

# INIGO



## *Collins Place*

**SISSINGHURST, KENT**

**£1,400,000 FREEHOLD**

With origins in the late 15th century, Collins Place is a supremely characterful Grade II-listed house in Sissinghurst, Kent. It has a generous plan spanning some 3,930 sq ft, with three storeys, five bedrooms and a series of diverse (though similarly atmospheric) living spaces. Outside are gardens befitting of the house's proximity to the world-renowned grounds at nearby Sissinghurst Castle: fragrant lavender mingles amid foxgloves, roses, flowering perennials and productive fruit trees. Commuting into the capital is made easy by the Collins Place's proximity to Staplehurst, a 12-minute drive away, which runs services to London in approximately 60 minutes.

### *Setting the Scene*

The earliest part of the Collins Place dates to the 15th century, with later 18th and 19th century additions. Timber-framed, it began its life as a cloth hall that formed a part of the larger network of Kentish weaving that proliferated during the Tudor period.

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A remarkable number of early features remain in situ, from its hung-tile exterior and clay Kent peg roof to 18th-century windows and grand stone fireplace surrounds, two with the date '1590' inscribed in them. Where newer interventions have been made, they have been done so with tact and sensitivity: reinstated historically accurate features include the ceiling height in the kitchen, and recovered floorboards on the ground floor. Contemporary yet subtle, a monopitched extension at the rear was added by the current owners to create a bright living space anchored in the surrounding greenery.

### *The Grand Tour*

Collins Place is set back from the street behind an enchantingly planted garden and wooden gate. From first glance the house exudes a Kentish countryside charm, its frontage is a combination of brick, red tiles and white clapboard – all of which have become synonymous with the county's vernacular style of architecture. A pitched porch encloses the front door and is embraced by the sprawling tendrils of a clematis and a rose, which blooms in spring and then early summer.

Entry is to a circulation space laid with characterful chequerboard tiles; original wooden panels line the walls, with a sweet ivy leaf Farrow & Ball paper and coat hooks above.

A large living room lies on the left, set beneath a series of exposed timber beams. On one side, a wide inglenook fireplace with an exquisite carved stone surround has been fitted with a modern log-burning fire. Windows on two aspects beckon in light and frame garden views.

From the rear of this room is a second hallway that connects to another reception space and to the kitchen. Of more intimate proportions than the first, the second sitting room unfolds below an arresting timber-framed ceiling. It also has a stone-framed fireplace with a modern log-burning stove added within.

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At the rear, set down a pair of steps, is the kitchen. Wooden posts and a nest of beams lend it a wonderful atmosphere; at the far end, these exposed timbers trace up to the top of a pitched roof and extend down to meet a handy open shelf. Below, grey cabinetry has been arranged in a wide U-shape and is topped with a generous oak countertop. A deep butler's sink has well-placed beneath a window that overlooks the lawn beyond.

Beyond lies a large skylight-studded conservatory – the contemporary crux of the home. Large limestone tiles ground the space, pairing with simple white-washed walls. Crittall-style glazing capitalises on the green surroundings and can be opened to create a seamlessness between inside and out.

A useful utility space with an adjoining shower room completes the ground-floor plan.

The ascent to the upper floors is an astonishing one, passing more timber beams en route – here organised in a curiously uniform pattern. A wide hallway laid with the original floorboards extends at the first-floor level, with three bedrooms emanating from it.

The principal bedroom is laid with the same floorboards as the landing and has a stone fireplace, as well as a series of embracing exposed timbers. Both of the other double bedrooms on this floor have original panelled walls. All three share a bathroom, with an original door, moss-green panelling, a bathtub, a separate walk-in shower and ditsy Nasturtium wallpaper by Lake August placed beneath the beams.

Upstairs, on the second floor, are a pair of particularly spectacular bedrooms; set beneath the pitch of the roof, they have a bright and airy feel and plenty more exposed beams. A games area unites the room, with a second shower room beyond.

### *The Great Outdoors*

Bounded by a red-brick wall, the charming gardens have had time to bed-in: mature trees and plants include bay, lavender, rosemary, hollyhocks, fox gloves, hellebores, artichokes and many more. Swathes of lawn provide space for playing or relaxing. On one side, an outdoor terrace framed by a grape vine is an ambient place to dine outside.



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There is an outbuilding in the garden that the current owners use for storage; pending the relevant permissions, this space could be reimagined for alternative uses.

### *Out and About*

The small, picturesque village of Sissinghurst has become synonymous with Sissinghurst Castle Garden, a now National Trust-managed building that Bloomsbury Group member Vita Sackville-West lived in with her husband, Harold Nicholson. The pair laid out the inimitable surrounding grounds in the 1930s; in the decades since, it has drawn in visitors from across the globe for the sheer scale of its horticultural ambition.

Popular village pub and former coaching inn, The Milk House, is located in the heart of Sissinghurst and serves locally sourced food and drinks from artisan producers.

Nearby Cranbrook, with its pastoral, medieval feel, was once known as the 'Capital of the Weald', and is home to a large church with a clock mechanism that was the prototype for Big Ben. Popular spots to visit include Larkin's Alehouse, a family-run micropub on the High Street and slightly further, in neighbouring village Hawkhurst, is the Great House. Hawkhurst also has a terrific independent cinema, Kino.

Additional shopping opportunities can be found in Tenterden, Rye and Royal Tunbridge Wells. The latter is one of the most popular towns in the south-east, thanks to its historic architecture, green spaces, outstanding schools and excellent links to the capital. Favourite local cafés and restaurants include Momentum, St Kilda, The Ivy, Thackeray's and The Beacon. The Pantiles are a particularly lovely part of the town, formed by elegant, Georgian architecture. The rolling Kentish countryside is a short drive away.

The historic Wealden woodland of Hemsted Forest is a beautiful place to walk and Bedgebury National Pinetum and Forest, reachable in about 15 minutes, is a significant conservation area and home to the world's largest number of conifer trees. Here there are lakes and ponds teeming with wildlife and various walking trails meander through Dallimore Valley which has spectacular hillside views.

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Further west is Bewl Water; the largest reservoir in the south-east, it sits within 800 acres of parkland. This part of Kent is also home to many wonderful gardens. Great Dixter at Northiam and Batemans at Burwash are both around 20 and 30 minutes' drive from the house respectively. Burwash also has a great pub, Lakedown Taproom.

There are many highly regarded state and independent schools in the area including Cranbrook School, Saint Ronans, Dulwich Cranbrook, and Benenden Girls School all within about 6 miles. Further afield the Tunbridge Wells Grammar Schools, the Maidstone Grammar Schools, and Tonbridge, Sevenoaks and Bede's are all accessible.

Trains run from Staplehurst (a 12-minute drive away) into London in around an hour. The M25, Gatwick Airport and the Eurotunnel are all within easy driving distance.

Council Tax Band: G

# INIGO



## *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.