

More than a flight of fancy

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RESTORATION specialist Morgan Restoration has unveiled its latest historic project, the redevelopment of the Georgian Baldwyns Mansion, at Baldwyns Park, in Kent.

The new development will provide 14 exclusive one, two and three-bedroom apartments, each designed in a unique style to complement the exterior of the 19th-century Grade II Listed mansion.

Until 1759, Baldwyns Mansion Villa was owned by Sir Edward Hulse, physician to King George II.

Later, the estate was sold to the Minet family, who resided there until the early 19th Century, when the house was rebuilt in a manner typical of Sir John Soane.

In 1889, the 750-acre estate was leased to Sir Hiram Maxim, who contributed significantly to the development of flying machines and the concept of flight. Most of his time at Baldwyns was devoted to the development of an early flying machine, which flew publicly for the first time on July 31, 1894.

The house and estate were bought by the London County Council in 1894 and were later taken over by Bexley Hospital. Baldwyns served as part of this institution for nearly 100 years until closure in the early 1990s.

The Grade II Listed Regency mansion suffered serious neglect in later years and was placed on the at risk register.

Years of neglect and vandalism had caused extensive damage to the interior and all internal structural timber had to be replaced. The external structure, with three to six brick

the right elevation and the original pitched roof to the front had been replaced by a flat roof.

The main internal staircase had been virtually destroyed by fire and most of the original features had been lost.

The first priority was to give the front of the building a new and appropriate roof.

A roof of the Mansard style was selected, featuring natural slate and traditional lead-clad dormers with Georgian sliding sash windows. The unsympathetic extensions were demolished and replaced with a single, more appropriately-proportioned, wing. The building's original stucco was beyond repair and had to be replaced with new ashlar stucco-work.

The front windows have new traditional sash frames with specially-moulded lamb's tongue glazing beads. New French doors with similar joinery detail to the upper windows have been installed at ground level.

The oval entrance hall, with classical recessed alcoves has been restored, complete with new plaster cornicing, moulded from the few remaining examples. New skirtings and architraves have been machined to copy the originals and an exact replica of the original staircase has been installed. Baldwyns is now a building of two parts with three loft and four Regency-style apartments to the front and five Victorian apartments to the rear in addition to two self-contained houses.

The loft-style ground-floor apartments are a striking addition to the Georgian mansion, featuring double

ground floor rooms and include glass balustrades and even a stainless steel walkway in one.

The first and second-floor Regency apartments are more conventional in layout and the second-floor apartments have secret roof gardens. The two and three-bedroom corner houses each have private entrances with private gardens at the rear, backing onto native woodland. All the apartments feature stainless steel appliances, granite worktops and Philippe Starck bathrooms.

Barry Morgan, chief executive of Morgan Restoration, said: "When we first reviewed Baldwyns, the building was in an extremely poor state, both externally and internally and I knew immediately it would be a challenge.

"The ceilings and floors had gaping holes in places and it was this which gave me the idea of creating open apartments split over three levels.

"These new apartments are exceptional, unique in design and specification and provide some of the most exciting new properties to come onto the market in a long time."

Situated just 15 miles from London, the Grade II Listed Baldwyns is being totally restored to provide 14 prestigious apartments in this enviable setting. Located in the best part of this 38-acre Green Belt site, Baldwyns is set within five acres of woodland and adjacent to playing fields. Woodland walks and cycle paths run across the site linking into the 40-mile Green Chain Walk. Dartford Golf Course is adjacent, set in the environs of Dartford Heath, one of Kent's largest ancient common lands wooded with



● **PART OF HISTORY: Baldwyns Mansion is being restored**

members' sports club, whose sports fields and facilities are literally on the doorstep.

Historic Old Bexley is less than two miles away with its listed watermill — now a restaurant and bar. Bexley train station, a mile away, has links to London Bridge and Charing Cross with listed peak journey times of 30 minutes. Exceptional modern shop-

in two miles. Within easy reach of the A2 (A2018 junction 400yards) and just over three miles to the M25 (Junction 2) there is good direct access to London and the south east motorway network. Further afield, the Channel tunnel is 42 miles, Gatwick Airport 36 miles and Stansted Airport 42 miles.

Prices for apartments at Baldwyns range from £250,000 to £450,000. For