

REAL ESTATE

High-value country house market is strongest performer in UK: Knight Frank

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It seems that the COVID-19 pandemic has made country houses and embracing the God-King-and-country lifestyle more appealing for those who need space and social distancing. Image of Nuffield Hall, credit: Knight Frank

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Country houses worth more than \$6.2 million (5 million) saw the strongest price growth of any property type in the United Kingdom in the three months to June, due to interest in country living and the greater ability of buyers in higher-price brackets to transact, per an assessment by real estate consultancy and brokerage Knight Frank.

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An increase of 1.2 percent was recorded in the second quarter of 2020 despite the fact property markets were closed between late March and mid-May as a result of the global pandemic, per Knight Frank. The overall Country House index was flat, as increased demand for outdoor space and greenery offset the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown.

"Buyers at the top end of the market have been willing and able to move quickly to secure their desired homes as lockdown restrictions have eased," said Chris Druce, senior research analyst at Knight Frank.

"The relative scarcity of homes available at this price point can spark competitive bidding, which has put a degree of upwards price pressure at this end of the market," he said.

Not shy about shires

Prices have declined across U.K. markets during lockdown, which mirrors what has happened in prime London markets.

However, higher-value properties outside of the capital have performed better due to the combination of growing demand for outdoor space and buyers who are in a financial position to act more swiftly, per [Knight Frank](#).

Price growth for higher-value properties has also been weaker than the wider market in recent years due to a series of tax changes, leaving greater scope for future rises.

While prices in England and Wales grew 22 percent in the five years to March 2020, the Knight Frank 5 million-plus index fell 8.1 percent.

An analysis of offers accepted outside of London between May 13 and June 24 shows that the 5 million to 10 million

price bracket has come back more strongly than the rest of the market.

The number of offers accepted was 182 percent higher than the five-year average, according to Knight Frank data. This compared to 64 percent for all price brackets.

Furthermore, the number of new prospective buyers for 5 million-plus properties in country markets was 137 percent higher than the five-year average over the same period.

ACROSS ALL PRICE brackets, the rise was 52 percent, per Knight Frank.

"People are sensing an opportunity now," said Edward Rook, partner in Knight Frank's country department.

"In the previous three or four years there have been consistent bumps in the road and the clear water people were looking for never came," he said.

"We had that at last after the general election and then the lockdown came. People have simply decided it's now or never."

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