

# INIGO



## *The Old Church*

RISHANGLES, SUFFOLK

SOLD

Resting nearly unseen off a meandering, tree-lined road in the bucolic North Suffolk countryside, this Grade II\*-listed medieval church has been thoughtfully renovated to create a four-bedroom home. Nestled in an acre of garden and further ensconced within woodland and fields, the house feels wonderfully secluded despite its proximity to the thriving market towns of Eye and Debenham, and to train connections into London via nearby Diss.

### *Setting the Scene*

From the leafy country road approach, one gets a glimpse of the 14th-century crenellated flint tower of The Old Church peeking through the trees. The church was renovated by a local furniture maker in the 1980s, with the current owners continuing improvements. Interventions were made to retain the home's ecclesiastical grandeur, keeping the focus firmly on its original features, such as stained-glass windows, soaring ceilings and exposed wooden beams. Sensitive to the house's context, native timber beams were also used where possible. For more information, please see the History section.

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### *The Grand Tour*

The entry porch is set within the base of a 14th-century tower complete with a tripartite tracery window and a wooden ladder that would have been used to ring its former bell. An even earlier 12th-century Romanesque portal still bears the cruciform marks made by those heading to the Crusades. The substantial timber door of early oak leads onto the historic nave, now a spacious entrance hall defined by its white-washed walls, wooden panelling and impressive panelwork staircase.

The central living space occupies the area that used to be the chancel. This dramatic space has soaring ceilings and is flooded with light drawn in from the enormous stained-glass windows. A complete overhaul of the church's roof has seen it equipped with strip lighting and fittings for chandeliers. On one side, a stately brick fireplace has a large wood burner in its hearth, warming the room in colder months. A balcony where the original rood screen would have been is currently used as a study. Accessed via a narrow stone stairwell, formerly the rood stair, this is the perfect vantage point over the room.

Equally imposing proportions define the kitchen. Extensive cream cabinetry is topped by wooden worksurfaces that extend the width of the church, creating plenty of space for cooking, while all cabinets are finished with arched doors that reference the building's gothic origins. A 1940s Aga, converted to work with electricity, is the focal point of the room, and there is a further two-oven gas oven. A large fireplace with a rugged brickwork hearth and an Aga woodburner makes the kitchen a welcoming space to gather.

The main bedroom occupies the north nave of the church. This room is dominated by another full-length tracery window, here with purple stained glass. The second bedroom has a sloped ceiling and exposed beams restored to gloss wood. A sunken bath sits on a raised wooden platform and forms part of a suite with a WC and a sink; a third bedroom is nestled in the eaves.

The fourth and final bedroom has underfloor heating. From here, there is access to the tower via a dramatic glass spiral stairway. Following an extensive restoration project approved by English Heritage, the tower now constitutes a library space, with a staircase that ascends to a terrace.



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A large family bathroom on the first floor is clad in the same panelling consistent throughout the entire house.

### *The Great Outdoors*

Set within dense woodland, the house and its garden are tranquil and secluded. A flagstone terrace runs along the length of the north side, providing the perfect space for entertaining in the shade of the handsome flint façade covered by climbing hydrangeas and Virginia creeper. Mature quince, apple, plum and pear trees grow heavy with fruit in the summer and autumn, while medlar, horse chestnut and holly display their changing hues throughout the seasons. The well-tended herb garden is planted with sage, mint, thyme, lavender, rosemary, and bay. A pathway leads around the house's perimeter and wisteria, roses, and hydrangeas climb up the ancient church walls.

### *Out and About*

Church Lane is situated in Rishangles, a sleepy village between the two larger settlements of Eye and Debenham. Eye is a bustling market town with a regular farmer's market. Shops include two butchers, a bakery and an array of fantastic antique stores. Debenham is well-known for its characterful pretty High Street and has an excellent grocer, butcher, florist and several thriving coffee shops, including the popular River Green Café and deli, as well as a local brewery. The Red Lion recently reopened as a restaurant and the Woolpack pub, an old-fashioned licenced beer house, is also on the High Street. Debenham also has an ironmonger, a well-stocked shop, a post office, and a newsagent.

The Station and Watson and Walpole are popular restaurants in nearby Framlingham, while The Leaping Hare at Wyken is a celebrated restaurant and vineyard. A celebrated Spanish delicatessen, Emmett's, can be found nearby Peasenhall and an excellent fishmonger in Orford, Pinney's of Orford. For South Indian cuisine, Chennai Dhosa in Ipswich is a favourite spot.

The arts are similarly well-served in the area. Snape Maltings and Leiston Abbey host celebrated musical concerts that draw many international musicians.

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There are also areas of outstanding natural beauty nearby, with nature reserves at Minsmere and Redgrave and Lopham Fens. The stunning Suffolk coastline with vast tracts of reedbeds, heath and beach is around half an hour by car. Likewise, Sutton Hoo, one of the most important archaeological discoveries of the 20th century, is close too.

Schools in the area are aplenty. Thordon Primary School is a mere three minutes' drive from the house, while Debenham has the Sir Robert Hitcham Primary School and Nursery and an excellent secondary school, Debenham High School. Stradbroke High School is well regarded, as is Thomas Mills High School in Framlingham.

Framlingham College offers co-ed independent education for children aged three to 18.

The nearest train station is at Stowmarket, a 25-minute drive away, with services running to London Liverpool Street in around 80 minutes. Diss and Ipswich, a 20- and 30-minute drive away respectively, provide frequent connections to London too, as well as to Cambridge and Norwich.

Council Tax Band: D

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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.