

INIGO



Bratton House

BRATTON SEYMOUR, SOMERSET

£1,250,000 FREEHOLD

Built in 1868, Bratton House is a remarkable stone house in Bratton Seymour, Somerset. This home occupies part of it, unfolding across more than 3,800 sq ft of space; the primary plan, a four-bedroom house, is added to by a self-contained annexe on the lower-ground floor. Outside are two acres of private grounds, designed to enhance the home's self-sufficiency, with a kitchen garden, edible forest garden, fruit trees, a polytunnel and a small paddock for grazing – it's a perfect little small holding. Beyond are communal grounds shared by the homes encompassed by the former estate; there is a heated swimming pool here, along with a tennis court. Castle Cary is close by and has a range of day-to-day amenities, along with a railway station, while Bruton, with its brilliant independent scene, is a 15-minute drive away.

Setting the Scene

Bratton House was designed as a large private country house. In 1939, it became a Quaker school for girls, The Hall School, before it was divided into a number of individual residences in the 1980s.

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Despite its age, Bratton House is unlisted. This home retains original features, including sash windows, beautiful ceiling mouldings and venerable beams. The views from the house are exquisite, stretching out to Shaftesbury across the bucolic Somerset landscape.

The Grand Tour

A private road winds up to Bratton House, its beautiful sandy-coloured stone façade gradually coming into view. The driveway culminates in parking for at least six cars, with room for an additional six by the garage.

From the driveway is a metal staircase with greenheart treads reclaimed from a pier in north Wales. This ascends to a patio – a wonderful vantage point – and the home's private entrance. The current owners have placed a table and chairs here to take in the big Somerset skies.

Entry is to a lobby-turned-music room with burgundy walls, and an ornate arch on one side with plenty of room for coats and boots. Here and across much of the home are original four-panelled doors, along with deep original architraves. Beyond the music room is a grassy green-painted study decorated in beautiful Mackintosh wallpaper, where a tripartite bay above a built-in, decoupage desk captures mesmerising views.

At the front of the plan is a fantastic kitchen and dining room, grounded by handsome original pine floorboards and sections of ornate marquetry flooring. Green kitchen units run along one side, with an under-counter freezer, fridge and a dishwasher, as well as a gas oven and a hob. A tall sash window captures beautiful views of the garden and of swooping and soaring birds. Arguably the centrepiece of the room, a long, antique pitch pine island with an incorporated breakfast bar is an arresting gathering point.

On the other side of the room is a fireplace fitted with a Heta wood-burning stove. At the far end is a romantic window seat beneath a trio of sash windows – the perfect place to admire the panoramic views. The room has a high ceiling that amplifies its sense of volume and is adorned with mouldings.

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Stairs ascend to the first-floor landing, with a bathroom on one side and a door to a second landing on the other. From here are two bedrooms: one, the principal, is a generous space with an en suite bathroom, dressing room and dual-aspect windows. The views from here are similarly spectacular.

More stairs ascend to the second floor, where an additional bedroom with a built-in platform with storage beneath makes for a peaceful retreat. Two large skylights above are perfect for stargazing. The room also has an en suite bathroom with a bathtub. There are two additional bedrooms on this level, one of which is used as a dressing room.

Set on the lower-ground floor, the self-contained annexe is a private retreat. It was recently converted by the owners, who have appointed it with smart finishes. There are two separate entrances, through the bathroom or from the kitchen/dining room; the latter is via a patio and timber-framed double doors. Original pine floorboards again ground here, and playful dual-tone kitchen units extend across two walls. Appliances include a fridge, dishwasher and a gas oven and hob. Opposite, another Heta wood burner – here with a painted surround – is a warming focal point in the winter. There is also a walk-in pantry at the rear, with plenty of room for supplementary appliances and storage.

Another sitting room, currently used as a cosy library, lies beyond; it also has a door that connects, via an internal staircase, to the primary plan. The bedroom is accessed from here and is picked out in a light pink; it also has an eight-over-eight sash window with original Georgian bars and shutters. A wet room with a washing machine and an external garden door can be accessed from the library. The annexe also has a bright, self-contained courtyard garden with attractive trellis and plantings.

The Great Outdoors

The attractive grounds that surround Bratton House are remarkable. A section of garden extends from the ground floor, with larch-clad raised beds, borders, a large cherry tree and a lawn. It is hidden from its neighbours by a tall viburnum hedge. From the garden is a spiral staircase that leads to a lower-ground-floor courtyard. It also has a gate to the swimming pool and the shared gardens.

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The rest of the gardens are to either side of the drive and include a Dell with a rockery, an old pond planted with hydrangeas, hellebores and other flowering plants. The rest of this large area is planted with acers, a candy floss tree, sweet chestnuts and a huge tulip tree, as well as more hydrangeas along the drive. In spring, it is covered with a blanket of snowdrops, followed by abundant wild garlic.

On the other side of the drive is a section known to the current owners as The Grove, a glade within a circle of tall sycamores which can be used as the private garden to The Lorry. Laurel has been planted to enclose this space to make it private in the future.

Beyond the drive are beautifully planted terraced gardens with a chicken emporium below and access to the 1.5-acre field and polycrub.

The field has been transformed from a grazed sheep field into a haven for pollinators. The present owners have planted over 200 trees, fenced off a paddock, sown yellow rattle to create a wildflower meadow, built a tool shed/ outdoor kitchen, made no dig fenced in kitchen garden, put in a tiny pond, planted an edible forest garden with a range of edible bushes and trees, and built a three-bay covered compost area. In addition, a drain around the house collects rainwater from the roof and takes it underground to a 3,000L hidden storage tank, which provides rainwater for the kitchen garden from a tap next to the composters.

The Lorry is a beautifully converted old Bedford horse box which has a built-in double bed, sofa, kitchenette and solar lights. There is also a water pump to the sink from a reservoir under the larch veranda. The current owners rent The Lorry as a holiday let; more information is available on request.

Opposite The Lorry is a huge log store, another rockery, a fern garden and steps up to a double garage that houses a 6.4kw solar system.

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Out and About

Castle Cary, a market town with plenty of shops and places to dine, is close to the house. Just beyond, Higher Farm is a new but decided favourite locally, with its delicious 'Farm Caff' and nature cabins. Horrell and Horrell is also close by and has atmospheric dining experiences, located in a transformed cow barn and with an outdoor kitchen.

Bruton is 15 minutes away, home to the ever-popular Roth Bar and the internationally acclaimed Hauser and Wirth art gallery, with gardens designed by Piet Oudolf. The Michelin-starred Osip restaurant is on the route from Bruton to Wincanton, while The Newt – which has been likened to Kew Gardens with rooms, fine dining and a spa – is just over the hill from Bratton House and enjoys a much reduced yearly membership for locals.

Frome is around 30 minutes' drive north; its many independent cafés and boutique shops include Rye Bakery, Projects Frome, Moo and Two, Frome Hardware, Little Walcot and Frome Reclamation Yard. The Frome Independent, a monthly market showcasing local artisans and food producers, has helped put Frome on the map, attracting over 80,000 visitors annually. For further recommendations from those in the know, look to our guide to Frome.

Spanning 380 square miles, Cranborne Chase National Landscape is a short drive away. Its diverse landscape encompasses areas of rare chalk grasslands, scientifically important ancient woodlands, and chalk escarpments. It has plenty of walking, cycling and even horse riding routes to explore. Encompassed within is Stourhead, a National Trust property 13 minutes' drive from the house. A magnificent 18th-century estate, it is renowned for its stunning landscape garden.

There are state-run schools in Bruton, along with the private King's School.

A 12-minute drive away, Castle Cary station is the closest. It runs direct services to London Paddington in under an hour and 40 minutes, or connecting services to Bath and Bristol.

Council Tax Band: E

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About

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