

INIGO



Russel's Green

WILBY, SUFFOLK

SOLD

Positioned near the pretty village of Wilby in the heart of the Suffolk countryside, this Grade II-listed thatched cottage and converted barn have breathtaking rural views. Set in large gardens spanning about two acres, dotted with mature orchard fruit trees, wild meadow spaces and a vegetable patch, the house also has a natural swimming pool and a wild pond that support a diverse local ecosystem. Extending to around 2400 sq ft, the home seamlessly combines the 16th-century cottage and a timber-clad barn conversion, creating cohesive living spaces. Rail connections are very good, with Diss train station a 20-minute drive away, providing direct links to London Liverpool Street in 90 minutes, while the amenities of nearby Stradbroke, Laxfield and Framlingham are easily accessible.

We've written about life in this house in more depth.

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Setting the Scene

Wilby village and its surrounding hamlets have a rich history that dates back to the medieval period, coinciding with the flourishing wool trade. The cottage, constructed in the traditional four-bay style, was originally built in the 14th century and consisted of a modest two-bay open hall. Over time, an additional floor with chamfered joists was likely added in the 16th or 17th century, expanding the house and creating the sitting room. Set along a quiet rural lane, the house is enveloped by the generous plot of land it sits in and the beautiful farmland stretching beyond. The house is approached by a pathway adorned with herbaceous borders awash with colour and thriving pollinators during the warmer months. For more information, please see the History section.



The Grand Tour

The ground floor of the cottage has undergone careful renovations, with traditional brick paving laid in a herringbone pattern. A small central hall divides the sitting room and dining room, with a convenient WC tucked between them. The sitting room, finished with traditional lime wash by Farrow & Ball, centres around an oak-beamed fireplace with a wood burner inset. This is complemented by the substantial oak joists overhead and pretty casement windows overlooking the garden.

The dining room is located in the oldest part of the house, where the significant central beam displays early modern builders' marks, possibly from when the floor was integrated into the open hall structure. In the original fire breast, there is a 19th-century bread oven accompanied by a more modern wood burner, creating a cosy atmosphere for entertaining.

A discreet stairwell leads to the principal bedroom, nestled under the thatched roof and painted in soothing green tones. On the opposite side of the plan, separate stairs ascend to the first floor, where a spacious bathroom with Jack-and-Jill sinks and a dressing room can be found.

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A back door leads to a covered hall, sheltered by hurdle panels and trellis work, creating a wonderful sense of indoor/outdoor living. Broad flags grace the ground, enhancing the seamless transition between the indoors and outdoors, with access to patios on both sides. A stable door opens to the beautifully renovated barn conversion. This versatile space can be used as additional living quarters or a self-contained guest suite. The large open-plan living room here is full of natural light and picturesque views of the surrounding grounds, care of Crittall-style French doors on two sides.

A small bathroom and WC are nestled alongside a well-appointed kitchen, which also features a stable door leading to the side garden and stable workshops shaded by a walnut tree. Just outside the barn, an expansive brick patio spans its width and is bordered with nodding euphorbia, creating an inviting extension to the living area during good weather. A stairwell leads to two spacious bedrooms arranged around a central hall. Strategically positioned, a clawfoot bathtub has pastoral views of the swimming pond and meadows beyond. Towards the rear of the cottage's layout, a second, later kitchen has open access to the dining room. Illuminated by light wells and featuring dual-aspect windows, it is bathed in abundant natural light.

The old stable block has been thoughtfully transformed into a homely workshop area with a robust wood burner to keep it warm in the cooler months. A welcoming porch extends along the front of the space, creating the perfect spot to observe birds and bats as they take advantage of the nearby wild pond. On the opposite side of the plan, the cart shed has been renovated and repurposed into a studio workspace.

The Great Outdoors

Surrounded by the picturesque Suffolk countryside, the gardens have been carefully designed to harmonise with the natural landscape, creating a haven for wildlife. Open water and grassland areas have been thoughtfully incorporated with minimal intervention to support the thriving biodiversity. Newts abound in the ponds, and bats lilt lazily through the air on summer evenings. Mature herbaceous borders bristle with fecund abandon along paths, thick with flowers in the spring and summer. Artichokes are as at home as roses in these borders, and wisteria trails across the façade. Old cider apple and pear varietal trees sit in front of the house.

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A garden shed separates the space from dedicated beds for cut flowers and vegetables. Lined by irises and other water plants, the wildlife pond is a tranquil habitat. An old walnut tree stands proudly, creating shade for many enjoyable afternoon picnics. At the rear of the plot is a naturally filtered swimming pond, complete with a swimming dock perfectly positioned for refreshing dips. The pond is surrounded by borders filled with aromatic rosemary, vibrant euphorbia, and a well-established purple-flowering Paulownia tree. A spacious brick patio is a lovely outdoor seating area. A charming courtyard, nestled between the cart shed and the house, centres around a water feature, while a fig tree creates shade and pale pink poppies add a touch of flamboyance. A gravel parking area is conveniently located on one side, while a separate field gate provides additional access on the other side.

Out and About

The cottage sits just outside of the village of Wilby, with its 13th-century church, well-regarded primary school, and village hall. It is located between Eye and Framlingham, about 20 miles from the stunning Suffolk coast as the crow flies. The home's rural setting gives it a feeling of utter seclusion, yet essential amenities such as shops, post office, and leisure center can be found less than 5 minutes up the road in the village of Stradbroke. The market town of Eye is a short drive away for a broader array of amenities. It has a number of cafes and restaurants, together with a traditional high street dotted with independent shops.

There is a tremendous amount of footpaths and bridle paths on the doorstep and, slightly further afield, are the ever-popular highlights of the Suffolk Coastline and Heaths AONB. Wilby is only a 40-minute drive from Aldeburgh, considered one of Suffolk's most attractive coastal towns. Beyond its beautiful beaches backed by a promenade and pretty pastel-colored villas, Aldeburgh is famed for ice cream, fish and chips, and having once been home to composer Benjamin Britten. The Lighthouse Restaurant is a must-visit local restaurant focusing on regional produce.

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Just down the coast from Aldeburgh is Orford, a pretty medieval village on the River Alde. Orford attracts visitors for its daily drops of fresh lobster and crabs, renowned oyster and smokehouse Pinneys of Orford, and the excellent Pump Street Bakery. The Station Hotel and Michelin-recommended Watson & Walpole are popular restaurants in nearby Framlingham. Other notable eateries include The Kings Head in Yoxford, The Leaping Hare at the distinguished Wyken Vineyards in Bury Saint Edmunds, and butchers and smokehouse Emmett's in Peasenhall. Farmers' markets are in Framlingham, Eye, Diss, and Aldeburgh, and vineyards in Monk Soham and Bruisyard.

The arts are similarly well-served in the area. Snape Maltings, just inland from Aldeburgh, hosts exhibitions throughout the year and is home to the internationally renowned Aldeburgh Music Festival, founded by Benjamin Britten. The UK's oldest privately operated movie theatre, Leiston Cinema, is in Leiston Abbey, which hosts internationally renowned musical concerts. Several heritage sites and attractions dating back to the early medieval period survive in the area, including Sutton Hoo, one of the most important archaeological discoveries of the 20th century, the 14th-century monastic ruins at Leiston Abbey, and the 12th-century fortress Framlingham Castle.

The abundance of waterways and woodlands makes the area a nature lover's paradise. The RSPB Dingle Marshes in Dunwich is an unspoiled mix of habitats, including freshwater reedbed, shingle, coastal grazing marsh, and saline lagoons, offering fantastic bird watching, particularly wading birds found on the famous Hazelwood salt marsh. Sailing facilities and a golf course are also within easy reach, and Aldeburgh Tennis Club has four championship standard courts. Thorpeness Meare boating lake and inset islands are a short stroll from Aldeburgh Beach.

Wilby has its own primary school, while Thordon Primary School in Eye and Sir Robert Hitcham Primary School and Nursery in Debenham are both 20 minutes away by car. Secondary schools in the area are well-regarded, including Debenham High School, Stradbroke High School, and Thomas Mills High School in Framlingham. Framlingham College offers co-ed independent education for children from ages 3 to 18.

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London is less than three hours away by car, easily accessible via the A12. Diss railway station is approximately a 20-minute drive, with direct services to London Liverpool Street in less than two hours. There are regular buses to Diss station as well as Ipswich and other local towns, connecting Wilby with the wider Suffolk region. Norwich Airport is about an hour away by car and has KLM flights to Amsterdam's Airport Schiphol.

Council Tax Band: C



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About

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