

INIGO



The Mill House

CRANBROOK, KENT

SOLD

This handsome four-bedroom house in the Cranbrook Conservation Area, Kent, is a palimpsest of 19th-century architectural traditions; its origins are Georgian, while later additions flourish with Victorian style. The clapboard-clad house has undergone an exacting internal renovation, employing a striking palette of colours and a considered repertoire of materials with a deft touch to conserve the building's authentic fabric. A terrace at the front of the house teems with roses, while the rear walled patio is swathed in honeysuckle and clematis, with views of the neighbouring historic smock mill. The house sits centrally in the pretty town, a short walk from Cranbrook's array of cafés, grocers, and independent shops. Trains run from nearby Staplehurst directly to London Bridge and London Charing Cross in under an hour.

Setting the Scene

The house sits on The Hill, a street that acts as a gateway to Cranbrook as it climbs to join Stone Street and Waterloo Road in the centre of the town. The Hill is lined with a myriad of vernacular Kentish cottages wrapped in hung tiles and white weatherboarding, dating to the 16th century.

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This house, however, was originally constructed around 1830 during the late Georgian period and later altered in line with Victorian tastes, offering it a unique elevation along The Hill. Its red and grey bricks are carefully arranged to emphasise the pattern of their Flemish bond, and the projecting bay is finished with rendered details. For more information, please see the History section.

The Grand Tour

Puncturing an impressive red and grey brick façade is the black-painted front door of the house. Entry is to a hallway, where restored pitch pine floorboards run underfoot and original four-panelled pine doors, complete with solid brass Suffolk Latch Co. door furniture, open to living spaces.



The drawing room is at the front of the plan, with its walls and ceiling painted in 'Bronze Red' and the joinery in 'Olive Colour', both by Little Greene. At one side of the room, a gas stove sits within an original red Rance marble surround, its shelf supported by heavy, unembellished corbels; the dusky tones of the stone are complemented by the room's deep red and green palette. A bay fitted with two pitch pine sash windows is a later Victorian addition to the Georgian house. The windows peer over the front terrace to maintain a private atmosphere and make for a cosy spot to settle down by the fire with a good book. At the other side of the room, bookshelves and cabinets are fitted with aged brass deVOL furniture and crowned with dentil corning, a nod to the 19th-century provenance of the house.

At the end of the hallway, there is an open-plan sitting room, kitchen and dining room. The sitting room is to the front of the plan, with French doors that can be thrown open to admire the rose-planted terrace. The kitchen is composed of bespoke cabinetry washed in 'Bancha' by Farrow & Ball and finished with bullseye roundels to mirror original Georgian details. The cabinets are topped with Carrara marble-style quartz countertops and fitted with a five-ring gas range, in addition to a steam oven and a convection oven, all by Fisher & Paykel. A fluted Shaws butler sink is set underneath a large sash window, positioned to take in the view of the neighbouring historic smock mill beyond the garden's boundary.

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Between the kitchen and the dining area, an island topped with solid oak provides an additional surface for preparing a dinner party, or makes a lovely spot to pull up a stool and thumb through the pages of a favourite recipe book. The current owners have arranged a dining table and chairs to sit in front of a cast iron grate with an original brightly-painted red surround with fluted jambs and bullseye corner blocks. There are original pitch pine built-in cupboards and drawers on either side of the fireplace, useful for storing cutlery, crockery and glassware. There is also an adjacent WC complete with Thomas Crapper lavatory and sink. The cellar below can also be accessed from this floor.

A staircase with a sweeping original Georgian handrail, fitted with a mangrove green stripey Off the Loom carpet runner with fleur de lis brass stair clips, rises to the first-floor landing; here, there are four double bedrooms, a bathroom and a shower room. Two of the bedrooms are at the front of the plan, including the primary bedroom which has deep-fitted wardrobes painted in 'Ashes of Roses' by Little Greene, with the cocooning walls and ceiling finished with playfully dark 'Jewel Beetle', also by Little Greene. Light filters through a six-over-six sash window. In the second bedroom, the walls are painted in 'Tuscan Red' by Little Greene. Here, through the bay windows there are charming views over the clay-tiled rooftops of Cranbrook. The two further bedrooms are at the rear of the house and look over the sails of the windmill.

The family bathroom is painted in a shade of soft pink, with timber panelling finished in a deep, glossy red. The bathroom consists of porcelain and polished brass fixtures from Lefroy Brooks. On one side of the room is a rolltop, claw-footed Albion bathtub painted in Farrow and Ball 'Hauge Blue'; on the other, a sink sits within a quartz-topped cabinet. Brass fittings in shower room, to the rear of the plan, are also from Lefroy Brooks. The room is tastefully tiled in white tiles with black accents, and in the corner is the spacious enclosed rain shower, with a mosaic-tiled floor.

The Great Outdoors

At the front of the house is a terrace enclosed with smart spearhead railings entangled with climbing plants. The terrace is planted with roses, fuchsia and a blossom tree.

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At the rear is a walled patio garden, its boundary draped in fragrant honeysuckle and clematis. There are bordering beds and there is plenty of space for a collection of potted herbs and greens. A raised terrace makes a good place for a table and chairs to enjoy an alfresco meal under the neighbouring windmill.

A gate at the end of the patio garden opens to Russells Yard, where there is an electric car charger and private parking for two cars.

Out and About

The town of Cranbrook has an array of daily amenities including a post office, a bakery, a grocery shop and a butcher as well as many independent shops and boutiques. There are numerous cafés, an authentic Greek deli, a highly rated Indian restaurant, and a smart sushi-to-go spot that takes advantage of the fresh local catches from nearby Rye Harbour. A wood-fired pizza van pulls up outside the family-run micropub, Larkins' Alchouse, every Thursday night.

Sissinghurst Castle Garden is less than a 10-minute drive from the house, where you can climb the famous tower with panoramic views over the Kentish high weald and take a stroll around the world-renowned poetic gardens designed by Vita Sackville West and Harold Nicolson.

Several wineries are nearby, serving Kent's popular sparkling vintages including the nearby Biddenden Winery, Balfour Winery, Chapel Down, and a 30-minute drive over the border into East Sussex, Tillingham Winery – a farmstead dating to the 13th century. Set amongst 70 acres of rolling hills and woodlands.

A short drive away is Water Lane, a picturesque Victorian walled garden with a food market every Saturday featuring the best of local suppliers selling top-notch sourdough, meat, dairy, as well as veg and flowers grown in the garden itself. A lingering breakfast, lunch or dinner can be had year-round under the glasshouse at its enchanting restaurant.

The house is within a few minutes of the highly-rated grammar school, Cranbrook School, with many other well-renowned school choices nearby including Dulwich School Cranbrook, Benenden School and Saint Ronan's, with further grammar choices half an hour away in Tunbridge Wells.

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Trains run from Staplehurst, around a 15-minute drive from the house, to London Bridge in approximately 50 minutes and to London Charing Cross in an hour. The M20 and M25, as well as Gatwick Airport, are within easy driving distance.

Council Tax Band: F

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About

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