

EDITORS' PICK

## Historic Vanderbilt Estate Sells For \$8 Million

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*I cover residential real estate, including buying, selling and trends.*

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Vanderbilt Berkshires Estate is about the same size as the White House - so big that it spans two ... [+]  
TRICIA MCCORMACK

In the late 1800s, the Berkshires in Massachusetts was a prime spot for the Gilded Age wealthy to show off their money by building giant mansions, or “summer cottages” as society’s upper crust called them. Most have been lost to fire or demolished as impractical for a family to manage and finance. One of the biggest and best — Vanderbilt Berkshires Estate, formerly Elm Court — has just sold for \$8 million to real estate investor and developer Linda Law. The home is being restored and may be transformed into a luxury resort development. Resort possibilities include 112 guest rooms, a 15,000-square-foot spa and a 60-seat restaurant.



The ballroom serves as a grand location for conferences, receptions and dining. TRICIA MCCORMACK

Elm Court's shingle style evolved from America's New England architectural movement of the late 1800s modeled after Colonial American architecture. The home, which is registered as a National Historic Landmark, got its name from a large elm tree that stood at the entrance to the mansion, but later succumbed to disease. A host to some of the world's most important business and political leaders, Elm Court was the meeting site for the Elm Court Talks in 1919, which led to the creation of the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations.



The Vanderbilt family enjoyed social and financial pre-eminence. ELM COURT ARCHIVES

In an effort to keep up with the high costs of running the large property after the original owners passed, their children turned it into an inn in the late 1940s. During the 1950s, it hosted events, dinners and overnight guests. Elm Court finally closed its doors and was boarded up until 1999 when descendants of Emily Vanderbilt began to renovate the estate. It operated for a few years in the early 2000s as a wedding-event space but then closed again.



Much of the renovation of Elm Court has been finished. TRICIA MCCORMACK

Much of the renovation of Elm Court has been finished with the main living areas and 13 bedrooms completed, according to [TopTenRealEstateDeals.com](http://TopTenRealEstateDeals.com). The original details such as the intricately carved-plaster ceiling in the dining room, the herringbone-wood floors and the fireplaces have been preserved and a new chef's-island kitchen installed. There is a large mahogany butler's pantry with a charming window seat and room for casual dining. All rooms are spacious enough for grand-scale entertaining. The grounds contain more buildings, including the larger butler's house, gardener's cottage and multiple long greenhouses with one large enough to grow taller fruit trees. There is a caretaker's house, carriage house, stable and two barns.



Library retreat. TRICIA MCCORMACK



Real estate investor and developer Linda Law bought Vanderbilt Berkshires Estate for \$8 million. TRICIA MCCORMACK

According to a press release from the buyer, "Collectively, we have done a tremendous amount of research on the architecture and design of the Gilded Age and the history of the Vanderbilt family, and we feel a tremendous responsibility to pay homage to its legendary past. Equally as important, we will pay the utmost attention to the historical importance of Elm Court as its own entity, as well as its position and prominence in the Lenox and Stockbridge communities."

