



PROPERTY Short-term lets offer maximum returns on property, writes **Rory Ford**

CENTRE OF ATTENTION The heart of Edinburgh is a prime location

Let's be thankful for small things

IF YOU'RE RENTING out a flat in Edinburgh you should ask yourself if you're getting the maximum return on your property.

Hold on, we're not suggesting that you artificially jack up the price. Try that – especially in this time of financial chaos – and your tenants will turn round and buy their own flat (or simply just leave to spite you). Serves you right too. HA!

No, the best way to maximise your investment in an Edinburgh property is to lease it out short to mid-term rather than the standard six-month contract.

Mark McCloud, the director of Clouds Property Management in Forth Street, started out renting what used to be his own flat as a furnished holiday let but warns of pitfalls. "It plays havoc with your social life and is so labour intensive," he says. "Now, our minimum letting period is four weeks and – even then – a lot of these flats are averaging 90 per cent occupancy."

McCloud highlights a studio flat in Edmonstone Close (pictured) – part of the old Traverse – as a prime example of



a flat that is ideal for short-term letting. The most anyone could reasonably charge for it on a long-term basis is £650 per month, but Clouds has it almost constantly occupied at £325 a week.

Even when you factor in council tax, utilities and cleaning, you are at least doubling your money. But don't plan on spending the extra income yet – not every flat in the Capital is suitable for shorter letting periods. Location is everything.

McCloud, pictured right, advises: "You could stick a compass in the middle of a map of Edinburgh and draw a circle of about a mile and a half in diameter – that's your best letting guideline."

Don't just let it all out

■ **Location** Royal Circus is a cut off point for us – as is the top of Leith Walk. No-one wants to cross the Dean Bridge and no business clients want anything to do with Stockbridge, strangely. That's a dead zone to them – the sticks!

■ **Your best clients** Performers, actors, directors – and not just during the Festival – lots of shows enjoy long runs at The Playhouse.

IT workers. Many finance houses in the Capital employ

consultants in information technology on month-to-month contracts – and the projects that they work on frequently overrun.

■ **Your expenses** Broadband – preferably wireless, gas, electricity, council tax and – if you really want to push the boat out cable TV (don't forget the licence).

Agencies charge commission on short-term lets – Clouds takes 17.5 per cent – but, even after these costs, you're still well in the black.

