

INIGO



Druids Altar

LLANGENNY, POWYS

SOLD

Curved, lace-white barge boards offset the Welsh stone façade of this Grade II-listed house, peacefully nestled in the Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons) National Park. Its 18th-century bones were first added to in the 19th century, with a timber-clad, self-contained bedroom, bathroom and kitchenette added during the 20th century. Enveloped in stunning grounds with breathtaking views, the five-bedroom house is in a prominent position on high ground overlooking the Grwyne Fawr below.

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Setting the Scene

The village of Llangenny was, until the 18th century, just a few cottages loosely configured around the early medieval church of St Cenau. With many hints towards earlier origins, the church is built (as so many Welsh churches are) in proximity to a natural 'healing' spring. Two prehistoric standing stones lay within the village, with one stone nearby the origin of this house's unique name. With the building of the little stone bridge across the Grwyne in the early 18th century, houses, including Druids Altar, began to dot the area. Although a small cottage to begin with, a grander 19th-century cross-section reoriented the house and lent a genteel Victorian charm still palpable today. For more information, please see the History section below.



The Grand Tour

Set beyond the house's garden gate and low stone wall, the 19th-century coursed rubble façade meshes with the cream-rendered, low-set original cottage frontage. The house is punctuated with Tudor Gothic-style stone mullion as well as more humble cottage-style casement windows. Crisp white bargeboards add an idyllic, whimsical feel to the darker Welsh slate roof line.

Entry is through the side door, which opens directly into a welcoming kitchen. An electric Aga in "linen" sits within the original chimney breast, which has been lined with ivory metro tiles, while duck-egg blue-painted cabinetry is topped with solid maple work surfaces. A window above the sink frames arboreal views and has a deep sill perfect for placing freshly cut flowers or well-thumbed cookbooks.

An open-plan dining room lies beyond, beautifully lit by skylights that flood the room with natural light. With expansive French doors leading out to a patio and garden beyond, the room becomes a model for indoor/outdoor living in finer weather. Careful attention has been paid to preserving the house's Tudor Revival feel, exemplified by Gothic timber moulded doors here. A short flight of stairs rises to a later 20th-century annexe wing with a self-contained bedroom, bathroom and kitchenette area.

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The house can also be entered from the front, via a formal half-timber front door accented with tracery windows and set within a depressed Gothic archway. This opens to a large entrance hall, with a sitting room to one side. Dual-aspect 19th-century windows usher in a serene light, and a wood burner within the original hearth warms during the winter. A reception room, currently used as an office, is on the other side of the hall also with working wood burning stove.

A striking, curved oak banister with moulded treads reaches up the first floor, set beneath elevating decorative plasterwork on the ceiling. Two bedrooms bookend the upstairs landing, both with windows that frame astonishing views of the surrounding countryside. A spacious bathroom sits between the rooms, with a clawfoot, roll-top bath the perfect spot for a luxuriant soak. Down the hall are two further bedrooms and a WC.

There is private parking for 2-3 cars just over the lane.

The Great Outdoors

Stretching to around half an acre, the house's gardens have an ethereal, idyllic feel. Areas of lawn are interspersed with mature borders full of ferns, crocosmia, ceanothus and magnolia that spring into life and colour in warmer months. Sweet-smelling roses and clematis clamber along the structure's stone façades. A horse chestnut tree billows with snowy white blossoms and huge five-fingered leaves in high summer; a stately host of oaks overlook from the neighbouring field.

There are two patios: one within a courtyard-like sheltered spot just beyond the dining room, and one outside the formal front façade, taking full advantage of the high position of the house in the surrounding landscape.

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Out and About

Llangenny is a peaceful country village but nevertheless has the prerequisite country pub at The Dragon's Head. Crickhowell is a short 5-minute drive away and has a wonderful array of independent shops including a microbrewery, farm shop, grocer, zero-waste refillable shop, butchers, florist and several pubs and cafes. The bridge at Crickhowell is a well-known wild swimming spot with the arches of the bridge (12 or 13) different in number depending on the direction it's viewed! For the outdoor-minded, the Sugar Loaf nearby is the favourite peak of many walkers in the Black Mountains.

Abergavenny is also well-placed for further amenities. An ancient Welsh town, it abounds with galleries, cafés, shops and a rotation of seasonal festivals. Abergavenny is also home to a convenient Waitrose as well as a branch of the beloved borders sheep's milk ice cream maker, Shepherds, can also be found here.

Perennial favourite Hay-on-Wye is just over half an hour by car, a lively town famed for its many bookshops and revered literary event, the Hay Festival (or, as it's been coined, 'the Woodstock of the mind'). Richard Booth's Bookshop and Cinema is a local institution. The Old Electric Shop is a well-curated emporium, stocking the work of local artisans alongside vintage clothes and books. It also serves delicious modern vegetarian food. Chapters is a celebrated local restaurant with serious foodie credentials. Beyond the yearly festival, Hay Castle is a centre for year-round arts, literature and learning events.

There are opportunities for canoeing and swimming on the River Wye. Walking routes are aplenty in the area, with the Offa's Dyke Path a short distance away, and the trail to Hay Bluff and extensive hillwalking routes carving through the Black Mountains.

The nearest rail station is at Abergavenny, with regular services to London in just over two hours and Bristol in around an hour.

Council Tax Band: G

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About

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