



 sandfords

Sandfords
020 7723 9988
sandfords.com

TO LET: Dorset House, Gloucester Place, London NW1 £1,400 per week
A stunning, interior designed, two bedroom penthouse apartment with west-facing private terrace situated in this purpose built Art Deco mansion building, ideally located moments from both Baker Street and Marylebone stations.



TO LET: St Edmunds Terrace, St John's Wood, London NW8 £2,400 per week
A four bedroom, four bathroom (three en-suite) stylish town house set over five floors (including a garage and staff/guest accommodation on the lower-ground floor level) providing generous living space of more than 2,100 square feet.



Talking on air

Natasha Higgins meets **Andrew Ellinas** founder of **Sandfords** and finds out about his unlikely past career

Rarely do you come across a radio presenter turned estate agent. It's possible, most things are, but unlikely. So when I meet Andrew Ellinas, founding owner of Sandfords, who tells me he went from presenting Jazz FM's Breakfast Show in the nineties, to selling houses in the noughties, I'm intrigued.

"I worked for the BBC, I presented Jazz FM's Breakfast Show for two years, I worked on political shows, sports shows, showbiz – anything really. At times it was interesting, at times dull. I've interviewed U2, Cliff Richard and Phil Collins and made a guest appearance in Rugby's Town Centre where I stood for an hour signing photographs of myself. As to why people would want my photo still baffles me," he says, amused.

Andrew receives me at his Regent's Park office on Gloucester Place, which he runs with two other partners. It's a rainy Tuesday morning and the tourists huddled outside the Sherlock Holmes Museum nearby, look especially weary. Nonetheless, the office is brilliantly located on the periphery of Regent's Park and a stone's throw away from bustling Baker Street. Andrew's other business partner is based at Sandfords' offices in Marylebone.

"I set up the agency because I needed to start making money," says Andrew matter-of-factly. "Radio doesn't pay very well and I had a young family to support. I would never have been able to give it up completely, though, so I still do some work at the weekends but it's now become more of a hobby".

As a teenager Andrew was passionate about music. "I loved discovering great songs. Being able to tell my listeners why a piece of music was so good was a dream come true. The job was very creative – it was just you and a pile of records; you had to entertain people for a given period of time".

After finishing his A-Levels at University

College School in Hampstead, Andrew studied law at Brunel University. He was supposed to go on to take his Part II exams at Lancaster Gate but decided that until he started, he would furiously apply to jobs in radio as "that's all I was really interested in doing". Lucky for Andrew, just days before he was due to start at Lancaster Gate, he was offered a job as a presenter for the United Biscuits factory in-house radio station (UBN) which he readily accepted.

"The problem with radio is that after you've been hosting your programme for about five years, the audience gets bored of you, you get bored of the show and it's time to move on. Radio takes you to all different parts of the

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Andrew Ellinas

country and it can be very taxing on family life." So, he decided to follow plan B.

Thanks to Andrew's Greek father, a successful property investor and developer, Andrew knew a significant amount about the industry. Thus with no negotiating experience, Andrew opened an estate agency in Archway, called it Sandfords – his mother's maiden name, and embarked on a career as an estate agent. "We were a small team of five. We opened in 1985 and for many years I was still presenting alongside being an agent."

"Things were so straightforward back then,"

says Andrew nostalgically. "I remember mail merging my letters and people couldn't understand how I did it. Our first office computer cost £5,000 and was much less powerful than a standard calculator today." Andrew believes that the modern way of doing things in his industry has become overly complicated as a result of technology.

Another bone of contention for Andrew is that he would like to see the industry become properly regulated: "This would enhance its reputation and eradicate cowboy outfits and underhand deals".

Sandfords, on the other hand, operates at the top end of the market and proof of its success was the need to expand seven years ago when a new office was opened in Marylebone after the main headquarters moved to Regent's Park in 1995. "Our core market is Regent's Park. We've already sold three houses in the park this year. We have a leaflet that goes through people's letterboxes that reads: 'If we haven't already sold your house, we've probably sold your neighbours'."

As for Andrew, his role today is mainly centred around what he calls 'the jobs that need doing' to keep the company running: "I head up marketing, IT, finance, HR, and anything else that no one else wants to do. My fellow Directors tend to do the property valuations and our negotiators do the viewings."

So, almost 30 years on, does Andrew see himself as more of a radio man, estate agent or bit of both? "Deep down, I am a bit of both. Radio is not something you can shake off. It becomes an inherent part of you, at the same time I love the day to day buzz of the property market".

Given the chance to do it all over again, would he have chosen a different path? There's a long pause. "No. I wouldn't have played it any differently," he answers.

FOR SALE: Chester Terrace, Regent's Park, London NW1 £8,250,000

An outstanding Nash house with fantastic views onto Regent's Park. The house provides elegant and well planned living accommodation with high ceilings and beautifully proportioned rooms.



FOR SALE: Nottingham Street, Marylebone, London, W1 £4,000,000

A uniquely located six bedroom, freehold, period town house in the heart of Marylebone Village. This rare to the market, bright, modernised property benefits from beautiful high ceilings, floor-to-ceiling windows and wooden floors.

