



23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

Price: £1,250,000 subject to contract

For Occupation: 02 April 2004

Classic Victorian Mansion Flat, completely restored and renovated. Two large reception rooms, four large bedrooms (highly adaptable to other uses), two bathrooms plus cloakroom, large eat-in kitchen with pantry and Aga cooker, laundry room, very large entry hall. Six working fireplaces. Balconies from reception rooms, overlooking Westminster Cathedral. Approximately 2,180 square feet gross internal area.



23 Ashley Gardens occupies half of the third floor of Block 2, one of the original five mansion blocks in Ashley Gardens, 1890.



Block 2 of Ashley Gardens is in Ambrosden Avenue, across from Westminster Cathedral which was built at the same time.



Seen from the back side, two tall trees at the edge of the Gardens conceal the bedroom windows of No. 23 on the third floor.



Mosaic floor in marble entry to Block 2, fourteen flats on seven floors.

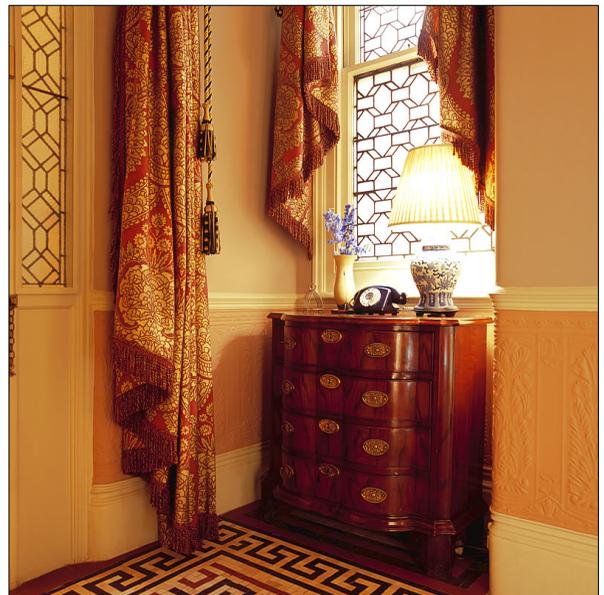


Interior Details of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

Entry Hall

Approximately 21'6" x 7'
(6.55m x 2.13m)

Original 1890 geometric mosaic tile floor (black, white, and dark red) restored, sealed and polished. Original leaded glass window, matching door panels double glazed with laminated security glass to meet current fire regulations. Original Lincrusta dado restored, dado rails, picture rails, frieze and cornice moldings. Original ribbed ceiling.





Interior Details of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

Sitting Room

Approximately 21' x 17'6"
(6.40m x 5.33m)

Original ribbed ceiling (different in every Ashley Gardens flat), dado rails, picture rails, frieze and cornice moldings. Working fireplace with Regency chimneypiece of statuary (white) and sienna (yellow-gold) marble carved with musical motifs, antique Georgian register grate, black Welsh slate hearth. Floor of Victorian oak, 16" herringbone parquet with double afzelia wood strips. Large bay windows overlooking Westminster Cathedral, door to balcony.





Interior Details of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

Dining Room

Approximately 20' x 13'6"
(6.09m x 4.11m)

Original ribbed ceiling and cornice moldings. High dado paneling of oak, with oak dado rail and oak skirtings. Working fireplace with gothic chimneypiece of portoro (black and gold) marble, gothic arch register grate, black Welsh slate hearth. Floor of Victorian oak, 16" herringbone parquet with double afzelia wood strips. Two large french windows open to balcony overlooking Westminster Cathedral.





Interior Details of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

Cloak Room

Approximately 7'6" x 6'
(2.29m x 1.83m)

Dado rails, picture rails, frieze, cornice moldings, and ceiling rosette. Lincrusta below dado rails. Floor of Victorian oak strip. Large fitted linen cupboard of mahogany, with carrara (white and gray) marble shelf. Deep basin with mixer taps, W.C.Brass heated towel rail. Large window. (Has an en-suite connection to adjacent bedroom/study, now concealed but easily reopened.)



Study (Bedroom 3)

Approximately 13'6" x 13'
(4.11m x 3.96m)

Dado rails, picture rails, cornice moldings, and ceiling rosette. Working fireplace with bullseye chimneypiece of carrara (white and gray) marble, arts and crafts "anglo-japonais" iron insert with Minton tiles, black Welsh slate hearth. Floor of Victorian oak strip. Fitted wardrobe and clothes cupboard of mahogany, bookcases to both sides of the chimney breast. Comfort cooling with independent thermostat control. Large window. (Has an en-suite connection to adjacent cloak room, now concealed but easily reopened.)



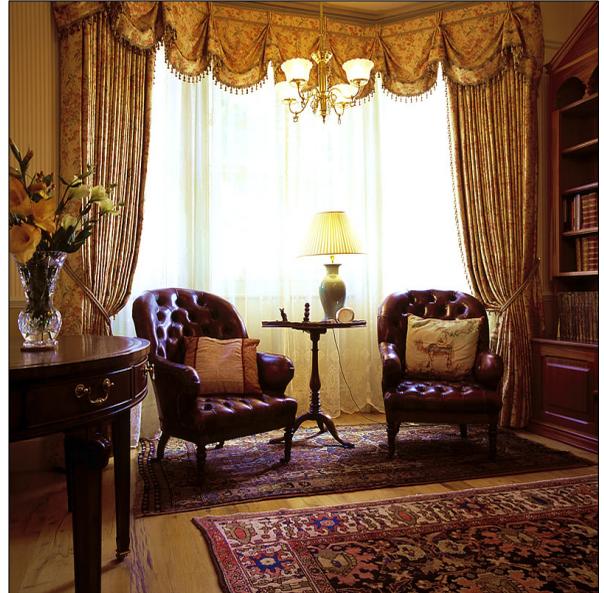


Interior Details of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

Library (Bedroom 2)

Approximately 16'6" x 12'6"
(5.03m x 3.81m)

Dado rails, picture rails, cornice moldings, and double ceiling rosettes. Working fireplace with bullseye chimneypiece of carrara (white and gray) marble, early nineteenth-century half-hob iron grate with early "Egyptomania" motifs, black Welsh slate hearth. Floor of antique French oak planks. Bookcases to both sides of the chimney breast. Comfort cooling with independent thermostat control. Large bay windows looking out through trees over the gardens. (Has an en-suite connection to adjacent bathroom, now concealed but easily reopened.)



Bath Room

Approximately 7'6" x 7'6"
(2.29m x 2.29m)

Cornice moldings, and ceiling rosette. Floor of roman-style stone mosaic. Victorian-style ceramic tile from Minton Hollins, ivory with tile skirtings and multiple decorative variants. Deep basin with mixer taps, traditional cast-iron bathtub with floor-mounted pillar mixer taps and hand-shower (teak drying rack over tub for hand laundry), brass shower surround with surface-mounted thermostatic-control mixing valve, large brass shower rose, plus hand-shower. (Plumbing for W.C. available, but not currently used.) Brass heated towel rail. Large window. (Has an en-suite connection to adjacent bedroom/library, now concealed as an arched recess, but easily reopened.)





Interior Details of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

Bedroom

Approximately 20' x 12'6"
(6.09m x 3.81m)

Dado rails, picture rails, frieze, cornice moldings, and ceiling rosette. Working fireplace with Louis XV-style chimneypiece of veined white marble, basket grate, black Welsh slate hearth. Floor of Victorian oak, 16" herringbone parquet with double afzelia wood strips. Bookcases fill one entire wall. Comfort cooling with independent thermostat control. Large bay windows looking out through trees over the gardens. Forms a master suite with connecting Dressing Room, Shower Room, and Lavatory, that can be closed off from the rest of the flat (with a back door to the Kitchen for nipping in to make tea).





Interior Details of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

Dressing Room (Bedroom 4)

Approximately 13' x 10'
(3.96m x 3.05m)

The smallest bedroom, originally the staff bedroom. Dado rails, picture rails, cornice moldings, and ceiling rosette. Working fireplace with original cast-iron surround and grate, original ceramic-tile hearth. Floor of Victorian oak strip. Fitted wardrobes with dressing table fill one entire wall. Comfort cooling with independent thermostat control. Large window looking out through trees over the gardens. Forms a master suite with connecting Bedroom, Shower Room, and Lavatory.



Shower Room and Lavatory

Approximately 10' x 7'6"
(3.05m x 2.29m)

Cornice moldings, and ceiling rosette. Floors of roman-style stone mosaic. Walls of ceramic tile from Ironbridge Tile Museum, cream with china blue and teal, swags in china blue, tile skirtings. Basin with mixer taps, brass shower surround with surface-mounted thermostatic-control mixing valve, large brass shower rose, plus hand-shower. Separate room for W.C. Brass heated towel rail. Large window (plus small window in Lavatory). Part of this area, the former service lift, is used for plumbing equipment. Forms a master suite with connecting Bedroom, Shower Room, and Lavatory.





Interior Details of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

Kitchen

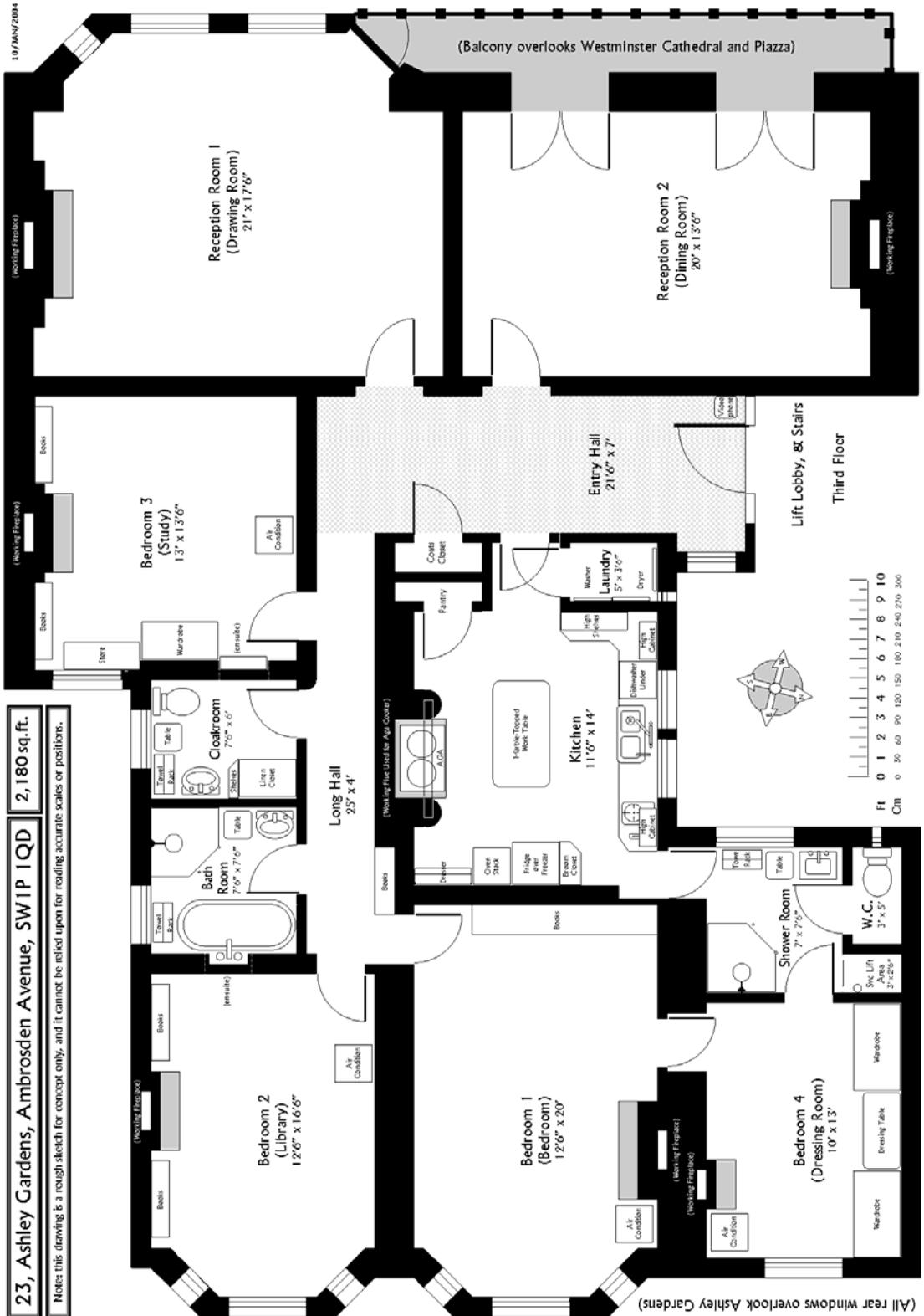
Approximately 14' x 11'6"
(4.27m x 3.50m)

Conveniently located just across the Entry Hall from the Dining Room, plus a back door connecting to the master bedroom suite. Beaded tongue-and-groove wainscoting. Floor of antique French oak planks. Aga cast-iron cooker in cream enamel, set in chimney recess with mahogany surround. Recess and backsplashes in ceramic tile from Ironbridge Tile Museum. Cabinets of solid maple, counter-tops of sealed teak wood, oak dresser, work table in oak with carrara (white/gray) marble top. Double deep traditional sinks in white porcelain fireclay, with waste disposer and mixer taps, below two large windows. Appliances include Sub-Zero refrigerator and Sub-Zero freezer, self-cleaning convection oven, high-heat gas hob with wok cradle, microwave oven, dishwasher. Comfort cooling for summer cooking. Large pantry for storage. Separate small Laundry Room with washer and dryer units.





Floorplan of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1





Description of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

Ashley Gardens ... "has long attracted nobility, ambassadors, and even former residents of No. 10 Downing Street."

--*The Wall Street Journal*, 13 March 2003, page D2 ("Money's Worth, Real Estate")

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For Occupation: 02 April 2004

Classic Victorian Mansion Flat, completely restored and renovated. Two large reception rooms, four large bedrooms (highly adaptable to other uses), two bathrooms plus cloakroom, large eat-in kitchen with pantry and Aga cooker, laundry room, very large entry hall. Six working fireplaces. Balconies from reception rooms, overlooking Westminster Cathedral. Approximately 2,180 square feet gross internal area.

Complete renovation 1996-2001

Design was to preserve and restore all the many original features of the flat while renewing its basic systems. Direct cost of renovation exceeded £400,000. It is rare to find a flat like this completely restored and renewed. Because the works are so time-consuming, the usual course is to make do with outdated infrastructure. Basic construction required nearly two years, with the rest of the time spent on finishing, decorating, lighting, curtains, etc. (See separate schedule of works.)

Views from all rooms

To the front, windows and balconies from the reception rooms look out to the Byzantine glory of Westminster Cathedral and its Piazza, lighted at night (including the bell tower); to the rear, the bedrooms look out over Ashley Gardens, with tall trees growing up around all the windows, populated by birds (and hawks). Every single room in the flat has large windows providing natural light. Flat extends between two streets, not backed up to another building.



Windows of Westminster Cathedral from Dining Room of 23 Ashley Gardens.

Location

Located in Ambrosden Avenue, a quiet street in Westminster running along the east side of Westminster Cathedral. A five-minute walk to Victoria Station (350 yards), a three-minute walk to Buckingham Palace, a five-minute walk to No. 10 Downing Street. Also a five-minute walk to St. James's Park, which provides (through connecting Green Park and Hyde Park) an efficient and lovely way to walk to almost any point in Central London. Convenient to City and West End. See maps and aerial photos of the location.



Description of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

Ashley Gardens Block 2

Built just after 1890, to offer large homes on a single level as an attractive alternative to older town houses built on small floorprints stacked in many vertical stories. Block contains 14 flats on 7 floors—this flat occupies the south half of the third floor (passenger lift plus stairway). Each flat has separate individual connections to the outside for utilities. Built as one in an estate of blocks, but this particular block has had its freehold bought, so the freehold is now owned by its 14 occupiers in equal shares.

CURRENT LEASE: the current lease runs to 2110 (over 106 years remaining), with a one-fourteenth share of the freehold of the block.

Ashley Gardens Estate

The block remains part of a unified maintenance and services agreement with the rest of Ashley Gardens, so it benefits from 7-day 24-hour portorage and security, a service for receiving parcels and messages, small maintenance jobs by a handyman, experienced Estate Manager (20 years) with staff, professional external maintenance, rubbish collection from flat doors, etc.

ANNUAL SERVICE CHARGES: £4,796 in 2003.

Neighbourhood

A very convenient and safe neighbourhood, with many long-term residents who form a "village" atmosphere. Busy during the day, but mostly with government employees of the nearby ministries, not with foreign tourists, with active street life well into the evening. Traffic (foot and vehicles) keeps to Victoria Street and other large streets, leaving Ambrosden Avenue and adjacent streets very peaceful. Quiet at night, and extremely quiet on Sundays and Bank Holidays. Post is delivered before 7:00 AM daily and second post about 1:00 PM. Regular presence of neighbourhood police on foot patrols, good local services.

WESTMINSTER COUNCIL TAX: Band H, £750.34 annually in 2003.



Mr. Whiskey, longtime Ashley Gardens cat, in front of the Porters' Lodge.



Description of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

Local Businesses

Many nearby restaurants and pubs. Easy to buy necessities; a medium-sized Sainsbury's is almost across the street, with a Marks and Spencer Foods, larger Tesco and a very large brand-new Sainsbury's "Market at Pimlico" within easy walking and carrying distance (also large carpark below the market). Specialist bakeries, fish shops, butchers, and delicatessens of several nationalities in Tachbrook Street and Rochester Row, including Rippon cheese shop in Upper Tachbrook Street with hundreds of cheeses at the peak of readiness, and again just on the other side of Victoria Station in Elizabeth Street and Ebury Street, Belgravia. A local market for fruit and vegetables is in Tachbrook Street daily, including Wright's Wet Fish, a family stall continuously at Tachbrook Market since 1876, suppliers of fish to Jennifer Patterson, one of the "Two Fat Ladies", who lived in Ashley Gardens and parked her motorcycle outside her flat up until her recent death. Many convenient local shops for practical household needs, Army & Navy department store very close. Starbucks and newsagents at the nearest corner.

Transport

Extremely convenient for transport. Victoria Station (350 yards away) provides national and suburban rail services, plus the Underground with Victoria, District, and Circle lines. District and Circle lines also at St. James's Park station, and the new Jubilee Line extension at Westminster station. Taxis are virtually always passing between Victoria Station and Parliament Square, seldom a wait of a minute to flag one down, and they are always close by to pick up account customers immediately. (Ashley Gardens is one of the official points in "The Knowledge" that all London black taxi drivers must master, so all drivers know where it is.) Many bus lines run down Victoria Street and through Victoria Station. Victoria Coach Station (a short walk) handles inter-city Coaches. Gatwick Airport Express train arrives at and leaves from Victoria Station every 30 minutes. Major car rental companies at Victoria Station (also book online or by phone). Easy access to the A40 (M) and A4/M4.

Parking and Congestion Charges

Ample parking bays reserved for residents, including the entire street in front of the block, with residents' permits available at Westminster City Hall (just across Victoria Street). Flat is located within the congestion charging area, so residents are entitled to a 90% discount on congestion charges. Secure multi-level parking garage nearby.



Renovation of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

Room Arrangement

Original as-built 1890 room arrangement restored. Non-structural walls rebuilt to higher strength. One new doorway added (with structural support and made to match originals), to provide additional circulation to the original servant's quarters, with the result that all the rooms of the flat now have two paths to an exit. Former service-lift shaft closed at floor and ceiling levels. Restored original hallway doors from bathrooms. (Two doors previously introduced for "en-suites" closed but left ready to be reopened if desired.)

Gas

All new plumbing from the British Gas meter connection, running to six working fireplaces, boiler for hot water and central heating, gas hob and Aga in kitchen; cutoff valves at each point of use.

Cold Water

All new plumbing from the rising main supply, sealed (no open cistern), water softener for all uses other than drinking, parallel plumbing of filtered unsoftened water to drinking taps and freezer icemaker.

Hot Water

All new, sealed and pressurized system, 210 liter capacity, no extra local pumps needed for high-power showers, and immediate hot water at all taps. Parallel distribution to separate "always available" circuits to hot towel racks.

Electrical Systems

All new 100 Amp service, starting with a new higher-capacity copper cable from the London Electric distribution point up through the block and into the flat, new electronic meter, new consumer unit and split residual current devices; entirely new wiring within the flat, all new switches and ample powerpoints, dimmers for all ceiling and wall lights.



Renovation of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

Central Heating

All new invisible Wirsbo under-floor heating in all rooms (except Entry Hall), split into five zones with separate sensors and thermostats, plus an outdoor-temperature sensor. Heat is gently radiated from tubes laid under floors (with no joins) on aluminium spreader plates, above more than two inches of new insulation—no hot-spots or cold-spots, and floors are just barely above room temperature. (This system is frequently chosen for listed buildings.) Brass heated-towel racks installed in each bathroom. Old radiators and plumbing removed (not original--a recent installation after the block system was discontinued). Appearance is now as it was in 1890, with heat apparently provided by fireplaces.

Air Conditioning

All new system (four bedrooms, plus kitchen) of comfort cooling, meaning air conditioning which recirculates inside air while cooling it and removing humidity, without external ducts for air intake or exhaust. Separate acoustically-isolated units mounted on the walls of the rooms remove heat and humidity from the air and dispose of it into a recirculating water loop (the heat being reused for hot water as necessary), with no central compressor, internal or external. Units are built into custom hardwood cabinets, with thermostatic controls. Sleeping in London is much more comfortable with control of summer temperature and humidity.

Telephone Wiring

All new service, ten telephone lines in a new 10-pair BT cable from the street, six lines activated, wiring to a dozen points within the flat with a master patch panel. Wireless phone base station for cordless phones everywhere.

Computer Network Wiring

High-speed broadband internet access from every point in every room, utilizing a wireless 802.11b computer network (11 megabits per second) covering the entire flat. Computers (Windows, Macintosh, or Unix), laptops, printers, can be located anywhere for high-speed access with no wiring. Also, new under-floor conduits laid, containing double Category 5e (100Mbps) T568A UTP local network wiring (further wiring can be added). Home runs terminate at phone entry, with router, hub, and base station on dedicated powerpoints.

Cable TV

All new distribution wiring within flat, from NTL cable feed, running under the floors and within walls to main reception room and to bedrooms. Parallel distribution for the block's own antenna. Ready to add wireless TV distribution.



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Alarm System

All new, with multiple sensors (doors, motion, smoke, heat), new concealed wiring, new computer panel, external and internal sound and lights, keypads with panic buttons, central-station monitoring including a dedicated British Telecom Redcare positively-monitored telephone line (sends alarm if monitoring is interrupted).

Front Door Glazing

Original leaded panels in and around door re-created from salvaged old glass to match leaded window in Entry Hall, and installed with secondary glazing of modern laminated fire-proof glass in steel frames added discreetly inside for fire safety and security.

Windows

All original sash windows and french doors completely refurbished; all removed, cleaned up and aligned, all new sash cords and weights installed, new staff beads and parting beads, invisible draughtproofing (Ventrolla) installed to seal out dust and draughts, all new brass window locks, catches, and lifts, ventilation required for the fireplaces concealed in glazing. All windows now work easily and fully, facilitating window-cleaning.

Interior Doors

All original doors completely refurbished: all removed, cleaned up, re-hung with new brass hinges, new door hardware as necessary. For new doorways, matching solid wood panelled doors have been made, indistinguishable from the original ones. All interior doors close and latch securely and have working locks and keys.

Interior Walls

All re-plastered after extensive works completed, lined ready for decoration. Skirtings restored or new skirtings made to the exact profile. Dado rails (made to match the profile of the Entry Hall) and picture rails restored in all rooms. Where curved, these features were run in new plaster like the originals.

Geometric Tile Entry Hall Floor

Original Victorian geometric mosaic tile floor in entry hall restored, damaged parts (broken in the past when lead plugs were inserted to secure fitted carpets) replaced with new matching tile still made by the original manufacturer (Johnson), sealed and polished.



Renovation of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

Stone Mosaic Floors

New stone mosaic floors (from Paris Ceramics) installed in Bathroom and Shower Room; hand-made to exactly fit the rooms, styled after Roman originals in the British Museum. Patterns resemble original mosaics in the porticos and lobbies of Ashley Gardens—still visible outside the street door of this Block.

Floors

All old soft-wood rough floorboards removed, all rubble between the joists removed and carried away, thoroughly cleaned out. Joists strengthened with new supports, new insulation laid down, all services installed, under-floor heating installed, and then new rough floors of 19mm plywood screwed (not nailed) to the joists.

Hardwood Floors

All rooms (apart from geometric mosaic in Entry Hall and stone mosaics in Bathroom and Shower Room) fitted with oak floors. All wood used is reclaimed wood at least a century old, remilled but still with marks of long use. Major rooms (the two large reception rooms and the largest bedroom) have 16-inch oak herringbone parquet with a double afzelia-wood border. Other rooms and halls have oak strip. The Kitchen and Library have six-inch planks of French Railway Oak, made from oak timbers used in the floors of 19th-century French goods vans. All oak is about half an inch thick, secured to rough floors with 29,000 concealed nails. It was kiln dried after remilling, and installed after under-floor heating was operating. Finished in natural color. All floors (including all bathrooms and all fireplace hearths) exactly match the height of the undisturbed original mosaic tile floor in the Entry Hall.

Fibrous Plaster

Existing ribbed ceilings in reception rooms (typical of Ashley Gardens, and different in every flat) restored with their existing cornice moldings. Traditional ceiling rosettes, cornice moldings, friezes, picture rails, and dado rails restored as necessary in all other rooms, with a fair amount of fibrous plaster sculpting done in situ.

Oak Panelling

High dado of quarter-sawn oak panelling and skirting in the Dining Room, formerly painted white, was hand-stripped and restored.



Renovation of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

Fireplaces

Six fully working fireplaces. Original chimneys were re-opened, flues inspected and cleaned. One iron surround with ceramic tile hearth original to this flat is still in place. Five suitable antique (1820--1890) marble chimneypieces installed, with black Welsh slate hearths and period register grates. All fireplaces fitted with new custom-built coal-effect gas fires incorporating the latest safety detectors and cut-offs. (Seventh chimney used for Aga, see below.) Chimney pots on roof corresponding to these flues identified, and provided with new flue caps to prevent wind and rain intrusion.



Fireplace in the Library, with 1820's "Egyptomania" motif grate.

Ventilation

New openings made to light wells for external ventilation fans in all bathrooms, kitchen, laundry room, and fitted with silent fans (total of seven exhaust fans). Special ventilation installed at the tops of the windows in each room with a fireplace, to meet current regulations (a nearly-invisible horizontal strip which affects the glazing only).

Ceramic Tile

Bathroom walls tiled with old-style ceramic tile, some hand-made Ironbridge tile from the Jackfield Tile Museum, some traditional Victorian patterns still made by Minton Hollins, with tile skirtings and decorative tiles. All set in the traditional close-set manner. Similar hand-made tile used in the Kitchen behind the Aga, and above the counters.

Sanitary Ware

All new white sanitary ware in three bathrooms, mostly from B. C. Sanitan. Two custom showers, one traditional cast-iron bathtub. New brass taps in period style, including free-standing floor-mounted pillars for the bath, surface-mounted brass shower plumbing with thermostatic valves (always the pre-chosen temperature, maintained throughout the shower) and large brass shower roses. (All brass plumbing is actually gold-plated for minimum maintenance)



Renovation of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

Laundry

Former pantry turned into small laundry room with new Miele electronic-control front-loading washing machine and separate dryer, new plumbing, wiring, sound-control, and ventilation. Also, old-fashioned teak drying rack for hand laundry.

Kitchen

All new, solid maple cabinets (painted) with natural dark teak (iroko) wood and carrara (white/gray) marble countertops. Additionally a solid oak dresser and oak work table with marble top. Original pantry cupboard restored. Double old-style white porcelain fireclay sinks, with waste disposer, brass taps (gold-plated for minimum maintenance). High-level storage refurbished and provided with new access.

Kitchen Cooker

New gas Aga cooker, the legendary heart of a British kitchen, traditional since 1929 and used by Jilly Cooper, Mary Berry and Jamie Oliver among thousands of other Aga owners. Cast iron with cream enamel, with special cream insulator lids, brass hardware, and traditional-style Aga badge. Erected and tested on-site, set in the former chimney recess to take advantage of the seventh chimney in the flat for the Aga's flue. Hearth of black quarry tile, recess lined with Ironbridge ceramic tile, concealed lighting above. Recess is surrounded by a solid mahogany mantelpiece with columns (hand-carved capitals) on each side and a shelf above.

Kitchen Appliances

All new, with new wiring and plumbing. Professional Sub-Zero refrigerator and separate freezer, completely self-defrosting, De Dietrich multifunction convection oven, self-cleaning. De Dietrich microwave (behind cover to match oven). De Dietrich high-heat gas hob, with custom-design pan holder and separate wok cradle. Miele dishwasher. In-Sink-Erator waste disposer.

Entryphone

New videophone installed to connect to portico intercom and video camera, doorbell at street. Doorbell at flat door refurbished and rewired, transmits to receivers throughout the flat.



Renovation of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

Decorating

Every surface prepared, newly finished with paint, wallpaper, lincrusta (new lincrusta installed, and existing 1890 lincrusta refinished). Fabrics "upholstered" onto the walls above the dado rails in the main reception rooms. All paint from National Trust colors.

Lighting

Collection of antique late-Victorian ceiling lights, brass/bronze all with original (fragile!) antique glass shades. Completely disassembled and restored, rewired to modern UK standards, laquered and hung. (Available for separate purchase.)

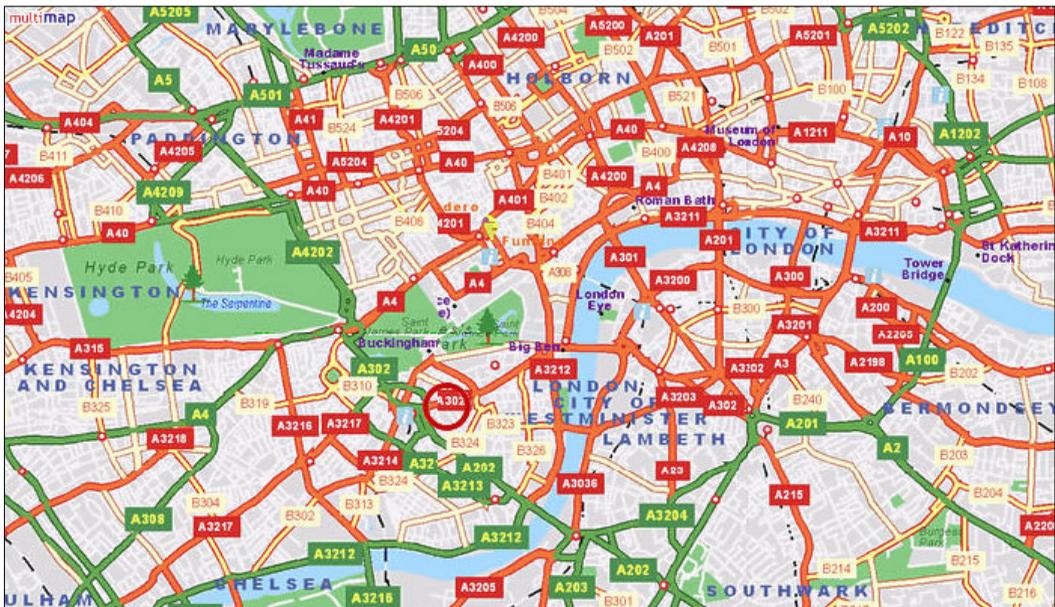
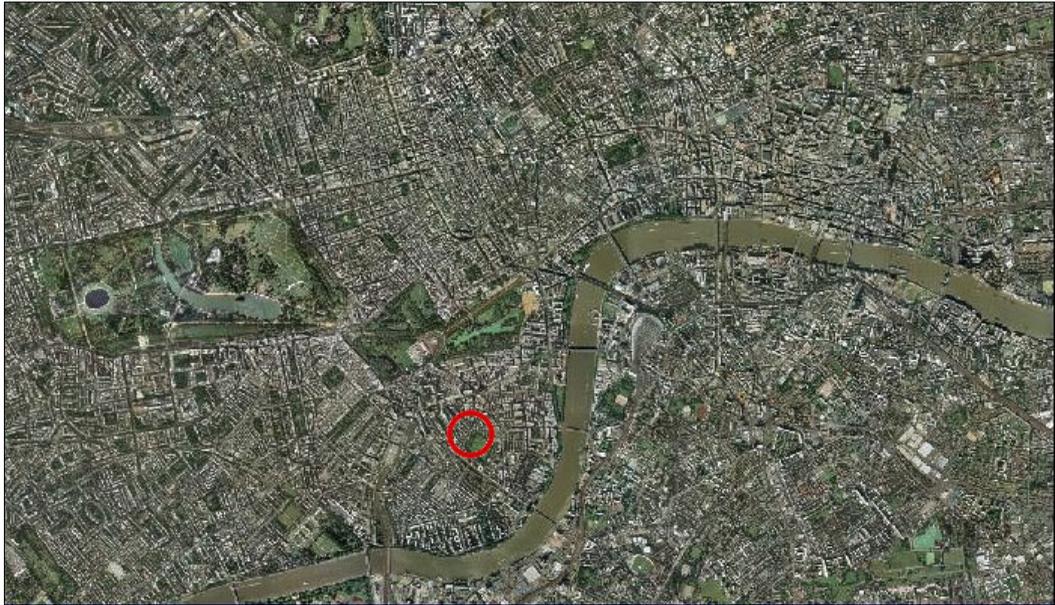
Curtains

Custom draperies designed and made for every set of windows, with some fabrics custom-woven and all trims custom-made. Under-curtains of Victorian lace for all windows. (Available for separate purchase.)



Maps and Aerial Photos of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

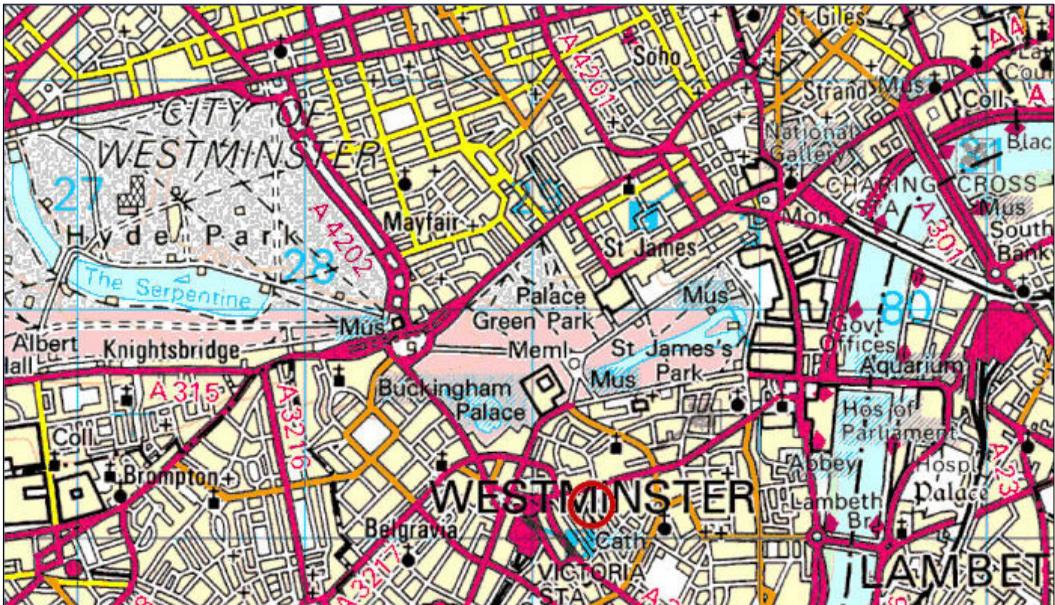
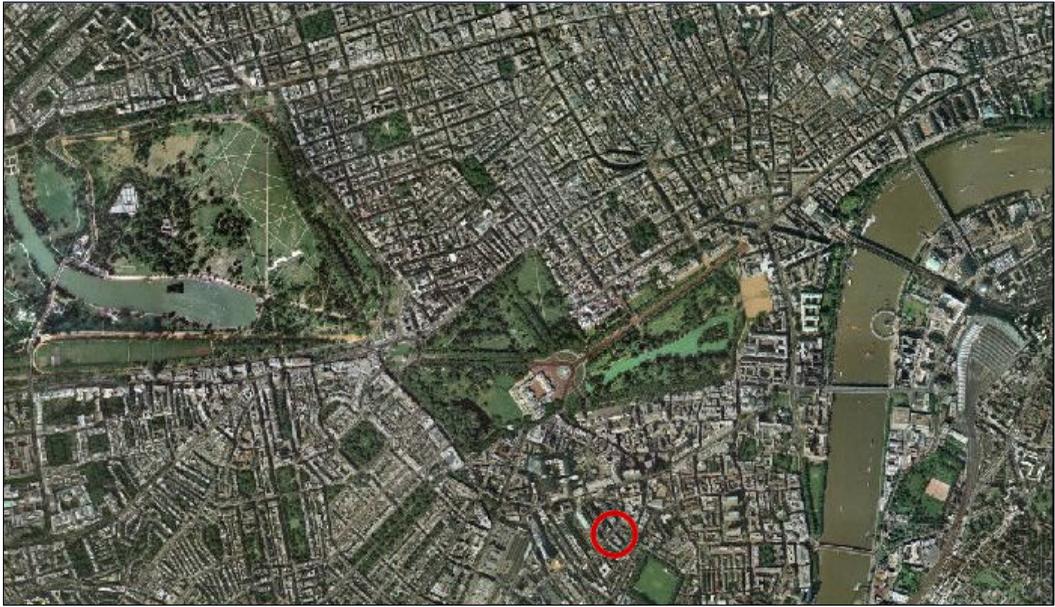
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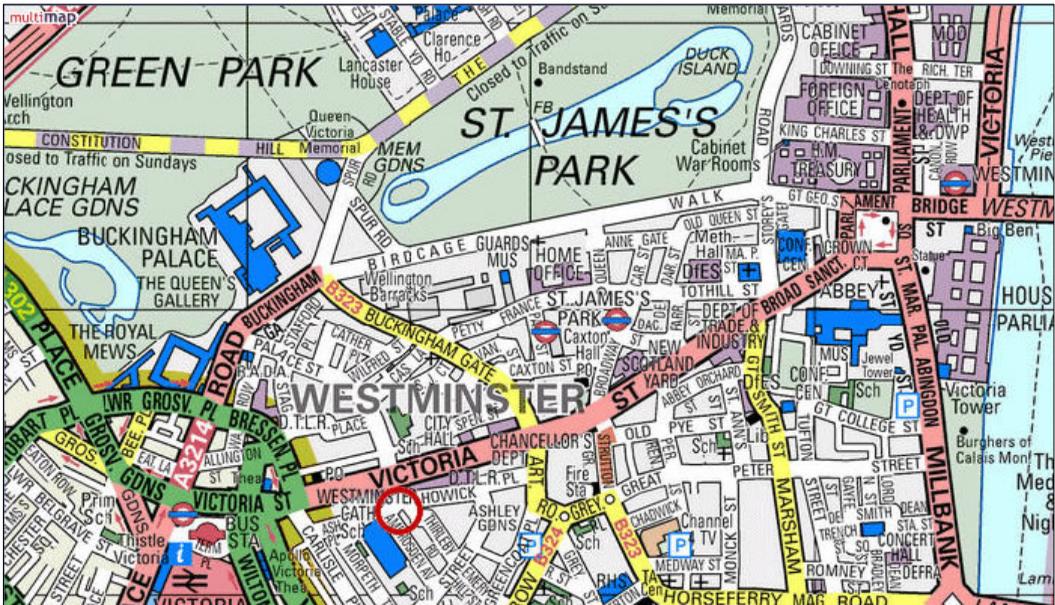
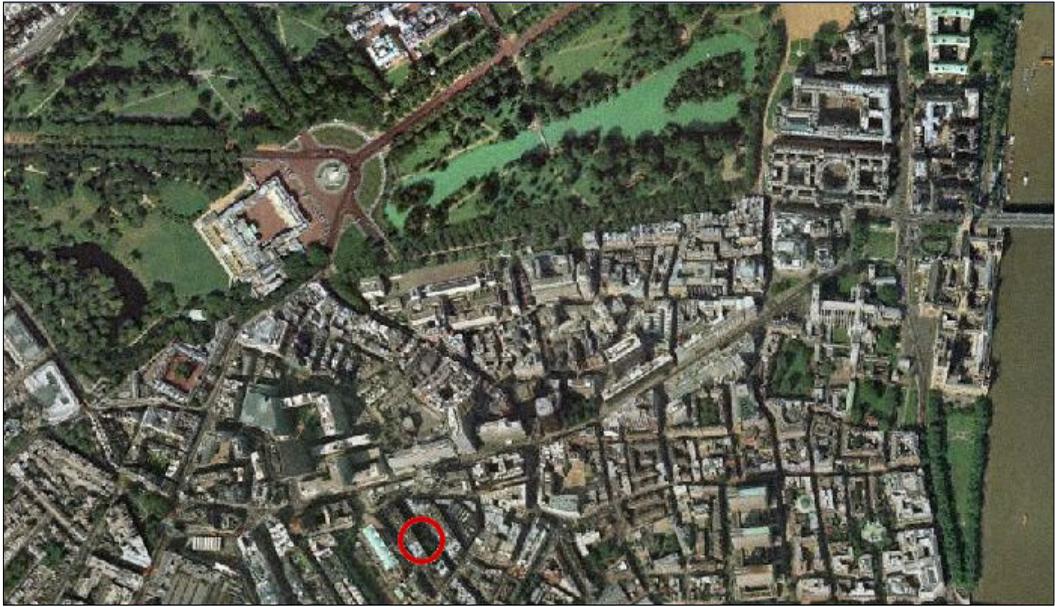
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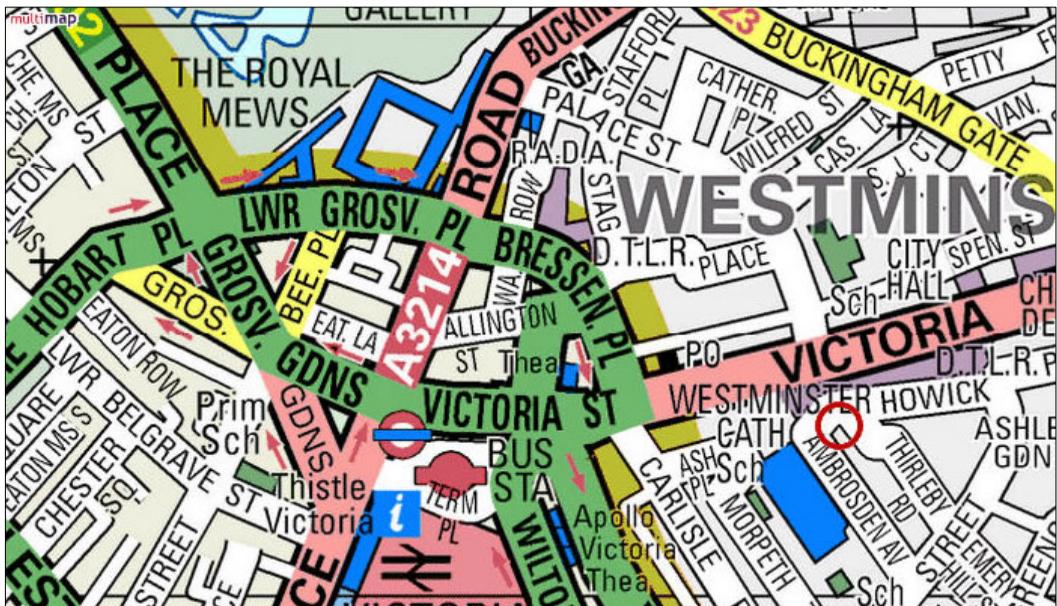
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Maps and Aerial Photos of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

Scale 1:5000





Historical Glimpses of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

Residents of Ashley Gardens

From its earliest days Ashley Gardens has been noted for the prominence of its residents, and this is still true today: when you live in Ashley Gardens you often see your neighbours' names on book jackets and hear their voices on BBC Radio 4. Residents include leading political figures, senior government officials, well-known musical and theatrical personalities, high-profile QCs and other professional people, chairmen of FTSE-100 companies, influential literary figures and journalists, high-ranking military officers, scientists and academics, and many more.

There are many stories about former residents of Ashley Gardens, and here are a few of them.



Ashley Gardens built beginning in 1890.

"The First Ten Years"

"Ashley Gardens ... offered a very different London lifestyle, central and convenient, generous in accommodation and advanced in design. Who would move in? Who would be able to tolerate the appalling noise and dirt associated with the construction of a Cathedral, a Roman Catholic cathedral at that and of enormous proportions, next door? Of course, for many these innovative developments offered a pleasant alternative for families living mainly in the country: husbands and fathers could reduce London expenses and entertaining in reasonable style: space was provided for domestic servants

"Ashley Gardens, as it was completed, rapidly established its social importance. *Kelly's Directory* for the 1890s indicates that tenants were happy to move in as the blocks were completed, some even being tempted from other new developments. Block 1 was virtually full by the end of 1890 with blocks 2 and 5 following in occupation by the



Historical Glimpses of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

end of 1891. ... All the blocks attracted pretty well the same social mix; MPs, army and navy officers, medical doctors and lawyers pursuing their careers were the neighbours of a large number clearly living on reasonable private means."

—"The World of the New: The First Ten Years", by Valerie Kingman. In *Ashley Gardens: Backward Glances*, London: Ashley Gardens Residents Association, 1990.

George Bernard Shaw: Ashley Gardens as "the New" (1893)

"Who were to be the 'New'? The 1890s were the decade of the New Drama and the New Woman. As Bernard Shaw said, 'we of course called everything advanced "the New" at that time.' Ashley Gardens, with the builders and decorators still at work, seemed extraordinarily well to represent 'the New'."

"Bernard Shaw wrote the 'topical comedy' *The Philanderer* in 1893. ... The first act is set in Ashley Gardens: Shaw's stage directions with their usual clarity create the atmosphere." [The spelling "Ashly Gardens" reflects Shaw's interest in simplified spelling, as does "Shakespear" further on.]

ACT I

A lady and gentleman are making love to one another in the drawing-room of a flat in Ashly Gardens in the Victoria district of London. It is past ten at night. The walls are hung with theatrical engravings and photographs The room is not a perfect square, the right hand corner at the back being cut off diagonally by the doorway, and the opposite corner rounded by a turret window filled up with a stand of flowers surrounding a statue of Shakespear. The fireplace is on the right, with an armchair near it. A small round table, further forward on the same side, with a chair beside it, has a yellow-backed French novel lying open on it. The piano, a grand, is on the left, open, with the keyboard in full view at right angles to the wall. The piece of music on the desk is "When other lips." Incandescent lights, well shaded, are on the piano and mantelpiece. Near the piano is a sofa, on which the lady and gentleman are seated affectionately side by side, in one another's arms.

... She is in evening dress. The gentleman ... is unconventionally but smartly dressed in a velvet jacket and cashmere trousers. His collar, dyed Wotan blue, is part of his shirt, and turns over a garnet coloured scarf of Indian silk, secured by a turquoise ring. He wears blue socks and leather sandals. The arrangement of his tawny hair, and of his moustaches and short beard, is apparently left to Nature; but he has taken care that Nature shall do him the fullest justice.



Historical Glimpses of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

"That such a play should have been set in Ashley Gardens, so soon after the first tenants had moved in, indicates what the development represented—a new style which would appeal to the progressive mind."

—"The World of the New: The First Ten Years", by Valerie Kingman. In *Ashley Gardens: Backward Glances*, London: Ashley Gardens Residents Association, 1990.

Thomas Hardy at Ashley Gardens (1895)

"During the spring they [the Hardys] paid a visit of a few days to the Jeunes at Arlington Manor, where they also found Sir H. Drummond Wolff, home from Madrid, Lady Dorothy Nevill, Sir Henry Thompson, and other friends; and in May entered a flat at Ashley Gardens, Westminster, for the season. While here a portrait of Hardy was painted by Miss Winifred Thomson. A somewhat new feature in their doings this summer was going to teas on the terrace of the House of Commons — in those days a newly fashionable form of entertainment. Hardy was not a bit of a politician, but he attended several of these, and of course met many Members there.

On June 29 Hardy attended the laying of the foundation stone of the Westminster Cathedral, possibly because the site was close to the flat he occupied, for he had no leanings to Roman Catholicism. However, there he was, and deeply impressed by the scene."

—*The Later Years of Thomas Hardy, 1892-1928* by Florence Emily Hardy (New York: Macmillan, 1930)

"The Greatest Change in the English House" (1910)

"Perhaps in one respect the greatest change which has been made in the English house is the adoption of "flats"; commenced ... in Ashley Gardens, Westminster, they have spread throughout London. In consequence of the great value of the sites on which they are sometimes built, to which must be added the cost of the houses pulled down to make way for them, the question of expense in material and rich decoration has not always been worth considering The increasing demand for these, however, shows that they meet, so far as their accommodation and comfort are concerned, the wants and tastes of the upper and middle classes."

— R.P.S. [R. Phené Spiers, sometime Master of the Architectural School, Royal Academy, London], in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th ed. (Cambridge: University Press, 1910), s.v. "House"



Historical Glimpses of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

Maugham describes Ashley Gardens (1919)

[Chapter 4] ... I was led up to Mrs. Strickland, and for ten minutes we talked together. I noticed nothing about her except that she had a pleasant voice. She had a flat in Westminster, overlooking the unfinished cathedral, and because we lived in the same neighbourhood we felt friendly disposed to one another. The Army and Navy Stores are a bond of union between all who dwell between the river and St. James's Park. Mrs. Strickland asked me for my address, and a few days later I received an invitation to luncheon.

My engagements were few, and I was glad to accept. When I arrived, a little late, because in my fear of being too early I had walked three times round the cathedral, I found the party already complete. Miss Waterford was there

The dining-room was in the good taste of the period. It was very severe. There was a high dado of white wood and a green paper on which were etchings by Whistler in neat black frames. The green curtains with their peacock design, hung in straight lines, and the green carpet, in the pattern of which pale rabbits frolicked among leafy trees, suggested the influence of William Morris. There was blue delft on the chimneypiece. At that time there must have been five hundred dining-rooms in London decorated in exactly the same manner. It was chaste, artistic, and dull.

When we left I walked away with Miss Waterford, and the fine day and her new hat persuaded us to saunter through the Park. "That was a very nice party," I said.

[Chapter 58] ... while the pair conversed I took stock of the room in which we sat. Mrs. Strickland had moved with the times. Gone were the Morris papers and gone the severe cretonnes, gone were the Arundel prints that had adorned the walls of her drawingroom in Ashley Gardens; the room blazed with fantastic colour, and I wondered if she knew that those varied hues, which fashion had imposed upon her, were due to the dreams of a poor painter in a South Sea island.

—W. Somerset Maugham, *The Moon and Sixpence*, (London: William Heinemann, 1919)



Historical Glimpses of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

D-Day is planned in Ashley Gardens (1943)

"... a brief and intriguing reference in the second volume of Dirk Bogarde's autobiography *Snakes and Ladders* [Chatto & Windus, 1978] when as a young and newly-qualified Air Photographic Interpreter he was involved in the early planning of D-Day 'in the high-ceilinged sitting room in a requisitioned mansion flat in Ashley Gardens, Victoria'. The date was late autumn 1943."

"He wrote to us in February" [1990]:

London, 4.2.90

... What a long time ago all that was. I have really forgotten so much. All I can do is offer a few broken fragments

We began the planning of D.day in a stripped-out drawing room in one of the Mansion Flats in Ashley Gardens. I think it was on the second or third floor We spent the nights on our camp beds in the empty bedrooms. Our batmen inhabited the basements ... or ground floors. We ate at a large restaurant opposite the fore court of Victoria Station. ...

Sorry not to be more helpful ... but I was pretty young then; it WAS a long time ago!

Dirk Bogarde

"... a letter from Brigadier Richard Vernon CBE which gives a vivid account of his time in Ashley Gardens—early March 1944 to mid May 1944. He writes ..."

I was responsible for the Operational Planning for the British Army side of 'OVERLORD'. ... There were a number of visitors to Ashley Gardens at that time. Certainly General Eisenhower came ... certainly Admiral Vian and Air Marshal Broadhurst were often there as the Senior Naval and Air Officers

"... a letter written by Colonel S. K. Gelbert about Mulberry Harbour ... "

... preparations for the Mulberry Operation were integrated through the Port Operating Committee sitting in Ashley Gardens, opposite Westminster Cathedral. This was chaired by the Senior Naval Officer, at that time Captain Petrie RN....

[Some blocks of Ashley Gardens down near Francis Street were lightly damaged by enemy bombing during the war, but Block 2 survived unscathed.]

—"Wartime Years 1939-1945", by Margaret Fournier and Barbara Freeth. In *Ashley Gardens: Backward Glances*, London: Ashley Gardens Residents Association, 1990.



Historical Glimpses of 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1



Harrods delivers to Ashley Gardens.

"Lord Jenkins of Ashley Gardens" (1959)

"This Law Lord conferred a minor honour on our homes by taking "Ashley Gardens" as a place name to distinguish his barony from those of other Jenkinsons, as is the custom with fairly common surnames. ... David Llewellyn Jenkins was born in Devon in 1899 ... Charterhouse ... military service ... Balliol ... Lincoln's Inn ... Inland Revenue ... Court of Appeal ... became a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary in 1959."

"When asked to choose a place name for his title, he is reputed to have stated that he was just 'Lord Jenkins of 24 Ashley Gardens', and proposed as the motto for his grant of arms, 'Up Jenkins!' Garter King of Arms of the day objected to such an undignified title and the flat number was duly dropped. So was the motto, which became instead 'Non sine jure'—not nearly so much fun."

—"Lord Jenkins of Ashley Gardens", by Lady Ann Gibson. In *Ashley Gardens: Backward Glances*, London: Ashley Gardens Residents Association, 1990.

Note: a copy of the volume *Ashley Gardens: Backward Glances*, (London: Ashley Gardens Residents Association, 1990), published by the Ashley Gardens Residents Association to commemorate the centenary of the building of the first blocks of Ashley Gardens, is included with the flat as a resource for its history.



Contact Information for 23 Ashley Gardens, London S.W.1

Details:

Price: £1,250,000 subject to contract

For Occupation: 02 April 2004

Classic Victorian Mansion Flat, completely restored and renovated.

Two large reception rooms, four large bedrooms, two bathrooms plus cloakroom, large kitchen with Aga cooker, laundry room, very large entry hall. Six working fireplaces. Balconies from reception rooms, overlooking Westminster Cathedral.

Approximately 2,180 square feet gross internal area.

Current Lease: to 2110 (106 years remaining), with share of freehold of the block.

Annual Service Charges: £4,796 in 2003.

Westminster Council Tax: Band H, £750.34 annually in 2003.

Curtains, antique mirrors, and restored 1890s ceiling lights shown in photographs are not included in the sale price, but are available for separate purchase.

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Misrepresentation Act 1967.

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