

TRAVEL+ LEISURE

Sleep Among 18th-century Paintings, Antiquarian Books, and a Baby Grand Piano at Winston Churchill's Former London Estate

Templeton House has been restored to its Georgian grandeur after a seven-year renovation.

BY [JILLIAN DARA](#) | UPDATED: JUNE 10, 2019



PHOTO: COURTESY OF TEMPLETON HOUSE

Located in the rural London borough of Richmond upon Thames, just steps from bucolic [Richmond Park](#), Templeton House is an opulent monument to an earlier time. And now, the London landmark is available for rental.

Originally completed in 1786, the property's first resident was the artist Elizabeth Upton, Baroness Templetown. Her designs were sought after – then, made famous – by esteemed English potter Josiah Wedgwood, founder of the iconic china and tableware company. (He also often left out the 'w' in her name, influencing her popular moniker, Lady Templeton.)



PHOTO: COURTESY OF TEMPLETON HOUSE

Over the next century, the Georgian manor was home to a variety of British nobles, admirals, and lawmakers. Its most notable occupant, however, arrived in 1919, when army officer Freddie Guest moved in along with his cousin, then-MP Winston Churchill. Though the future Prime Minister stayed for less than a year, his time at Templeton House solidified the property's status as a landmark address.

The 28,000-square-foot building was purchased in 2012 by David and Laura Rich-Jones, founders of real estate development firm [Richstone Collection](#), from Froebel College, which was using it as a residence hall. Saving historically significant properties from disrepair is somewhat of a hobby for the duo; previous Richstone Collection projects include [Walpole House](#), [Langdale House](#), and [Isabella House](#), all transformed into luxury villas. The firm restored Templeton to its original grandeur with a seven year renovation – involving a team of 1,000 gilders, painters, and contractors – and it is now available for groups of up to 16 guests.

On a recent trip to London, I had the opportunity to tour Templeton House, where Rich-Jones divulged the details of the multi-year project. “The result is always good, but the journey is better,” he told me – “and Templeton was a journey.” The team began with the [gardens and landscape](#): a full two acres surrounding the estate and nearly extending into Richmond Park, just outside the gates. “It took three years,” Rich-Jones said, gesturing through an oversized bay window toward the pristinely manicured lawn. Just beyond: a reflective duck pond, square hedges, and the original cedar trees planted during Churchill's residence.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF TEMPLETON HOUSE

Each of Templeton's eight guestrooms are meant "to have a balance between opulence and restraint," said Joa Studholme, a color consultant with classic English paint manufacturer [Farrow & Ball](#). Richstone enlisted Studholme to create a bespoke paint scheme through the property, complementing elements like 18th-century furniture and chandeliers handcrafted from French crystal. Her choices reflect traditional neutral paints and pigments, she told me, with the aim of creating the illusion that "it's all been here forever."

In planning the interiors, David Rich-Jones followed what he calls the ten times test. "If you go into a room ten times," he said, "you need to see something different every time." In the Churchill Room — named after the Spencer-Churchill family, who added the wing during the early 20th-century — the eye is first drawn to the antique furniture pieces, massive chandelier, baby grand piano, and paintings dating to the 1700s (including a portrait of Lady Templeton).



PHOTO: COURTESY OF TEMPLETON HOUSE

Once you get past those, more details unfold: distressed mirrors, original marble fireplace, black-and-white sketches of the Prime Minister, and Lady Templeton-inspired [Wedgwood](#) designs carved into the ceiling and molding. An original letter from Clementine Churchill, wife of Sir Winston, occupies a frame on the oak-paneled library, which is stocked with antiquarian books from around the world. The room is so evocative of the era that it has had a second life as a [Downton Abbey](#) set.

Downstairs is a palatial spa, one of the more modern spaces in the house. Templeton's basement level was expanded to make room for the largest indoor pool in the United Kingdom – 82 feet long – as well as an oversized sauna and steam room.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF TEMPLETON HOUSE

I asked Amanda Goodin, one of the three lead designers assigned to Templeton, about their process. “There’s an element of newness, but with antiques and traditional elements,” she said. “We could have gone with a fully modern feel, but it would be too much like a hotel. It’s not a hotel – it’s a home.”

Templeton House is priced between \$19,000 to \$31,500 per night, depending on the length of stay. It sleeps up to 16 and includes a personal chef, butler service, spa treatments, and a variety of activities, including high tea and lawn games. For rental inquiries, email info@richstoneproperties.co.uk.

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