

INIGO



Old Forge Lane

SOUTH GREEN, KENT

SOLD

Constructed in the 16th century or earlier, this timber-framed, detached, Grade II-listed house is nestled in the North Kent Downs Area of Natural Beauty near the hamlet of South Green. The house is at the centre of a rural, quiet oasis, surrounded by seven acres of garden, meadow, woodland and orchards in an exquisite wider landscape. Extending to almost 3,000 sq ft, including four or five bedrooms, the house has a separate studio annexe, garage, workshop and further storage space. The house is extremely well located; it is secluded while connected, close to the M2 and M20, and a short drive from both Sittingbourne and Hollingbourne train stations, which have direct services into St Pancras and Victoria stations, respectively, in around an hour.

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Setting the Scene

The timber-framed house retains a handsome medieval vernacular structure. On the ground floor, it is built from red brick in English bond. Above, the upper storeys are tile hung, a traditional construction technique known for its weather-protective qualities. Tile-hanging, also called weather-tiling, originated in south-eastern England and was commonly employed to shield the wattle and daub walls of houses from the elements. The plain tile roof crowns the house, complementing the brick and tile work.

Situated in an incredible position in the AONB, the original lands of Icknor are now owned by the Woodland Trust and make up the northern part of the Hucking Estate, nearly 700 acres of protected landscapes. Icknor is one of the oldest surviving dwellings in the area; the original residents would have worked their living in the surrounding woodlands and meadows, modern life intruding only recently with ultrafast broadband and improved accessibility. The archaeology of the immediate area reveals Anglo-Saxon standing stones, motte and bailey earthworks at Thurnham, remnants of centuries of coppicing and flint working, ancient drovers ways and mysterious neolithic dene holes, all in a dreamy landscape accessible just a walk away. The Hucking Estate offers all this with ancient woodlands, wildflower meadows, an endless variety of walks and astounding views across the North Downs and the Weald of Kent.

An incredible amount of plants and wildlife have found refuge in the area. Intense bluebell woods, chalk grassland meadows, and bird-filled wilderness surround the property. Nightingales, wrens, woodpeckers, buzzards, owls and skylarks are frequently sighted. It's a magical place, offering sustainable living in an ancient landscape.

The Grand Tour

There are numerous entrances to the house; the main one in use is accessed via the courtyard, opening to a wide hallway. To the left is the kitchen, a lovely dual-aspect space with beautiful views over an orchard. There is ample space here for a dining table, surrounded by blue-painted cabinetry. A blue Aga sits to one side of the room, in front of an exposed brick wall.

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A double-height hallway leads to two more spacious living spaces, including a sitting room crowned by characterful beams and a large inglenook with a working open fireplace. Bookshelves line the walls, and a door opens from here straight onto a sunny south-facing terrace. The neighbouring room, currently used as a bedroom, would also make a brilliant dining room or additional drawing room. Beyond the kitchen, the other end of the plan lies a bright study with direct access to a vine-clad, herb-bordered terrace. There is also a bathroom with a shower on this floor.

Stairs ascend to a galleried hallway, which leads to four generous bedrooms, each with windows framing far-reaching green views. The principal bedroom has a wall of fitted cupboards, and an en suite bathroom, while the others share a family bathroom with a separate walk-in shower. Another painted a rich blue, has a curved ceiling and beams from which the owner has cleverly hung curtains to delineate the space.

The Great Outdoors

A live willow fence, planted by the owner, frames the approach to the house opposite a wild white rose hedge and has been fashioned into an arch where it leads to the separate studio annexe and pump room where the private water supply is managed. There is also an idyllic pond bordered by cheerful yellow and purple irises, an abundance of roses, and a fabulous display of early flowers and bulbs through spring and summer.

Much has been added to the approximately seven acres of land by the current owner, a keen ecologist and enthusiastic cook, who has gardened with biodiversity and the kitchen in mind. The orchards and gardens include a wide variety of traditional cider and perry trees as well as table and cooking apples, pears, cherries, quinces, medlar, apricot, figs and mulberry. From the height of the main orchard, there are expansive views all the way to the Thames Estuary, where it's possible to see ships travelling up and down the river.

On the other side of the house is a combination of lawn, wildflower meadow, and a productive vegetable patch and polytunnel offering soft fruits, berries and vegetables year-round. Beyond the woodland garden is another large field, perfect for keeping ponies, chickens or hosting campers.

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Out and About

The area is spoilt for choice when it comes to restaurants. The Sportsman in Seasalter has rightly won accolades for its exquisite cuisine. The Milk House in Sissinghurst is well-loved due to its emphasis on local produce and the lovely garden overlooking vineyards. For fine dining, The West House in Biddenden is an excellent choice, as much for the food as for the setting in a 16th-century weaver's cottage. Closer to home, the Hook and Hatchet Inn is just a 10-minute walk away, perfect for a quick drink on the way back from a Sunday ramble and offering a programme of events. The Dirty Habit in Hollingbourne, just 10 minutes by car, derives its name from its status as an 11th-century stop-off point for those on the Pilgrim's Way towards Canterbury, a small city offering history, shopping, dining, and culture.

Adventures in nature are plentiful in the Kentish countryside. Aside from the countless walks in the Downs and North Weald, the local deer park and the grounds belonging to the private Elizabethan manor house Boughton Monchelsea Place is just a short drive from the house. Some of England's finest country houses and gardens are easily accessible, including Sissinghurst Castle Garden and Leeds, Hever, and Scotney Castles. Kent's bucolic coastline, the attractions of Whitstable's ancient oyster town, the pre-Roman settlement of Faversham with its antique shops, markets, and festivals, the galleries and restaurants of Margate and Folkestone, the unique desert landscapes of Dungeness, and the many other beaches, towns, and villages with walks and eateries are all accessible by car.

There is an excellent range of primary and secondary schools in the area, which benefits from a range of grammar schools, including the Ofsted-rated Outstanding Invicta Grammar for girls and Maidstone Grammar for boys. Public schools include Sutton Valence School, Sevenoaks School and Benenden School.

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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.