

INIGO



The Old Vicarage

WEST MALLING, KENT

SOLD

Occupying a coveted position in the heart of West Malling, this Grade II-listed, three-bedroom house was constructed as a vicarage in the 18th century. Set back behind a distinctive topiary knot garden, its elegant facade with French windows and the original Regency door hint at the spacious proportions beyond. Extending over 2,950 sq ft, it has two sitting rooms and a striking atrium staircase. It was once the residence of the antiques dealer Jonathan Vickers who decorated the spaces with a classic flair that the current owners have continued. West Malling is situated in the heart of Kent, yet well connected to London by excellent train links.

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Setting the Scene

West Malling is a market town with 10th-century origins. In the following centuries, buildings sprung up along the high street, characterised by its array of Norman, Tudor and Georgian architecture, including the Prior's House, St Mary the Virgin church and several historic pubs. Constructed in the 18th century, this house was originally the vicarage to the church. An elegant building with high ceilings, spacious rooms and an extensive garden, it still retains marks from its historic use, including inscriptions on the brick walls by the choristers who frequented the vicarage. For more information, please see the History section.



The Grand Tour

The house is slightly set back from the high street, alongside a row of Georgian buildings. A mature topiary border provides privacy, while an intricate pattern of shrubbery flanks the pathway leading to the front door. The brick façade was refronted in the early 19th century in roughcast stucco, which was subsequently painted a gentle cream, offset by the pale green gloss front door. Three French windows on the ground floor and four sash windows on the first floor have elegant intersecting tracery. Entry can also be gained via a small lane that leads past the church and winds around to a gravel driveway at the back of the house. A white wrought-iron gate opens to a gravelled walkway leading past mature topiary. This culminates at a central patio courtyard with access to the kitchen.

The front door opens into a spacious entrance hall with a welcoming fireplace. A glass cupola above the curved staircase means the room is light even on the darkest days. Directly to the right is the first reception room, painted a delicate blue with white wainscoting. The focal point of the room is the cast-iron fireplace with an intricate carved wooden surround, counter-balanced on the opposite wall by French windows with Colefax & Fowler curtains. The principal sitting room is situated at the back of the house. Here, the high walls are punctuated by original cupboards and adorned with sunny yellow paper handpainted in a bespoke design by an artist who worked with Colefax & Fowler. French doors open directly from here to the garden. A spacious crockery and glass cupboard adjoins the sitting room, accessed from either the sitting room or the hallway. An extensive cellar is also accessed from the hallway.

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The dining room is set in what was the original kitchen. Consequently, it is dominated by the fireplace that still has its original cast-iron range. The walls are fitted with extensive shelving and a Jack-and-Jill cupboard that connects to the reception room. From here, a door leads directly to the kitchen. Here, in a small additional corridor, inscriptions by various choristers have been engraved into what was external brickwork but now forms an internal wall. This galley kitchen, which may need some modernisation, is bookended by a neat summer room that captures the morning sun. Doors from both of these spaces open directly onto the central patio.

The atrium staircase leads up to a spacious landing that provides access to three large bedrooms. The principal bedroom has two intricate sash windows, a wide fireplace and a gently curved ceiling. A recently installed Jack-and-Jill shower room connects the bedroom at the back of the house with expansive sash windows overlooking the garden. A further bedroom, with white patterned Colefax & Fowler wallpaper and a gently curved ceiling, is situated at the front of the house. The large bathroom is adjoined by a functional utility room.

The Great Outdoors

The house has retained a sizeable garden, accessed from the sitting room, the kitchen and the conservatory, which all open to a central patio surrounded by mature hydrangea. A white wrought-iron gate opens to the rest of the garden and a patio. This leads to a path that cuts through the garden, along an extensive lawn cleverly partitioned by shrubbery designed as 'rooms' by Jonathan Vickers to break up the space. To the right, a paved space with a trellis blooming with roses is perfect for entertaining. At the end of the path is another iron gate opening to a gravelled parking area; there is also a white timber-clad workshop and garage.

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Out and About

The Old Vicarage is set in the middle of West Malling, a town that has retained a community feel, with commercial and social pursuits centred around the High Street. The Mill Yard Craft Centre houses a range of creative outlets, Coco & Bloom is the go-to for flowers, and Hardy's Wine Merchant is an excellent independent for the best bottle. There are plenty of restaurants in the town and the surrounding area too. Local favourites include St Leonards, The Farm House with its Elizabethan origins and The Swan, a Michelin-listed brasserie. The Hungry Guest is also a lovely place for lunch and to pick up provisions.

Schools in the area are excellent at both primary and secondary level. Offham Primary School is Ofsted-rated 'Outstanding', and the town has a Church of England primary school. West Malling is in the catchment area for the grammar schools of Tonbridge and Maidstone that offer single-sex education. Options for public schools include Sevenoaks, Sutton Valence and Tonbridge, among others.

West Malling sits in the heart of Kent, within easy reach of Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Maidstone. It is within easy reach of the M20 that connects swiftly with the M26 and M25. Train links from the town are excellent, taking 50 minutes to London Victoria and 40 minutes to London Bridge. Plans are underway for a high-speed rail service connecting to London Charing Cross for a journey which currently takes one hour 10 minutes.

Council Tax Band: G

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About

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