

INIGO



Church Rise

LONDON SE23

SOLD

This striking one-bedroom apartment sits in a converted church in Forest Hill. Renovated in a neutral palette, allowing the original features to sing, the apartment is a beautiful blend of pared-back modernity and historic grandeur. Constructed in the 1800s, the building was once the local parish church, and this apartment occupies a prime spot in its southern portal. Unfolding across three floors, the open-plan living spaces are filled with light that pours in through full-length windows, while a mezzanine level provides space for guest accommodation. Set in the centre of Forest Hill, the apartment is close to the vibrant bars and restaurants the area has to offer and has fast and easy access to central London.

Setting the Scene

During the 19th century, several churches were constructed across south London to accommodate the increasing number of parishioners in these newly developed areas of London. Frequently built by established architects, these churches, situated away from the centre of London, offered the opportunity for these architects to experiment with the design.

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Originally known as Christ Church, the present Kentish Flagstone structure was built in 1854 by Ewan Christian, the architectural advisor of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who went on to design the National Portrait Gallery. For more information, please see the History section.

The Grand Tour

Accessed from the ground floor, entry is to a neat hallway, through to the open-plan kitchen, living and dining room. Here, oak floorboards ground the space and are complemented by whitewashed walls, the minimal colour scheme putting the focus firmly on the ecclesiastical architectural features.

On the left is a kitchen with chalk stained beach cabinetry topped by black laminate worktops, finished with chrome detailing. The current owners have utilised the adjacent space as a dining area, with plenty of room for a large table and chairs, making it perfect for entertaining. The living area is set into what was the portal, accessed through an arch of sweeping pilasters and elegant molding. This space is triple aspect; a full-length glazed cast-iron door with folding oak shutters opens to the garden, and two windows on either side of the room allow light to flood the plan. The space is defined by the rugged stonework and a high wooden vaulted roof that has been recently restored.

On the first floor is a mezzanine, fronted by a glass balustrade with views down onto the living area. An airy space, it would make the perfect studio or a guest bedroom. The main bedroom is on the second floor, set into the caves. Two skylights illuminate the space, and an arched entrance door and foliate church pillars add drama.

A large bathroom is on the first floor and has a bath with an overhead shower. It is tiled in cream marble, referencing the neutral palette in the rest of the apartment. There is a separate shower room opposite the main bedroom. Echoing the scheme of the other bathroom, it has cream mosaic detailing, which adds a clever sense of cohesion.

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The Great Outdoors

The church is within its own gated complex on the hill leading from Perry Vale. The gates open to a verdant communal garden that wraps around the house. The south side has a large sweeping lawn, which can be accessed directly from the apartment with ample space to sit and bask in its relative tranquility.

Out and About

The church is situated in the centre of the leafy residential area of Forest Hill. In recent years, several cafes, restaurants and boutiques have sprung up, contributing to its bustling community feel. On Perry Vale is Pantry, a famous delicatessen that doubles up as a café and wine bar. Dartmouth Arms is affiliated with MeatLiquor and serves burgers and craft beer. Canvas and Cream and St David Coffee House are lively cafes. Further dining options around Dartmouth Road include Sylvan Post, a gastropub that occupies the site of a former post office, The Chandos, with its independently brewed beers, homemade pizza, and the bohemian London Beer Dispensary. The neighbourhoods of East Dulwich and Peckham are slightly further afield, both with a host of excellent restaurants and cafes.

One of the principal attractions in the area is the Horniman Museum and Gardens, designed by Charles Harrison Townsend. Opened in 1901 to house the collections of Frederick John Horniman, it encompasses eclectic anthropological and musical items, a world gallery, a butterfly house and an aquarium. The extensive gardens provide excellent views over London and are the setting for the weekly Sunday Farmer's Market. Other things to do in the area include walking along the 18th-century nature conservation site of Cox's Walk, which runs from Dulwich Woods to Sydenham Hill and comprises around three acres of green spaces. Also, there is Daces Wood Nature Reserve, formerly part of an extensive Victorian garden. The Dulwich Picture Gallery is also a 10-minute drive away.

The nearest station is Forest Hill, running London Overground services to Highbury & Islington via Shoreditch High Street and Canada Water (for connections to the Jubilee Line). Southern Trains runs direct services to London Bridge with a journey time of around 20 minutes.

Tenure: Leasehold

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Lease Length: 115 years remaining

Service Charge: £3,500 per annum

Ground Rent: £200 per annum

Council Tax Band: C

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About

Inigo is an estate agency that specialises in selling marvellous historic homes, believing that a beautiful home is a pleasure that never ages. We connect discerning individuals with extraordinary spaces, no matter the price or provenance. Covering urban and rural locations across Britain, our team combines proven experience selling distinctive homes with design and architectural expertise.