



14 BEDROOM DETACHED HOUSE FOR SALE IN HERTFORDSHIRE

Guide Price **£7,995,000**



REF: 3369798

PROPERTY FEATURES

- FOURTEEN BEDROOMS
- SEVEN RECEPTION ROOMS
- EIGHT BATHROOMS
- FOUR SELF CONTAINED APARTMENTS
- OUTBUILDINGS
- TEN ACRES
- POTENTIAL COMMERCIAL OR RESIDENTIAL OPPORTUNITY

High Elms Manor, formerly known as Garston Manor, has been described as 'one of the finest and most dignified medium - sized estates in the county of Hertfordshire'. This was the opinion of Stafford Bourne, son of one of the founders of the London store, Bourne and Hollingsworth, who lived here with his parents and siblings for ten years, from 1911.

With the oldest part of the property being of Georgian origin with later Victorian and Edwardian extensions, High Elms Manor offers an unprecedented opportunity to restore a magnificent period property to its former glory as a substantial home or as a boutique country hotel, private members club, care home, or other commercial enterprise.

HISTORY

Augustus Cavendish Bradshaw was the originator of High Elms. He appears to have purchased the estate in the early 1800s and either built High Elms or made very substantial alterations to a small existing building. He and his wife Mary Ann were a very notable couple at this time.

Augustus was born in 1768. His father was Sir Henry Cavendish of Doveridge Hall in Derbyshire and his mother was Sarah Bradshaw, who later became Baroness Waterpark.

In 1796, he married Mary Ann (sometimes written Marianne) Jeffreys who was the daughter of James St John Jeffreys of Blarney Castle in Ireland. Mary Ann had previously been married to George Frederick Nugent, the Earl of Westmeath and she became the Countess of Westmeath. In 1796 in a sensational court case she divorced Nugent and soon after married Augustus.

Mary Ann had considerable literary talent and published two novels. The first, Maria

Countess of D'Alva (1808), is set at the time of the Spanish Armada in the 16th century. The second, Ferdinand and Ordella: A Russian Story (1810), is set in the time of Peter the Great. Both novels were written during the period that the couple lived at High Elms. In 1806, Sir Thomas Lawrence painted the portraits of both Mary Ann and Augustus.

Augustus became a member of Parliament in 1805 and continued in this position until 1817. When he completed his parliamentary career he put High Elms on the market. An excerpt from the advertisement in The Times in 1817 read as follows:

'The singularly elegant freehold villa called High Elms situated near the picturesque cross-road leading from Watford to St Albans, Hertfordshire is in a beautiful country abounding with field sports lately the admired residence of The Honourable A. Cavendish Bradshaw from whom the same has received the most substantial additions and many elegant improvements at a very great expense.'

John Ryley bought High Elms soon after this and he and his wife Charlotte remained there until he died in 1845.

John Ryley was born in 1786. In 1806 he married Charlotte Catherine Coxe, who was the daughter of General Coxe of Cavendish Square. He worked for some years in the Bengal civil service and after that was a magistrate for Hertfordshire for thirty years.

After he purchased High Elms it appears that he acquired a large amount of the surrounding land so that the estate was increased from 82 acres in 1817 to 170 acres in 1847. He also bought Fortune Farm and Winch Farm which were adjoining properties.

The next owner of High Elms was Arthur Currie. The 1851 census shows that he and his wife Dora were living on the estate and states that Arthur was a magistrate and distiller. Arthur was born in 1804 at Bromley by Bow. He was first married to Charlotte Judith Smith but unfortunately, she died in 1840. In 1845 he married Dorothea (Dora) Seymour who was the daughter of Admiral Sir Michael Seymour. The couple seem to have lived at High Elms for about ten years.

In 1863 Robert Pryor acquired High Elms after he retired from the Bar. He was born in 1812 in Hamstead. He was educated at Cambridge and graduated in 1834 after which he was called to the Bar and for many years practiced as an Equity Barrister and conveyancer. In 1844 he married Elizabeth Caroline Birch the daughter of Wyrley Birch of Wretham Hall, Norfolk

After Robert came to live at High Elms, he became Chairman of the Quarter Sessions at St Albans in 1867 and was made a deputy lieutenant of the County in 1874. For over 20 years he was Chairman of the Watford Board of Guardians and occupied many other public positions. He died at High Elms in 1889 at the age of 78. In 1890 the property was advertised for sale in The Times.

During the 1890s Claude Watney bought High Elms as his country house. He and his wife Ada lived there until 1911. Sometime during the 1890s the name of the house was changed from High Elms to Garston Manor.

A member of the Watney family of brewers, Claude was born in London in 1866. His father, James Watney, Jr., was a member of Parliament and a wealthy brewer who owned the firm Watney & Co, Ltd. Claude was educated at Eton and Oxford University and then entered the family business where he rose to become Director in 1898. He married Ada in 1895 and the couple seemed to have a fairly active life. They were both interested in motor cars and were mentioned in the motoring journals. One journal mentioned that Claude owned a Pipe car and was an all-round sportsman whose horses were famed for their mettle and speed. The article also mentioned that Ada Watney owned a Pipe, a Panhard and a Mercedes and was one of London's best known lady motorists. Her Pipe car was described as a "most tastefully upholstered car in cream and painted in electric blue with a pretty canopy and bowed glass dust screen".

Ada Watney had a rather unusual life. She was born in 1868 as Ada Annie Nunn and seems to have come from fairly humble parentage. At the age of 21 she married Sherman Martin whose parents were extremely wealthy Americans. At this time he was only 19 and appeared to be leading a rather intemperate life in London. The marriage seems to have been very ill-considered by him and his parents

wished him to obtain a divorce. Only a few months after their marriage Sherman returned to America and Ada did not see him again.[21] In 1894 Sherman died possibly because of alcohol-related effects and Ada was free to remarry. In the following year she married Claude and they remained together until his death in 1919. She married again in 1925 and became Mrs Bernard Weguelin. She died in 1938 at the age of 70.

The Watneys put the house (which was now called Garston Manor) on the market in 1911.[22] It was purchased by Walter William Bourne, who was the founder of the department store Bourne and Hollingsworth.

Walter was born in 1865 in Muckleston.[23] His father John Bourne was a farmer.[24] He became an apprentice in the drapery trade in Birmingham. During this time he met Howard Hollingsworth and they became close friends. In 1894 they opened the first Bourne and Hollingsworth store in Westbourne Grove and later moved to Oxford St where they established a very large department store.

In 1896 Walter married Howard's sister, Clara Louisa Hollingsworth and the couple had seven children (Molly, Kathleen, Stafford, Christine, Helen, John & Jim). Stafford Bourne later became prominent in the retail business.

In 1921 Walter died at the age of 56 at Garston Manor. The probate register shows that he left a large fortune to his family. Clara retained ownership of Garston Manor until 1932 when she put the house on the market. An advertisement for its sale appeared in The Times.

Colonel William Hilton Briggs and his wife Doris (see photo at right) were the next residents of Garston Manor.[26] At this time William was the managing director of Benskin's Brewery in Watford.

William Hilton Briggs was born in 1871. He was the son of Colonel Charles James Briggs of Hylton Castle, Sunderland. He joined the military forces and at the age of 20 was promoted to lieutenant. He served in the Boer War and some years after was promoted to lieutenant-colonel. He was also served in the First World War and retired after it finished in 1918.

In 1904 he married Doris Kathleen Benskin, who was the daughter of the wealthy brewery owner Thomas Benskin. Doris was born in 1880 to Thomas and Alice Benskin. It is she who is credited with inventing the current Benskin trademark of a waving pennant.

In 1910 William was appointed to the position of Managing Director of Benskins in Watford and he held this position until 1946 when he became Chairman of the company. In 1946 he and Doris bought Brickendon Grange near Hertford.

During the war years the property was heavily defended with "pill" boxes and fortified trenches and three large air raid shelters were built, however there seems to be no record of occupation by presumably one of the services during this period.

In about 1951 Garston Manor was sold to the Hospital Board and it became a rehabilitation centre for many years until it closed in 1997 and was sold to the late Sheila O'Neill. She restored the property whereupon it was used as a Montessori School, and in the more recent years as a location for many notable film and television series and also as a successful events venue.

ACCOMODATION

Ground Floor

Entrance Hall, Inner Hall, Study, Sitting room, Morning Room, Drawing Room, Dining Room, Ball Room, Reception Room, Library, Kitchen, Games Room, Utility Room, Pantry, Store Room, Three x WC.

First Floor

7 x Reception Rooms, 9 x Bedrooms, 3 x kitchens, 6 bathrooms, Laundry

Second Floor

6 x Bedrooms, 2 x kitchens, 2 x Bathrooms

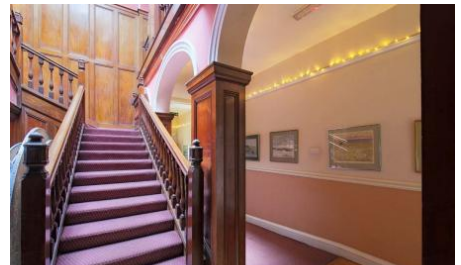
Basement

Extensive storage covering 8 large rooms with good ceiling height,

Grounds and outbuildings

Extending to in excess of ten acres of flat usable grounds, lawn, gardens, and woodland. There are extensive portacabins that were used as classrooms, but would provide (subject to planning) further accommodation or leisure facilities.

PROPERTY PHOTOS



LOCATION



No Media available

FLOORPLANS

High Elms Manor
Approximate Gross Internal Area
25491 sq ft - 2368 sq m



Not to Scale. Produced by The Plan Portal 2024
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