

Period Homes: Profile

Hartwell House, Aylesbury

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Hartwell House has a remarkable history, stretching back almost a thousand years to the reign of Edward the Confessor.

It has been the seat of William Peverel, the alleged natural son of William the Conqueror; of John I who succeeded his brother Richard the Lionheart as King of

England in 1199; and of Louis XVIII, the exiled King of France, who held court there from 1809 to 1814. During the residence of the French Court the roof was converted into a miniature farm, where birds and rabbits were reared in cages, while vegetables and herbs were cultivated in densely planted tubs. Some shops and businesses were even opened

in the outbuildings by *émigrés* short of money.

The modern Hartwell House & Spa (hartwell-house.com) is one of Buckinghamshire's most widely celebrated country houses. This impressive Grade I listed house, which has both Jacobean and Georgian facades, also contains rooms with rococo ceilings, and unique antique furniture and paintings.



The Louis XVIII library at Hartwell House is just one highlight



The beautiful grounds of Hartwell House make it one of Buckinghamshire's top attractions


All set in 90 acres of landscaped parkland, this National Trust property features outstanding decorative plasterwork and paneling throughout its elegant reception and dining rooms.

The north frontage features remarkable examples of early 17th century design and the south and east fronts were built around 1760 and are characteristic of their period, with projecting eaves, canted bays, skirted windows and iconic colonettes set within relieving arches.

The Great Hall is an English baroque masterpiece and, with the exception of the floor, which was originally flagged

with Portland stone, remains virtually unchanged since its completion in 1740.

However, despite this adherence to its historical aspects, Hartwell House features every imaginable contemporary comfort; fine dining, from its Relais & Châteaux restaurant, and a luxury spa.

Recently restored by Historic House Hotels, who also restored Bodysgallen Hall in North Wales, and Middlethorpe Hall in York, Hartwell House was donated to the National Trust in September 2008 and is also a member of the Pride of Britain Hotels consortium and won Pride of Britain Hotel of the Year 2008. 

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