

ESCOMB NATURE RESERVE

Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham



GSC GRAYS

PROPERTY • ESTATES • LAND

ESCOMB NATURE RESERVE

ESCOMB LANE, BISHOP AUCKLAND, CO. DURHAM, DL14 6TZ

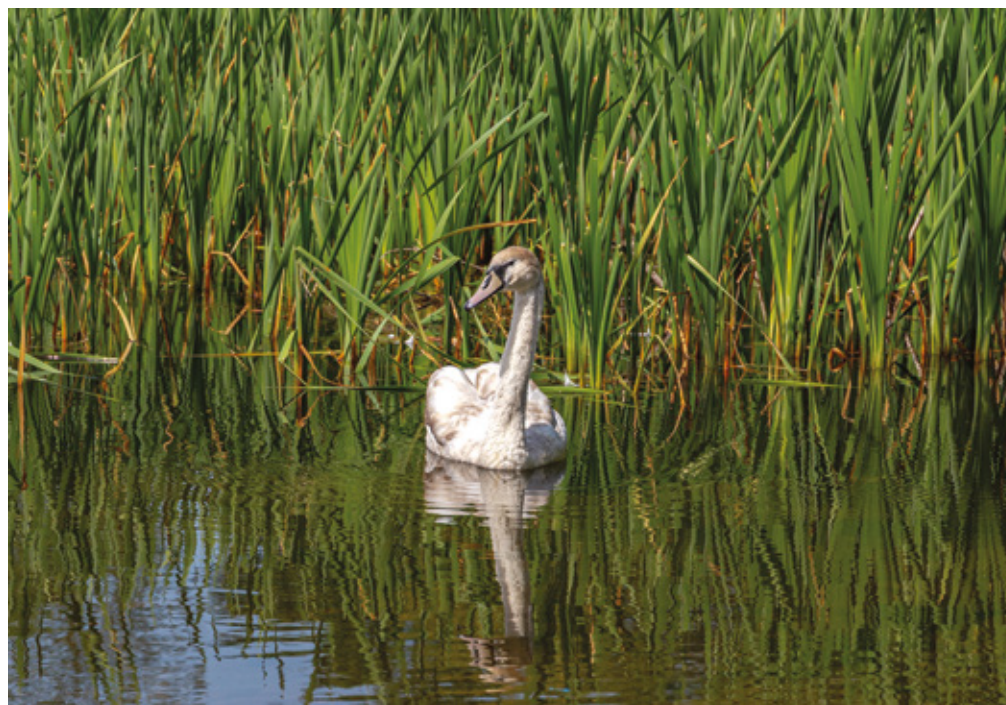
A RARE OPPORTUNITY TO ACQUIRE AN ATTRACTIVE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT PRIVATE NATURE RESERVE WITH LAKES, SPECIES-RICH GRASSLAND, WETLAND AND WOODLAND, COMPRISING A TOTAL OF APPROXIMATELY 66 ACRES (26.7 HECTARES)

- Two attractive lakes extending to approximately 10 acres and 2.6 acres within a thriving wildlife and wetland setting
- Rich biodiversity habitat supporting kingfisher, barn owl, buzzard, dipper and otter along the River Wear corridor
- Secluded rural setting with excellent access to Bishop Auckland and the wider County Durham area
- Stewardship and SFI income scheme in place, with future potential for leisure, eco-tourism or strategic development, subject to consent

FOR SALE IN LOTS OR AS A WHOLE



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LOCATION

Escomb Nature Reserve occupies an attractive position on the western fringe of Bishop Auckland, within the historic village of Escomb. The reserve enjoys a peaceful semi-rural setting adjacent to the River Wear, whilst remaining highly accessible to the A68, Durham City and the wider Northeast region.

The surrounding area is renowned for its rich heritage, countryside landscapes and growing tourism appeal. Bishop Auckland has undergone substantial regeneration in recent years through the work of The Auckland Project, helping establish the town as one of the North East's leading cultural and visitor destinations.

Escomb is particularly noted for Escomb Saxon Church, regarded as one of the finest and most complete Anglo-Saxon churches in England, dating from approximately 675 AD. Additional nearby attractions include Auckland Palace, Binchester Roman Fort, and Raby Castle, all contributing to the area's strong heritage and visitor appeal.

DESCRIPTION

The property comprises a diverse mosaic of open water, wetland habitat, grassland, woodland and established wildlife corridors, creating an exceptional haven for flora and fauna.

The reserve includes two principal lakes extending to approximately 10.07 acres (4.08 hectares) and 2.63 acres (1.06 hectares), together with smaller wetland margins and riverside habitats associated with the River Wear corridor. The land further comprises approximately 30 acres of grassland currently removed from active management to encourage natural regeneration and biodiversity enhancement, approximately 22.4 acres of established herbal leys designed to support species diversity and soil improvement, and a small area of woodland extending to approximately 0.2 acres.



Existing footpaths and natural features provide an appealing setting for quiet enjoyment of the countryside, whilst the varied landscape creates excellent amenity, conservation and recreational appeal. The reserve enjoys a secluded and unspoilt character rarely available on the open market, whilst remaining conveniently accessible from Bishop Auckland and the wider County Durham area.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Escomb Nature Reserve is managed as an environmentally focused landholding with significant ecological and biodiversity appeal. The varied combination of lakes, wetland margins, woodland, herbal lays and naturally regenerated grassland has created a rich habitat network supporting an abundance of wildlife.

The site forms part of a wider ecological corridor associated with the River Wear and provides valuable habitat for birds, mammals, pollinators and invertebrates. Species regularly recorded within the surrounding area include kingfisher, barn owl, great spotted woodpecker, buzzard, dipper and otter.

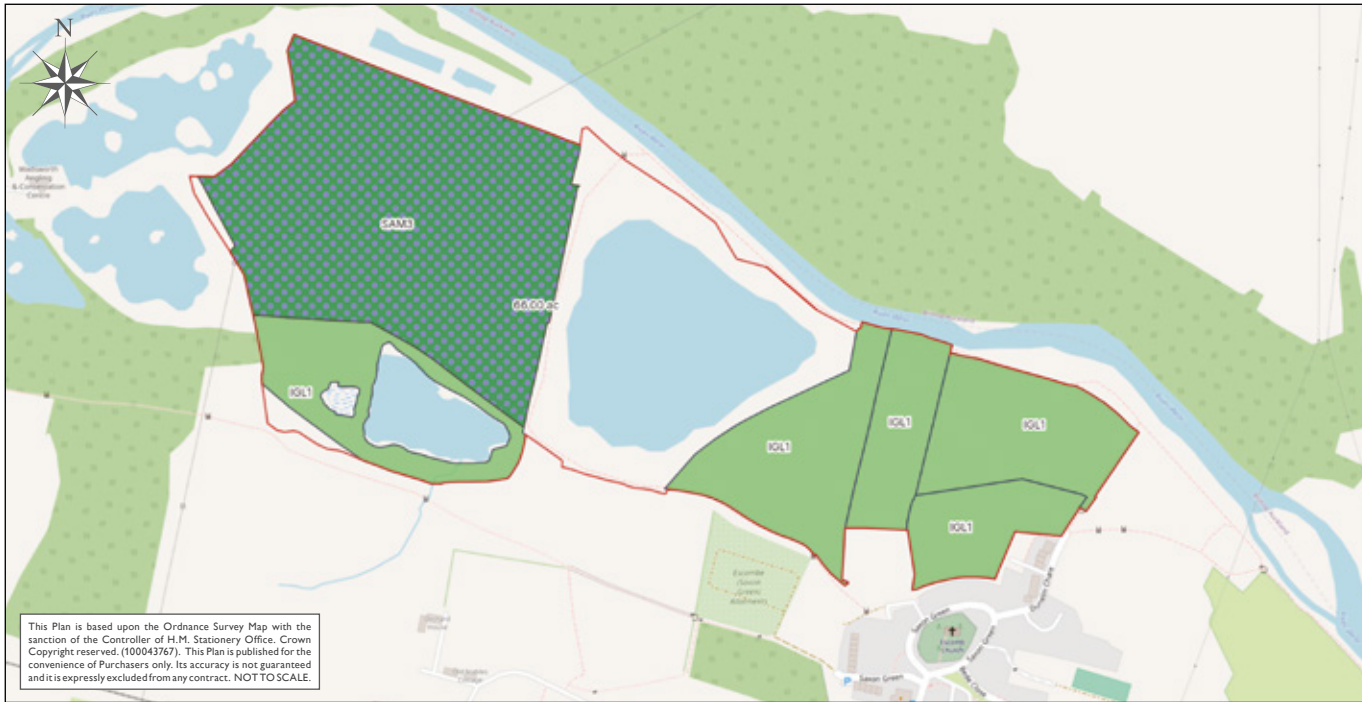
The current stewardship approach has encouraged the development of species-rich grassland, native vegetation, woodland regeneration and wildlife corridors, contributing to long-term habitat enhancement, soil improvement and biodiversity gain. The reserve offers a unique blend of environmental importance and private amenity appeal within an increasingly sought-after landscape setting.

PLANNING PERMISSION

Planning permission was granted in November 1993 pursuant to application reference 8/3/92/753/CM for the extraction of sand, gravel, coal and fireclay, together with the subsequent restoration of part of the property to a landscaped lake.

This area is also subject to a Section 106 Agreement dated 12 November 1993 and an associated approved Management Plan, which require this parcel to be managed and maintained as a wildlife habitat in accordance with the approved scheme.

Further details, including copies of the planning permission, Section 106 Agreement and related documents, are available to download from the Durham County Council Planning Portal under the above planning reference or by clicking the link here: [Planning Documents](#)



STEWARDSHIP & SFI SCHEME

Part of the land is currently subject to a Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) agreement, which includes areas of herbal leys together with blocks of grassland left out of active management for the duration of the scheme, supporting habitat enhancement, natural regeneration and wider conservation objectives across the holding. The land parcels identified under the terms of the SFI agreement, which is due to come to an end in 2027, are those shown on the plan as IGL1 (rewilding) and SAM3 (herbal leys). Further guidance on the current and future schemes is available via the government website: [Rural grants and payments - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/rural-grants)

FUTURE POTENTIAL

Given its location adjoining the village edge and within close proximity to Bishop Auckland, the property present longer-term strategic potential for a variety of uses, subject to all necessary planning permissions and statutory consents. Areas situated nearer the existing settlement boundary may present future scope for sensitively designed residential development; other areas may serve a range of leisure, tourism and conservation-based initiatives including nature and wildlife trails, educational or outdoor learning facilities, eco-tourism or glamping uses, wellness retreats, birdwatching hides, fishing opportunities, conservation projects and community environmental enterprises. Interested parties are encouraged to make their own enquiries in this regard.

The continued growth of Bishop Auckland's tourism economy, supported by attractions including Kynren and the ongoing regeneration led by The Auckland Project, further enhances the long-term appeal and versatility of this unique property.



GENERAL INFORMATION

Tenure & Basis of Sale

Offers are invited for the freehold interest in the property which is held in four separate Land Registry Titles:

- DU360932: Land comprising approximately 25.75 acres (10.42 hectares)
Current Use: Herbal Leys on 22.49 acres (9.1 hectares)
Woodland on 0.27 acres (0.11 hectare)
- DU173987: Land comprising approximately 19.41 acres (7.85 hectares)
Current Use: Surrounding lake and part rewilding
- DU309166: Lake comprising approximately 16.42 acres (6.64 hectares)
- DU139334: Lake comprising approximately 4.17 acres (1.69 hectares)
- Field parcel 2337 comprises a small parcel extending to approximately 0.44 acres (0.18 hectares) and is held within the vendor's ownership. The parcel is currently in the process of first registration at HM Land Registry, which it is anticipated will be expedited in connection with the sale of the property.
- Upon exchange of contracts, a deposit of 10% of the purchase price will be paid with the balance due on completion. This deposit will be non-returnable in the event of a purchaser failing to complete the sale for reasons not attributable to the Sellers or their Agents.
- The land is offered for sale by private treaty as a whole and in lots. All potential purchasers are advised to register their interest with the selling agents so that they can be advised as to how the sale will be concluded. Vacant possession will be provided upon completion.
- The land and property is known locally as Escomb Nature Reserve, however is not officially recognised as a Natural Nature Reserve, designated by Natural England.



Lotting

The property is offered for sale as a whole or in the following lots. The Seller reserves the right to withdraw the property from sale or to exclude any part thereof.

Lot 1: 22.61 Acres (9.51 hectares) comprising 22.40 acres laid to Herbal Leys and 0.21 acres of woodland.

Lot 2: 7.39 acres (2.99 hectares) comprising a small lake and wetland of 2.63 acres (1.06 hectares) and 7.76 acres (1.94 hectares) of land laid to rewilding.

Lot 3: 17.34 acres (7.02 hectares) comprising large lake of approximately 10 acres (4.05 hectares) with surrounding pathways and vegetation.

Lot 4: 15.01 acres (6.07 hectares) of land laid, partially separated by hedgerows into four separate enclosures and laid to rewilding.

Lot 5: 3.19 acres (1.29 hectares) of land, laid to rewilding and situated adjacent to Escomb Village to the southern boundary, presenting residential development potential, subject to the necessary planning consents.



Boundaries

The Vendor will only sell such interests as they have in the boundary hedges and fences. The boundary liabilities are delineated on the sale plan in accordance with the information we have been provided.

Plans, Areas & Schedules

These are based on the Ordnance Survey and Rural Land Register records and are there for reference only. They have been carefully checked by the Selling Agents and the purchaser/s shall be deemed to have satisfied themselves as to the description of the property and any error or misstatement shall not annul the sale nor entitle either party to compensation thereof.

Wayleaves, Easements & Rights of Way

The property is sold subject to and with the benefit of all rights of way whether public or private, rights of water, light, support, drainage, electricity and other rights and obligations, easements, quasi-easements, restrictive covenants and all existing and proposed wayleaves whether referred to or not.

Town & Country Planning

The property falls under the jurisdiction of Durham County Council, <https://www.durham.gov.uk>.

Prospective purchasers should rely upon their own enquiries and professional advice in relation to the environmental, ecological and planning characteristics of the property. Any ecology summary, stewardship schedule, planning note or natural capital overview provided within these particulars or accompanying information is supplied for guidance purposes only and should not be relied upon as a definitive assessment of the property's environmental status, development potential, scheme eligibility or future income opportunities. Interested parties are advised to undertake their own investigations with the relevant authorities, consultants and professional advisers prior to exchange of contracts.

VAT

Any guide prices quoted are exclusive of VAT. In the event of the sale of the property or any part of it or right attached to it becoming a chargeable supply for the purposes of VAT, such tax will be payable in addition to the purchase price.

Overage

The property may be sold with the provision of an overage to allow the Sellers to benefit from development or change of use of the land in future. The clawback will be based on the sellers receiving a 35% share of the uplift in value created by planning approval and the resulting income for a period of 35 years from the date of completion of the sale.

Directions

The property enjoys a convenient yet private setting with excellent access to the regional road network and the wider North East. From both the north and south, leave the A1(M) at Junction 60 and follow the A689 towards Bishop Auckland. Continue along the A689 before joining the A688 towards Bishop Auckland town centre. Proceed onto Escomb Road (B6282) and continue onto Hallimond Road into Escomb. Continue through the village, where the entrance to the property will be found after approximately 1 mile on the left-hand side, with public access situated at the end of Durham Chare. A free-to-use public car park is situated close to the entrance to the nature reserve, which is available to enter on foot.

Disputes

Should any discrepancy arise within these particulars of sale or in the interpretation of them, the question shall be referred to the arbitration of the Selling Agents whose decision acting as experts will be final.

Health & Safety

Please take care when viewing the property and follow normal health and safety practices for your own personal safety. No liability is accepted by the vendor or the Selling Agents.

Viewing

By appointment through the Selling Agents GSC Grays, 5-6 Bailey Court, Colburn Business Park, Richmond, DL9 4QL.

Lucy Rutherford
E: lur@gscgrays.co.uk
T: 01748 829 203

Katherine Wigham MRICS
E: kjw@gscgrays.co.uk
T: 01748 829 203

Anti-Money Laundering

In accordance with current anti-money laundering regulations, all offers to purchase the property - whether from within the UK or overseas, and whether cash or subject to finance - must be supported by appropriate evidence of source of funds. Acceptable documentation may include a bank statement evidencing the purchase price, a financial reference from a bank or funding provider, or written confirmation from a solicitor verifying that sufficient funds are available to complete the transaction. Purchasers will also be required to provide certified copies of identification (such as a valid passport) together with proof of residential address, in a form compliant with anti-money laundering legislation. These requirements apply to all individuals who will be named on the title deeds, as well as any parties holding a beneficial interest in the property. An administrative fee of £37.50 per person will be charged to cover the cost of the necessary verification checks.

Disclaimer Notice - Please Read: GSC Grays gives notice to anyone who may read these particulars as follows: 1. These particulars, including any plan, are a general guide only and do not form any part of any offer or contract. 2. All descriptions, including photographs, dimensions and other details are given in good faith but do not amount to our presentation or warranty. This should not be relied upon as statements of facts and anyone interested must satisfy themselves as to their corrections by inspection or otherwise. 3. Neither GSC Grays nor the vendors accept responsibility for any error that these particulars may contain however caused. 4. Any plan is for guidance only and is not drawn to scale. All dimensions, shapes, and compass bearings are approximate and you should not rely on them without checking them first. 5. Nothing in these particulars shall be deemed to be a statement that the property is in good condition, repair or otherwise nor that any services or facilities are in good working order. 6. Please discuss with us any aspects that are important to you prior to travelling to the property. Particulars written: August 2026. Photographs taken: May 2026.

