

INIGO



Hale Farmhouse

HALE, HAMPSHIRE

SOLD

Nestled in the north-west corner of the New Forest National Park, this outstanding 17th-century farmhouse has spectacular tree-filled views from every aspect. Its internal footprint amounts to almost 4,000 sq ft in total, divided between the historic core of the house and a sympathetic modern extension. There are four spacious bedrooms in the main part of the home in addition to the two in the newer section, which could be used as an annexe if desired. The sublime interiors are matched by the 16 acres of grounds that surround the house; encompassed here are a conservation woodland, a lake and several ponds, wildflower meadows, vegetable patches, paddocks, a bothy and three Grade II-listed barns. A delightful village, Hale has attractive period architecture and a primary school. There are two nearby village shops and the amenities of the larger market town of Fordingbridge are four miles to the south.

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Setting the Scene

Despite its small size, Hale has a deep-rooted history that can be traced (although not by its present-day name) to the Domesday Book. The village lies within the Western Escarpment Conservation Area and is home to the Grade I-listed Hale House and to the Church of St Mary's, which was remodelled by Inigo Jones in the 17th century – a provenance only discovered in recent times. Hale sits to the north-west of the New Forest, a magnificently broad area that was first designated as a royal forest by William the Conqueror.

As its name suggests, Hale Farmhouse's lineage can be traced back to agricultural beginnings. The original house is believed to have been built between 1650 and 1700 and is speculated to have initially formed two separate cottages. Under its current ownership, the house has been transformed whilst retaining its historic integrity; all contemporary interventions have been well considered and masterfully executed.

The Grand Tour

Approached via a five-bar wooden gate along a quiet countryside road, Hale Farmhouse comes into view from its stone-laid driveway, which has space for several cars. Its long profile is formed of red-brick walls punctuated by a generous amount of glazing that tells of the brightness within. Its older material composition pairs effortlessly with the timber-clad extension at the rear, which benefits from separate access and can be used as an annexe for guests or relatives, if desired.

Entry is to a wide entrance hall laid with parquet flooring, where the fireplace, now fitted with a modern log-burning stove, extends a warm welcome on arrival. The living spaces extend from this arterial hallway, with the cosy kitchen tucked in the left-hand corner. Pretty and in-keeping with the older wing's cottage appeal, the room has been fitted with a run of bespoke cabinets, both above and below a solid timber countertop. Appliances have been integrated and include a four-oven Aga, dishwasher and a fridge-freezer. A utility room lies to one side and a dining room to the other, where an inglenook fireplace makes for particularly atmospheric wintertime suppers.

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A characterful reception room and drawing room lie beyond. The latter has a large square bay window that, care of its south-west-facing aspect, draws a beautiful quality of natural light deep into the room. French doors on opposite sides grant access to a terrace and the rear gardens, sustaining the plan's interconnected feeling and ushering in a through-breeze during the warmer months. There is another wood-burning stove here, as well as oak flooring that grounds much of the home.

Four exceptionally generous bedrooms lie on the first floor of the original house. The main bedroom is double-aspect and has a refined en suite with a shower and bath and the same deep-toned wooden boards underfoot. Bespoke wardrobes lie in several of the bedrooms, adding to the storage provision created by a dedicated dressing room. There is a reposeful family bathroom on this storey too, well-lit and with a roll-top bath, walk-in shower and a window above the sink that surveys the grounds.

Between the newer and older parts of the house is a study or snug with a wrap-around window that captures stunning views across the gardens. A sky-lit corridor with end-to-end bookshelves runs parallel to this room, with a door at its far end that stands as the threshold between the home's two halves. Beyond lies an immaculately finished open-plan living space with twin double doors to an adjacent Yorkstone terrace, where the current owners have arranged a large outdoor dining set-up and a jacuzzi.

Half of the room is given over to a honey-hued ash wood kitchen with appliances neatly housed in hand made joinery, with the other half arranged as a sitting room orientated towards a log-burning stove. Cream-painted walls hug the contours of the space, fostering an airy, bright feel. Two additional bedrooms lie in this section of the house, of almost equal size and a similarly serene finish, and each with an ensuite bathroom.

Underfloor heating runs throughout, with a ground-source heat pump providing heating to the modern part of the house.

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The Great Outdoors

As central to the experience of the house as the internal plan, the sprawling grounds of approximately 16 acres are nothing short of magnificent. Wide swathes of lawn provide plenty of space for strolling and summer parties, all set against a near unbroken backdrop of mature, ancient trees, including a stately great oak. From the rear terraces, the immediate gardens blend seamlessly with the naturalistic backdrop of the wild meadows that lie beyond, leading down to an enchanting conservation woodland, with a boating lake, and a bird hide tucked within the bluebell glade.

Adding to the already impressive internal footprint of the house, there are also a series of outbuildings that add over 2,800 sq ft of space. These are reached through a second gate, which sits at the fore of the structures. Three Grade II-listed barns – once a granary, staddlestone and workshop barns respectively – are each impressive in scale and original character. A former stable block also lies on the periphery, providing additional external storage.

There are four paddocks, and to the back of the house, a secret vegetable garden lies behind a high mature mixed native and yew hedge, where raised beds spill over with flowers, herbs and vegetables, and a greenhouse sits to one side. A timber-clad bothy can be found tucked away in one corner of this garden, currently used as a painting studio. An orchard lies adjacent, brimming with apples, quinces and plums in the autumn.

Out and About

Hale is a sylvan village in the north-west corner of the New Forest National Park, close to the edge of the Cranborne Chase AONB. As a result, the area is steeped in greenery, with a great many walking, cycling and riding routes available; Hale's village green is also known to be frequented by the area's free-roaming cattle and ponies. There are also several golf clubs nearby, as well as a handful of gardens and National Trust-managed properties. The village itself has a well-regarded primary school. Woodgreen, the next village along, is a mile from the house, and has a shop, post office and well loved local pub, The Horse and Groom.

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The larger yet decidedly quaint market town of Fordingbridge is a 14-minute drive from the house. Known for its historic architecture and status as the gateway to the New Forest, the town has one of only two seven-arched bridges in the UK, which was first built in the 13th century. Fordingbridge Riverside Park is also found here, as is the Avon Valley Path, a walking route that passes from Salisbury to Christchurch. Fordingbridge has a handful of convenient supermarkets, with bigger branches of Sainsbury's and Waitrose found in Ringwood, to the south of the town.

Known for its unusually cohesive 13th-century cathedral, held as the pinnacle of early English Gothic design, Salisbury lies around a 25-minute drive to the north. As well as its fantastic architectural and cultural offerings, the city is known for its independent provisors and eateries; local favourites include Nole on the Square for pizza and The Yard for coffee.

There are plenty of schools in the area, including the Ofsted "Good"-rated Hale Primary School. The Burgate School and Sixth Form also has a "Good" Ofsted rating. Private options include Salisbury Cathedral School and Leehurst Swan School, whilst South Wilts and Bishop Wordsworth's School are brilliant grammar options.

Road connections are excellent and include the A338 and the A36 for connection to the national motorway network. Rail services can be sought at Salisbury Station, a 30-minute drive from the house, where trains run to London Waterloo in around 80 minutes.

Council Tax Band: G

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About

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