

FARMLEIGH

Farmleigh, an estate of 78 acres situated to the north-west of Dublin's Phoenix Park, was purchased from the Guinness family by the Irish Government in 1999 for €29.2m. The house has been carefully refurbished by the Office of Public Works as the premier accommodation for visiting dignitaries and guests of the nation, for high level Government meetings, and for public enjoyment.

Originally a small Georgian house built in the late 18th century, Farmleigh was purchased by Edward Cecil Guinness (1847-1927) on his marriage to his cousin, Adelaide Guinness in 1873. A great-grandson of Arthur Guinness, founder of the eponymous brewery, Edward Cecil became the first Earl of Iveagh in 1919. The first major building programme was undertaken in 1881-84 to designs by Irish architect James Franklin Fuller (1832-1925), who extended the House to the west, refurbished the existing house, and added a third storey. In 1896 the Ballroom wing was added, designed by the Scottish architect William Young (1843-1900).

With the addition of a new Conservatory adjoining the Ballroom in 1901, increased planting of broadleaves and exotics in the gardens, Farmleigh had, by the early years of the 20th century, all the requisites for gracious living and stylish entertainment. Its great charm lies in the eclecticism of its interior decoration ranging from the classical style to Jacobean, Louis XV, Louis XVI and Georgian.

In 2001 the Office of Public Works began the delicate job of restoring this magnificent estate. This was carried out with great delicacy and care so as the historical ambience at Farmleigh has been preserved as it assumes its new role on behalf of the Irish State.

Guided tours of Farmleigh House are available to the public and, during the summer months in particular, the fabulous grounds at Farmleigh have proven to be a popular visitor attraction.

For more detailed information on Farmleigh go to www.farmleigh.ie