

INIGO



Temple Bar House

EARSHAM, SUFFOLK

£890,000 FREEHOLD

This Grade II-listed, 16th-century house brims with original features, from exposed timber beams and ornate panelling to a remarkable pair of priest holes. The home lies in Earsham, Norfolk, close to the county's border with Suffolk and on the periphery of the restorative Broads National Park. Inside, its primary plan of some 2,420 sq ft is divided between two three-bedroom wings. Naturalistic gardens unfold at the front and rear, gently designed to provide perennial visual appeal and distinct areas to enjoy the great outdoors year-round.

Setting the Scene

Constructed around 1530, Temple Bar House is believed to have been built by Lord William Howard as part of the Duke of Norfolk's vast local estate; it is thought that it first served as a hunting lodge for shooting wildfowl. Legend also has it that the Duke installed his ex-mistresses here, an easy distance from his home at nearby Earsham Hall.

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Structurally, the west wing of the house was added 50 years after its initial construction, and the east wing followed around a century later. Its rear aspect was originally the front; the area of garden that runs along the back of the house was once on the main route between Bungay and London. It is thought that, at some point, the building may have served as a tollhouse, where travellers paid a fee to travel on the road – ‘bar’ being another word for toll.

Today, the house brims with original features that tell of its storied past, including a garderobe, richly moulded beams and joists, a timber screen, and broad fireplaces in many of its rooms, along with two remarkable priest holes. During their custodianship, the current owners have continued to lovingly restore the house, a process which will need to be continued by its future owners.

The Grand Tour

Tall hedges and mature trees conceal the house from the road in front; its red-tiled and thatched roof peers through between leafy canopies. A stone-paved driveway winds up to the house, with space to park up to six cars.

A palimpsest of period features, the home’s profile is immensely characterful, with its red-brick stepped gable end, white-washed frontage and timber-framed windows. Its idiosyncrasy is a testament to the organic growth it has seen over its centuries-long life.

The front door lies beneath a storm porch and opens to a screens passage. Red-brick floors begin on arrival, their ruddy hue pairing beautifully with an original timber screen along one side. A studded door here opens to the drawing room, a wonderfully atmospheric space with dual-aspect windows, sometimes mullioned windows, exposed beams and a fire box set into an inglenook fireplace.

Open and welcoming, the kitchen revels in its rustic feel. Oak cabinets provide plenty of low-level storage space, while open shelves are perfect for displaying prized pots or jars of dried goods. Pammets and floor bricks line the floor, and a white Everhot range is set into a panelled alcove. The room has plenty of space for a dining table in front of twin casement windows overlooking the garden.

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A spacious utility room extends from the kitchen, giving way to an adjacent WC/shower room. The former also has direct access to the garden, convenient for washing muddy paws or storing wellies after a ramble in the Waveney Valley. A cosy study at the front completes the ground-floor plan.

Stairs from the entranceway ascend to the upper level, where four bedrooms extend from a central landing. All are exceptionally characterful, with embracing beams and calming garden views. A bright bathroom with timber panelling serves this level.

The largest bedroom is especially generous and is presently used as an additional living space; it has three period windows, built-in storage and a dramatic exposed timber frame.

The west wing of the house is presently set up for use as a separate annexe, if required. It has two points of entry – convenient and private for visiting guests or elderly relatives. Here, a large room, currently used as a bedroom suite, has a wonderful Jacobean fire surround to an inglenook with a wood-burning stove. A kitchenette adjoins, along with a large shower room. An original staircase ascends to the upper level, where there are a further two bedrooms and a large bathroom.

The Great Outdoors

Divided into several 'rooms', enchanting gardens surround the house on all sides. Some sections have been left to rewild, while others have been carefully planted with wildflowers to enhance biodiversity.

Other species of flowers include snowdrops, which grow in profusion beneath a copper beech tree, snakeshead fritillary, cowslips, and bluebells, which have taken root in one of the front gardens. The other 'room' in the front is given over to a formal parterre-type wildflower garden.

There are plenty of mature trees across the grounds, including several productive fruit trees, including fig. Some trees have been espaliered, and there is a stately magnolia that erupts with beautiful blossom come spring. A well-established yew hedge runs along two sides of the boundary.

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Another section of the garden is given over to a small vegetable patch and a cutting garden. A large walled and lawned section at the rear is brilliant for a summertime kickabout or for hosting summertime soirées.

There is also a south-facing courtyard with potential for transformation into another atmospheric seating area.

Out and About

Temple Bar occupies a tranquil spot in Earsham, near the border between Norfolk and Suffolk. Surrounded by open countryside and close to the coast, the region offers many opportunities for outdoor adventures. The beautiful Waveney River Valley is close by, as are the Norfolk Broads.

Frenze Beck Nature Reserve, on the outskirts of Diss, is a 15-acre county wildlife site with a variety of wetlands, meadows, pastures and scrub habitats. The stunning Dunwich Heath, RSPB Minsmere and Sutton Hoo are all reachable within an hour. The Norfolk coast is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, with dramatic landscapes and unique wildlife. Its 112-mile route can be explored either on foot or by bike.

The market town of Bungay is a 10-minute walk from the house across Earsham Dam, with river meadows on each side where Montbeliarde dairy cattle graze at Fen Farm dairy, famous for its delicious Baron Bigod Brie cheese. The dairy's self-serve shop is an excellent place to stock up and is a short walk from the house.

Nearby Earsham Street has an array of independent local businesses, including a delicatessen, a fishmonger, a butcher and a greengrocer. Earsham Street Café is known for its delicious scones and cakes, and Source Bistro serves locally sourced meats and wines. The award-winning Flint Vineyard is a five-minute drive from the house and hosts frequent wine-tasting events.

Bungay has a vibrant arts scene thanks to The Fisher Theatre, a centre for music, theatre and cinema. There are a number of art galleries and antiques centres to explore, as well as regular events at nearby Earsham Hall, as well as a splendid antique centre and tea rooms. Folk music is popular in the local pubs, and the town celebrates an annual folk festival.

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The larger centres of Norwich and Cambridge can be reached in 34 and 90 minutes by car respectively, while Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich are both around an hour's drive from the house. Even closer to home is popular Southwold, a 35-minute drive away, and the peaceful villages of Walberswick and Dunwich.

There are a number of excellent schooling options in the area, including Earsham Church of England Primary Academy, Ellingham VC Primary School, and Bungay High School.

Diss rail station is a 25-minute drive away and offers regular services to London Liverpool Street in approximately 90 minutes. Trains also run from nearby Beccles to Ipswich for connecting services to the capital.

Council Tax Band (Temple Bar House): E

Council Tax Band (Annexe): A

INIGO



About

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