

Property Features



Lenox, MA In the Berkshire Mountains

ETHELWYNDE OVER THE YEARS

History

In the late 1800s, New York industrialists, financiers and aristocrats would leave the city to escape the heat and overcrowding. They sought to emulate European families who had a rural seat or “a place in the country.”

Heir to the Cunard Steamship fortune, Henri Monrad Braem was one such New Yorker. As an early “cottager”, Braem selected one of the prettiest sites in the resort community by choosing a location that had views to both the south and the west. He created one of the esteemed Berkshire Cottages, Ethelwynde, later to be known as one of the Berkshires Great Estates.

Braem was the U.S. Diplomat to Denmark and it was in Lenox, more than his NYC townhouse, where he most lavishly entertained. Through the Roosevelt family, he was introduced to Kate Taylor Winthrop.

Kate’s father had been one of the founders of Citicorp and was also a financier to Cornelius Vanderbilt. Kate married Robert Winthrop, a direct descendent of John Winthrop, a leading figure in the establishment of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. One of her grandchildren later wrote that Kate was seeking a Berkshire property with the finest views and was delighted to find this in Ethelwynde, which she purchased from Braem.

Kate was an exemplary hostess and enthusiastic gardener. She was an avid competitor in local and regional flower shows, building a reputation for her gardening prowess. The property’s impressive 100-year-old specimen tree collection no doubt comes from her careful stewardship and include silver elm, copper beech, spruce, horse chestnuts, split-leaf maple, ginkgo biloba and silver poplars in close proximity to the house.

The Winthrop family then sold Ethelywnde to Halstead Lindsley, an NCAA Golf Champion and co-founder and owner of several of the largest mines in the world. Wanting to raise the cottage to a new architectural standard, Halstead commissioned an impressive, English-style manor, sited on the original cottage’s footprint. He spared no expense importing materials and workmen to build the home for his new bride, who had summered in Lenox years earlier. The Lindsleys owned the property for nearly two decades. The estate passed thru several families (Hammonds, Hunnewells, Schieffelins) until it was purchased in 1975 by an engineering company who made Ethelwynde its corporate headquarters for the next quarter century. Their European-born CEO of this company commissioned a fountain with imported Carrera marble which now graces the entry lawn of the mansion.

Restoring the Residence

The mansion had all the finishes that one would expect in a corporate space, when purchased by the current owners in 2003: fluorescent lights, stark walls, temporary room divisions and peeling plaster. Employees who worked in the mansion wore heavy coats as the heating system was ineffective and had only one zone.

A three-year restoration and renovation program was implemented by the current owners with the goal of bringing the Great Estate back to what it was- as well as to thoughtfully and carefully lead it into the 21st century. Sheet rock partitions were removed to reveal original plaster walls and exceptional wood paneling. Layers of tile and concrete were painstakingly chipped away, exposing well-preserved hardwood. Crumbling ceilings were repaired, lead casement windows tended to and original nickel and brass fixtures restored. The kitchen was modernized. New mechanical systems were installed, heating and cooling system improved and electrical upgraded. The owners assembled an extensive team of skilled craftsmen in varying trades, accustomed to working on homes of this caliber.

Landscaping

Great attention has been paid to the landscaping, beginning with the creation of a master plan by a noted landscape designer. Overgrown trees which had been blocking gorgeous vistas were removed. There was no sign of the great lawn and beautiful gardens created by Kate Taylor Winthrop, which had once been heralded in the NY press. Today, the Great Lawn has been restored, specimen trees and bushes tended to, flower beds created, and asphalt removed.

Ethelwynde Today

After bringing Ethelwynde's grounds and mansion back to life, the owners wanted to share it with the cultural Berkshire community. Events with some of the world's greatest musicians, including performances by both Yo Yo Ma and Emmanuel Ax have been held at the estate. A series of salons, named the Lenox Athenaeum, were created. The salons focus on classical music, talks by local and national authors, and various tastings with vintners, chocolatiers and locally grown products. TEDxBerkshires was born in the living room at Ethelwynde. The owners host less formal events too, such as an annual BBQ which grew from 20 friends to over 150. And holidays are celebrated with a full house of family and guests enjoying the home.

The owners are outdoor enthusiasts and selected the Berkshires, in part, for the gorgeous scenery, road cycling, mountain biking, nature walks on the property or at nearby Pleasant Valley and Kennedy Park, kayaking and standup paddle boarding on Stockbridge Bowl.

Ethelwynde is in walking distance to Tanglewood (the summer home of the Boston Symphony), several world class spa retreats (Canyon Ranch and the new Miraval), the nation's largest Yoga center (Kripalu), and the downtown of Lenox. A number of other well-regarded cultural activities, including Shakespeare & Co. and Jacob's Pillow, are a short drive from the estate.

Once numbering more than seventy, Ethelwynde remains the last Great Estate in Lenox to still be used as a private residence.

Features

- Built in 1929
- Architect- James Cameron Greenleaf
- Landscape Architect- Gordon Hayward
- 11,748 sq ft on four levels
- 31 acres
- 7 principle bedrooms/6 additional bedrooms (or may be used for other functions)
- 10 full baths + 1 half bath
- ft ceiling main floor, ft 2nd floor, ft lower floors
- Leaded glass casement windows with original hardware
- Original nickel bath fittings and fixtures
- Garaging for 4 cars (3 attached, 1 detached) and additional parking

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Details

- Steel beam
- Slate roof
- Exterior Façade: Stone from Rhode Island Quarry

Details

HVAC MECHANICALS AND ELECTRICAL

- 16 temperature zones AC Company
- 2 Buderus Gas Boilers 35,000 BTU each (approximately 15 years old)
- 300 Gallon Water heater (approximately years old)
- 400 AMP Electrical Service

SYSTEMS

- Security – Windows, doors, motion detection, RING system perimeter cameras (linked to phone). Security System linked to Berkshire Communicators.
- Internet/Phone/Cable- Served by Spectrum, Pittsfield, MA