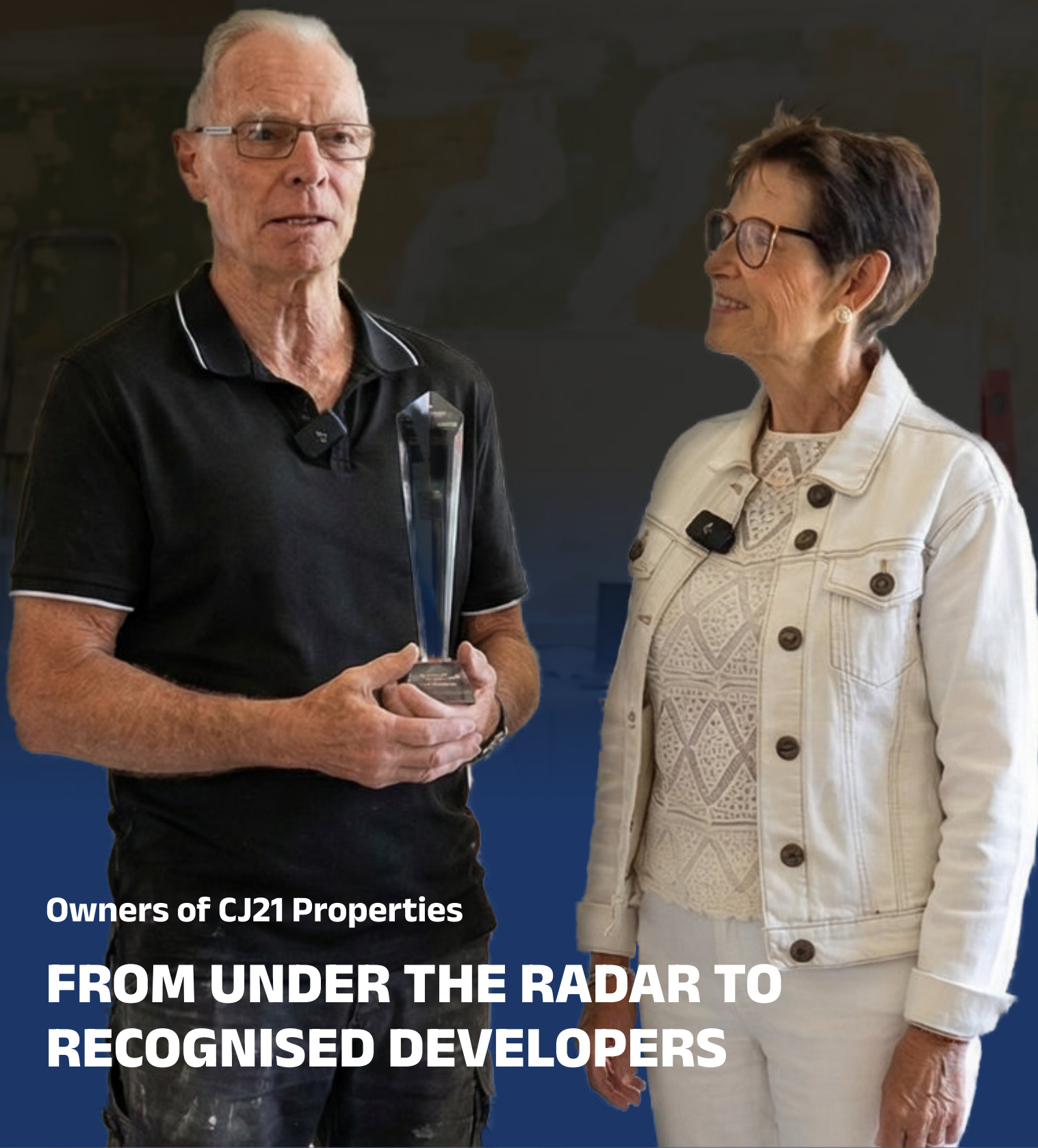


A Blue Bricks Case Study

# CHRIS & JO



Owners of CJ21 Properties

**FROM UNDER THE RADAR TO  
RECOGNISED DEVELOPERS**

- **STARTING POINT:**  
Established developers with limited visibility

- **RESULT:**  
Award-winning business with stronger positioning, relationship and opportunities



## Chris and J & CJ21 Properties

Chris and Johanna Phillips, Directors of CJ21 Properties, are experienced developers with a strong track record of delivering quality projects.

They focus on taking run-down properties and turning them into high-quality homes, with experience across buy-to-lets, commercial conversions, planning gain, HMOs and flips.

Despite this, much of their reputation sat within their existing network. They were doing more than most, but weren't being seen for it.



## THE PROBLEM

Chris and Jo are two of the most genuine and unassuming people in the industry.

Their online and in-person presence didn't reflect the level they were operating at or the quality of the projects they were delivering.

They were often surrounded by people looking to learn from them, rather than people who could challenge them or help them grow.

This made it harder to find the right partners, mentors, and higher-level opportunities.

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## What We Did



# WHAT WE DID



- Supported Chris and Jo with award submissions, resulting in them winning Commercial Conversion of the Year at the Blue Bricks Awards 2024 (judged by an independent panel)
- Featured CJ21 in Blue Bricks Magazine, putting their work in front of 10,000+ readers
- Secured speaking opportunities, allowing them to share their journey and experience
- Introduced them to key people within our network, leading to new team members, suppliers, a mentor, and a business partner
- Filmed one of their projects and shared it with thousands of people across our website, mailing lists, and social channels

CLICK TO WATCH

# Collaboration project with CJ21 Properties and Wildkind Interiors



Collaboration in the Property Industry



Blue Bricks Magazine

**WATCH NOW**



Chris & Jo Phillips | Commercial Conversion of The Year

When we were gifted a trophy at the Blue Bricks Property Awards for our commercial conversion in Huddersfield, we were blown away.

1024 Manchester Road has been the jewel of our property portfolio since its completion. It was one of those deals that just cracked, bringing us home a nice profit, without eating up years of our lives.

That said, it was a project with its fair share of unforeseen hiccups and challenges that reared their head during the refurbishment.

We hope that in reading about our deal, you learn from some of the errors we made (which will save you a good amount of money) and pick up some golden nuggets that help you with your next development.

#### A Quick Overview of the Project

Before we jump into the nitty gritty, let us give you a quick overview of the development: an old commercial property, spread across three floors, that we planned to convert into five two-bed flats and two commercial units.

The property was a curvy house on the ground floor, with one floor stationed above it and a one-bedroom dingy flat on the lower level below.

On the ground floor was a kitchen and dining area.

Then, on the first floor, was a nightclub... which (like the rest of the property) had seen better days.

Our idea was to convert the ground floor into two commercial shopfronts, with a two-bedroom apartment to the rear. We then wanted to install a staircase between the shopfronts which led to the first floor, giving our residential tenants their own entrance.

Our plans for the first and lower floors were to convert them into four two-bedroom apartments (two apartments on each floor). Planning was approved for this scheme, which is what we eventually pulled off.

Now that the overview is out of the way, let's get to the finer details.

#### From Disco to Dilapidated

The property wasn't in the best of shape when we found it. But, like a Tardis, it was much larger on the inside than originally meets the eye, when you're looking at it from the roadside.

We're not entirely sure about the history of the property, but when we walked through the front door, we were greeted with at least one- to two-hundred letters of demand.

What we do know, is that the property was on with an agent and didn't sell. It went to auction and didn't sell. Finally, it was brought to us through a friend and property investor, allowing us to strike a direct deal at £150,000 (a purchase which we funded with investor finance).

#### Beware of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

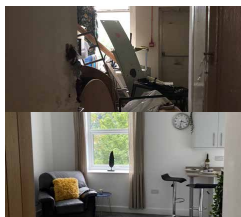
We didn't make an offer subject to planning, so we were certain that we would be eligible for permitted development (PD).

We knew that we'd have to apply for planning for the external changes (since the site was in a conservation area) which included repairing the roof as well as removing and installing windows. But, given we had PD, we were certain this wouldn't be an issue.

Then we got the bad news from the local council. We weren't applicable for PD rights because the area was in a HSE safety zone.

It turns out that ten years earlier, a chemical factory fire had erupted.

The chemical factory was over a mile away from our site and the edge of the HSE zone, was literally on the other side of the street where 1024 Manchester Road resided! One street was the difference between PD and a full planning application.



Before & after pictures of Chris's project

July/August 2024 | 21

Blue Bricks Magazine Feature

## Chris & Jo featured in Blue Bricks Magazine to showcase their award winning property project

# THE RESULT

Chris and Jo are now recognised within a wider circle of property investors and professionals.

Their positioning has improved significantly placing them in higher-level rooms with more like-minded individuals.



**Their positioning has improved significantly, placing them in higher-level rooms with more like-minded individuals.**



**They are no longer surrounded by people looking to take from them, but by people who can help them grow.**



**Through these relationships, they secured a mentor who supported them in completing their first HMO project.**



**They have also found it easier to raise finance, secure joint venture partners, and access better opportunities.**

## ACHIEVE THE SAME RESULTS

**Book Your Discover Session**

# WORDS FROM CHRIS & JO

“

*Working with Blue Bricks has been a big part of our growth over the last couple of years.*

*When Johanna and I first joined, we were already active in property, but most of what we were doing sat within our existing network.*

*What stood out straight away was the quality of people, the willingness to help, and the honest, no-nonsense approach.*

*Through Blue Bricks, we've made some fantastic connections and been introduced to people who have genuinely helped*

*us move forward, whether that's systems, partners, or specialist support we didn't previously have.*

*More importantly, it's helped raise our profile.*

*Since being involved, we've won an award for Best Ethical Commercial Conversion, which has significantly increased our visibility.*

*We've also been invited to speak at events and appear on podcasts, which has opened up new conversations and opportunities.*

*It's not about being everywhere, it's about being seen by the right people. And that's what Blue Bricks has helped us do.*

”

NEXT PAGE

**Achieve The Same Results**





**ACHIEVE THE SAME  
RESULTS AS CHRIS & JO**

**BOOK YOUR DISCOVERY CALL**