A unique opportunity to restore an historic stately home and create one of England’s finest properties set in 130 acres of parkland.

BENHAM PARK

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO RESTORE AN HISTORIC STATELY HOME AND CREATE ONE OF ENGLAND’S FINEST PROPERTIES SET IN 130 ACRES OF PARKLAND.
LOCATION

Benham Park is located on the Berkshire Downs near Newbury, in a gorgeous area classified as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a Conservation Area. Newbury is renowned as the centre of Southern England, being within easy reach of all major cities, airports, schools and the most enjoyable elements of English country living.

Communications are excellent with London 60 miles, Heathrow Airport 46 miles, Oxford 27 miles (also Oxford Airport) and Newbury 3 miles with a rail service to London Paddington (approx. 50 mins).

Both Newbury and Hungerford are good for shopping and restaurants, and the property is also well placed for sporting and leisure facilities such as horse racing, golf, polo and shooting.

There are a good number of excellent private schools within the area including Cheam and Cothill prep schools; Down House, Marlborough, Radley and Eton public schools and Oxford University.

TO LONDON

By Air:
- Battersea Heliport 25 minutes

By Car:
- Mayfair 60 miles / 75 minutes

By Train:
- Paddington from 55 minutes

TO OTHER DESTINATIONS

- Newbury 3 miles
- Oxford 28 miles
- Eton 41 miles
- Heathrow Airport 46 miles

(Distances and times are approximate)
The glorious mansion is set on raised ground overlooking its ten acre lake.
Benham was first documented in 956 when it was granted by King Eadwig to Aelsige, a Saxon Warlord. Subsequently, during Edward the Confessor’s reign of 1042 – 1066 it was owned by three of his thegns.

After the Norman Conquest, Benham Manor was granted by King William I to Humphrey Vis de Lou, a Norman knight, but in the Doomsday survey of 1086 it was listed as being owned by Wolter de la Riviere. It then passed back to the Crown in 1158-59. In 1194 the Manor was leased by King Richard I to Richard de Camville and on his son’s death to Hugh Wake, whose heirs held the Manor until 1251 when it was seized by King Henry III. His grandson, William de Valence, his half-brother and uncle of Edward I who rose to prominence during the Second Barons’ War whereupon the Manor became known as Benham Valence.

At some point the ownership changed to Sir William Essex and in 1543 he exchanged it for various properties with King Henry VIII and it remained in royal custody, with its deer park, until it was granted by Queen Elizabeth I to her favoured tutor John Baptiste Castillion in 1575. His son Francis sold the Manor in 1630 to the Trustees of Sir William Craven, Baron Craven of Hamstead Marshall and later Viscount Uffington and Earl of Craven.

In 1767, the young Lord William Craven married his sixteen year old bride Elizabeth, youngest daughter of the fourth Earl Berkeley. They called on Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown who advised that Benham had “considerable capabilities”. In 1772 the Baron gave instructions for work on a new mansion and park to commence forthwith. At this time Lancelot Brown, who was at the pinnacle of his distinguished career, had recently formed a partnership with the young London architect Henry Holland and was building a new house for the immensely rich Lord Clive of India. William and Elizabeth were hugely impressed and ordered an almost identical house at Benham to take advantage of the similarly commanding situation and picturesque aspect. The park was to be improved in the same landscape style that had made ‘Capability’ Brown so sought after by King George III and many of the wealthy nobility.

The new house and park certainly lived up to Lancelot Brown’s promise of great ‘capabilities’ with the mansion being built in glorious Bath stone on high ground sloping gently south over wooded grounds to the river Kennet below and then over the water meadows beyond to the rolling hills of the Berkshire Downs. Hundreds of new trees were planted both individually and in shelter belts with oak, beech and sweet chestnut predominating but also the newly fashionable cedars of Lebanon being introduced. New carriage drives were constructed to take advantage of the magnificent views.

On the death of Lord Craven, Lady Craven married the Margrave of Brandenburg, Anspach and Bayreuth; a nephew of King Frederick the Great of Prussia and a cousin of King George of England. However news of social unrest in France with mass executions of noble families by guillotine unsettled the corpulent Margrave who promptly sold his principality to his uncle in return for a large annual stipend. He was now free to live in great splendour at Benham and Brandenburg House in London.

In 1848, Lady Craven’s son Richard Keppel Craven sold Benham to Frederick Villebois and upon his death in 1868 the estate was sold again, this time to Sir Richard Sutton, the fourth Baronet, a wealthy landowner with valuable interests in Piccadilly and the neighbouring streets of Mayfair. Sutton continued to be developed during the many decades of the Sutton ownership so that by 1913 the house was considerably larger with 30 bedrooms. Reception rooms were made bigger and the gardens made more formal by the introduction of a massive stone double staircase to link the house to the terraces leading up to the outdoor theatre. From 1986 to 2011 the house was occupied as offices until bought by the current owners. Today the wonderful house and its beautiful gardens and park are ready for a new and glorious chapter.

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The mansion sits in the centre of a magnificent 130 acre park created by Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown, the celebrated 18th Century Royal landscape designer.
The Mansion

The interior of the mansion is still much as it was when originally built. The exquisitely carved Bath stone ionic capitals at the front; the magnificent cantilevered staircase in Portland stone in the centre of the house and even the ingeniously designed wine cellar that cools by the process of evaporation, have all stood the test of time.

During the Edwardian era, the north side of the house was reconfigured and enriched to create even grander reception rooms. A magnificent pair of Palladian fireplaces was brought from the Duke of Buckingham’s state Dining Room at Stowe as well as an outstanding marble fireplace by Giovanni Battista Borra from the Duchess’s Drawing Room.

The new owners will not only have the opportunity to completely refurbish the mansion to their own taste and requirements, they will also have the opportunity to greatly enlarge the house and its associated facilities by the addition of very extensive new spaces to accommodate family, entertaining, sporting and business requirements. Such an opportunity to transform a nationally important stately home back into an elegant and dignified property of such magnificent proportions has not arisen in the English countryside for many years.

The exterior of this wonderful house and its beautiful gardens and park have been restored and Benham is now ready for a new and glorious chapter.
Henry Holland helped establish an elegant form of neoclassicism in England, favoured by the aristocracy.

The mansion is rich in architectural history and detail.
“Born to grace Nature and her works complete,
With all that's beautiful, sublime and great!
For him each Muse enwreathes the Laurel Crown,
And consecrates to Fame immortal Brown”

Anon – Published by Horace Walpole – 1767
To the north of the house lie the cascading terraced gardens originally designed by the renowned garden designer William Andrews Nesfield. These lead up to the old amphitheatre where Lady Craven arranged her amateur dramatics in the 18th Century, calling on illustrious names such as Horace Walpole and David Garrick.
The Grade II wrought iron gates, flanked by a pair of Doric half columns supporting segmental pediments, provide a splendid entrance to the property.

At the north-east corner of Benham Park are the Grade II listed East Gates (sometimes also known as the London Gate) and adjoining three-bedroom Grade II listed East Lodge.

Situated at the eastern end of the lake is The Mill House. Originally the site of a working corn mill powered by a stream leading from the lake, it was converted into a larger residence in the late 20th century. It comprises four reception rooms, five bedrooms and three bathrooms.

The Grade II listed East Gates (sometimes also known as the London Gate) and adjoining three-bedroom Grade II listed East Lodge.

On the southern boundary the ten-acre lake provides a truly classic outlook from the mansion. With its wooded island and generous proportions it also provides a wonderful opportunity for walking and boating. The lake was conceived as part of the ‘Capability’ Brown / Henry Holland master plan and was amazingly dug entirely by hand.

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PLANNING CONSENT

Detailed planning consents were granted in 2013 to restore the mansion and build new ancillary space to create a total of 140,000 square feet of accommodation. These consents were obtained for two alternative schemes, residential and commercial, and were of identical design. The commercial consent was triggered in 2016 and whilst the residential consent has since lapsed, planning consultant’s advice is that it will be relatively straightforward to resurrect. This wholly unique opportunity to take a nationally important stately home and transform it into a property of such magnificent proportions and grandeur of scale has not arisen in the English countryside for over one hundred years and is unlikely to occur again.

RESIDENTIAL

This consent provides for the best of both worlds: an historic stately home with its grand reception rooms together with the opportunity to build on a significant amount of new accommodation to provide for all the modern living space and facilities an owner may require. If the entire consent is implemented, then the following accommodation could be provided:

- Mansion: 7 reception rooms, 7 bedroom suites and domestic offices.
- New wing: 5 reception rooms, 22 bedroom suites, extensive leisure facilities.
- New ancillary accommodation: Manager’s house, 6 cottages and Chauffeur’s house.
- New leisure complex.
- Offices.
- Mill House and Gate Lodge.

COMMERCIAL

The commercial consent is for a world-class residential Medical Park or Wellness Spa or mixed use could include a headquarters building or conference centre, art gallery, hotel or country club.
BUILDING | GEA
--- | ---
Existing Mansion | 23,620
East Wing | 21,637
Northeast Wing | 55,929
Staff Cottages | 9,666
Riding School | 18,891
Offices | 18,891
TOTAL | 139,609
Computer Generated Image of entire consented scheme
The new build accommodation has been designed to fit seamlessly with the existing mansion.
EXTENSION FLOOR PLANS (AS PROPOSED)
The existing buildings and planning consent provide a wide number of options that can be implemented in a number of different ways and phases.
**Size**
The approved residential consent provided the opportunity to create a very large property. This allows a purchaser considerable flexibility. Some may choose to make use of all the potential space, for example to house an extended family, a private office, a medical park or country club.

**Phasing**
Others may choose to build much less accommodation or to build in phases over a medium to long term period. As an example of this, the CGI above depicts the mansion and east wing - ‘Phase 1’ - which provides for a total of approximately 50,000 sq ft.

**Use**
With both past and current detailed residential and commercial consents, the new owner is provided with a relatively wide degree of scope to vary or change the consent.

**Design**
It is understood that a new owner may wish to vary the design of the consented scheme. Provided the new design is no larger in scale, is on a similar footprint and has no greater impact on the mansion, then subject to planning consent, this will be possible.

**Sports Complex**
The current proposal allows for an equestrian centre, housing a full range of facilities including stables, an international size indoor riding arena, tack and feed rooms, offices and associated store rooms. Alternatively this building could be built as a sports complex or additional accommodation.

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**FLEXIBILITY**

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TIMING

It is important to note that all the planning preconditions have been signed off and the Council have accepted that works to implement the medical consent have already commenced. Therefore there need be no delay to implementing the development. And since both schemes are identical in design, neither would there be any delay to implementing the scheme as residential, albeit one would have to re-new the planning residential consent before occupying the property as a house.

DELIVERY

A detailed report has been commissioned by specialist family office consultants, who have tried and tested experience in delivering projects on behalf of UHNW individuals and families. It sets out the various issues and the methodology by which the new owners can redevelop Benham Park to meet their own unique vision successfully, on time and on budget.

A scheme can be implemented immediately

A professional team has been assembled to deliver the project for a purchaser if required
The opportunity to re-establish Benham Park's quintessential English gardens
Using CGIs a team of designers has given an insight into creating one of the finest properties in England.
Sculpture Gallery

40-seat Cinema

Prestigious garaging for 50 cars

Swimming Pool

Spa

Master Bathroom
There is enormous potential to reinstate many historical features of the property, including the ‘Chinese Bridge’ across the lake, to the south of the mansion, providing not only another alternative access drive, but also a glorious feature across the lake.
LIFESTYLE

AIRPORTS
- Oxford Airport – 35 miles
- Farnborough Airport – 38 miles
- Southampton Airport – 40 miles
- Heathrow Airport – 46 miles

TRAINS
- Newbury - 3 miles

EDUCATION
- Downe House School - 6 miles
- Marlborough College - 17 miles
- The Oratory School - 22 miles
- Cothill House - 23 miles
- Radley College - 25 miles
- Oxford University - 28 miles
- Winchester College - 29 miles
- Dragon School - 34 miles
- Heathfield School - 34 miles
- Summer Fields School - 34 miles
- Wellington College - 34 miles
- St Mary’s Ascot - 37 miles
- Eton College - 39 miles

GOLF
- Newbury & Crookham - 5 miles
- The Berkshire - 35 miles
- Sunningdale - 39 miles

FISHING
- River Kennet, River Test and River Itchin

RACING
- Newbury - 3 miles
- Ascot - 35 miles
- Cheltenham - 53 miles
- Goodwood - 75 miles

POLO
- The Royal County of Berkshire - 35 miles
- Gianoli - 38 miles
- Cirencester Park - 40 miles
- Beaufort - 43 miles
- Cowdray Park - 57 miles

STATELY HOMES
- Highclere Castle - 8 miles

DIRECTIONS (RG20 8EP)
From Junction 13 of the M4 take the A34 southbound, do not take the slip road for Newbury. After approximately 4 miles leave the A34 taking the signs for the A4 towards Hungerford. Still following signs for Hungerford, turn right at the first roundabout, cross over the dual carriageway, and after the second roundabout the main entrance gates to Benham Park are seen on the left hand side.