

# INIGO



## *Crafton Lodge Road*

MENTMORE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

SOLD

Sitting on the edge of the beautiful Mentmore Estate, this Grade II-listed lodge house is an exquisite early example of Arts and Crafts architecture. It is encased by a plot of approximately an acre, with mature box and cherry laurel hedging, and a number of handsome oak trees. Inside, the house has been lovingly restored using traditional techniques, a gentle palette and an intelligent use of materiality. With protected views across neighbouring land and a serene approach down a single track no-through road, the house has a rural feel despite its proximity to London, around 40 minutes away by train.

### *Setting the Scene*

Once the home of the gamekeeper during Rothschild's 19th-century tenure at Mentmore Towers, Crafton Lodge is one of four gatehouses erected across the estate in the 20 to 30 years following the completion of the main house. Each differing in size, form and use, the lodges are attributed to architect George Devey (1820-1886), whose work across the latter half of the Victorian era was grounded in joyful creativity, eccentricity and the revival and appropriation of myriad historical architectural conventions.

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### *The Grand Tour*

Taking striking form from all elevations, Crafton Lodge is composed of a ground floor of cheerful white brick, entirely repointed by the current owner in lime mortar, with a whitewashed façade and ornamental half-timbering above. The steeply pitched clay-tiled roof is punctuated by impressive white brick chimneys with offset heads and moulded neckings, typical of their innovative architect and his anachronistic style.

There are three entrances to the house, with the principal set beneath a jettied first-floor bay providing a sheltered porch and protected access. Entry is to a room used as a study that could instead be used as a large second bedroom. Washed in Farrow and Ball's 'Salon Drab', the space sings when light dances in from the south-east-facing bay leadlight casement windows, painstakingly restored in recent years. An open fire with a handsome cast-iron fire grate sits centrally and is shouldered by built-in cupboard.

Much care and attention has been paid to the walls and flooring in this room, as throughout the rest of the house. Hand-mixed goat hair and lime plaster provides breathability to the walls and ceilings, harking back to the artisanal building methods used during the structure's inception. Underfoot, oiled reclaimed herringbone parquet hardwood flooring brings soft texture and warmth to the space. This detailing continues into the hallway and sitting and dining room beyond, resulting in a cohesive flow of colour and grain.

With dual-aspect fenestration overlooking the patio and lawn to the rear of the home, exposed beams and a soaring vaulted ceiling the sitting room opens out into the dining room, both painted in the same combination of Farrow and Ball's 'Shadow White' and 'Shaded White'. Leaded French doors in the dining room provide direct access to east-facing portion of the wraparound garden, offering up the perfect spot for al fresco breakfasts. Inside is a new wood-burning stove and room for a generous host's large dining table.

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A light-filled rear extension added in the 20th century houses the kitchen, with triple-aspect windows and a tall ceiling that enhances its airy, spacious feel. This room provides a wonderful opportunity to complete the restoration and renovation of Crafton Lodge. The downstairs cloakroom and utility space are to the north-west of the plan and whimsically make use the house's old bread oven as turreted positioning for the WC.

Ascending the meticulously sanded and painted staircase to the first floor, an increased sense of quiet and calm sets in. The same neutral palette that so successfully pervades downstairs is drawn upon in the principal bedroom and bathroom to be found on this floor.

A fairytale-worthy miniature window in the bedroom faces directly south, lending a view to the gate and track beyond. Original floorboards run underfoot and an elegant stone fire surround provides a focal point. Across the landing, the bathroom sees a wonderfully marrying of old and new, with another original stone fire surround, Jack-and-Jill sinks, VOLA taps and a large bath, with the window above the sink allowing a brilliant view of the mature planting outside.

### *The Great Outdoors*

Pretty hornbeams run along the border of the grounds and the Mentmore Estate, providing privacy as the plants flourish. Within the fencing of the garden are a number of species of trees, including oak and paper birch, that attract a variety of birds and provide an electric display of colour through the seasons. Paving directly surrounding the house offers an attractive and pragmatic delineation between the garden proper and the seating areas and pathways up to the house. Beds at the rear are planted with neat box balls, while red peonies reign supreme by the front door.

The charming original game store still stands, its many hooks and fine mesh ventilation screens still extant in places. With a two-tone façade of brick lower and clapperboard upper, topped by a neatly pitched roof, this space would lend itself perfectly as a studio or functioning workshop. Water and electricity have been run up to the site in preparation for any potential development. Neighbouring the game store is an equally attractive Crittall greenhouse and further up the garden the remains of the brick Victorian kennels.



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### *Out and About*

The house sits in the hamlet of Crafton, just outside the slightly larger Mentmore. The surrounding countryside of Buckinghamshire is famed for the Chiltern Hills and the River Thames and has a plethora of wonderful cycle paths, walking routes and bucolic vistas to enjoy. A lovely walk will get you to The Stag, the nearest gastropub while the towns of Leighton Buzzard, Tring and Aylesbury all provide all essential amenities including a range of supermarkets, popular cafes and farmer's markets.

The county abounds with attractions for the historically inclined. The National Trust's Ascott House is of particular note, sharing the same architect as that of Crafton Lodge and exemplifying his work on an entirely different scale. The collection at Ascott is an impressive and visitors can enjoy works by the likes of Gainsborough, Reynolds and Stubbs. Additionally, amongst the Chiltern Hills are Waddesdon Manor and Claydon House, two houses offering walking tours, weekend markets and family entertainment.

The area is serviced by many good schools. Hockliffe Lower School and St Leonards Heath & Reach VA school are both Ofsted "Outstanding"-rated primaries, and Challney Boys and Girls Highs are both "Outstanding" secondaries.

Despite its pastoral location, Crafton and Mentmore are brilliantly connected for access to London with trains running from Leighton Buzzard and Tring in c. 30 and c. 37 minutes respectively. Flights across the UK and further afield are serviced by Luton Airport, less than half an hour away by road.

Council Tax Band: G

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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.