

£300,000 FORT UP FOR SALE

30/7/94

LANDMARK Rodborough Fort at Stroud is officially on the market – with an asking price of almost £300,000.

The listed folly fort, which overlooks the town from its prominent hilltop site in the middle of Rodborough Common, was last home to controversial, self-styled 'lady of the manor' Joanne Willies-Williams.

But she was eventually evicted over mortgage arrears and now agents Knight, Frank and Rutley from Cirencester have erected their signboards inviting offers for purchase at £295,000.

Some eight and three quarter acres of land as well as the grade II listed fort itself would be part of the deal.

Estate agent Tim Lawson, who is handling

by Jo Barber

the sale, was not available for comment today.

But the fort advertising notice also states the property is for sale for "possible alternative uses, subject to planning permission".

One contender with ideas for the site, but who is seeking financial backing for his plans, is Chalford architect Jeremy Portch, who has already unveiled proposals for a 25-home village there.

In its heyday, the fort was run as a camping and caravanning holiday centre.

But in more recent years, before the Halifax Building Society repossessed the building this

spring, it was believed to have fallen into decline.

Only last summer Mrs Willies-Williams said she had fallen on hard times and was living there on social security.

During her residence the fort, with its turreted tower, 14 bedrooms, and private approach drive was also at the heart of contentious court battles over access with the National Trust, owners of the picturesque surrounding Rodborough and Minchinhampton Commons.

Mrs Willies-Williams (46), a one time beauty queen and also zoo keeper, now lives at Whitminster.

She has said she will appeal against her conviction by the RSPCA in April for cruelty to 10 Chihuahua dogs at the scenic fort.