

INIGO



Wellesley House

ROCHESTER, KENT

£1,200,000 FREEHOLD

This exceedingly handsome, 1860s-built townhouse in Rochester, Kent unfurls over more than 3,000 sq ft of space. Grade II-listed, the house sits on a quiet residential street within Rochester's historic core; from its upper levels, some of the town's most impressive architectural sites can be spotted, as well as sweeping views of the River Medway. The train station is a short walk and offers direct services to London St Pancras and London Victoria in as little as 37 minutes as well as access to the delights of the Kentish countryside.

Setting the Scene

Sitting at the lowest bridging point on the River Medway, Rochester has a rich and varied history as a site of strategic importance for British trade and military fortification. From its early roots as a Saxon settlement, through its Roman occupation and the Norman conquering, the stone fabric of the town tells a tale laden with the longstanding tradition of rulers demonstrating their might through the construction of civic monuments and seats of power.

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Much like the town it sits in, Wellesley House has a storied past. Thought to have been built for local brewery owner Edward Winch in the early 1860s, the house was later occupied by a soldier, William Abney, later Sir William de Wivleslie, who was also the inventor of the Abney Level – an advanced surveying tool which can be seen in the Maritime Museum at Greenwich. The 20th century saw the house used, for a brief time, as an additional boarding house for the neighbouring King's School and, during the second world war, as a rationing office.

The Grand Tour

From the pavement, the house's elegant façade rises steeply, the warmth of its red brick accentuated by fine pointing and the buttery-white refurbished sash window frames. Entry is via a small number of Portland stone steps and through the imposing original four-panelled, partially glazed door. Within, the generous hallway is set in a neat square and defined by the grand cantilevered staircase that curls towards the upper floors. Replica Victorian mosaic tiles run underfoot, reflecting the current owners' sensitive decorative approach.

To the front of the plan, with double windows overlooking the street, is a well-appointed sitting room. A gas fireplace sits on one side, with a Farrow and Ball's De Nimes painted built-in desk/bookshelf on another. To the rear lies the drawing room, a large and bright space with verdant views across the private back garden. Tracing the perimeter of the ceiling is an unusually intricate cornice, displaying a climbing rose motif in high relief.

The hallway gives access to a guest WC and shower room, as well as to the lower-ground floor, where the separate dining room and kitchen are positioned. The dining room is an atmospheric space with original carpentry that provides ample display space for glassware.

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Beyond, an open-plan kitchen stretches out within the footprint of the house's original plan, demonstrated by the positioning of a burnt-orange Lacanche range within the arch of a Victorian hearth; other appliances are integrated and from Miele or Fisher and Paykel. Cream waist-height bespoke oak-framed cabinetry runs either side of the hearth and is topped with a black granite counter. A large island provides additional storage and has a stainless-steel sink with an Insikinator waste disposal and a Quooker boiling water tap. Underfloor heating warms the kitchen from below.

French doors at the far end of the space draw brightness right the way through the kitchen. They also provide access to a continental-style terrace, ideal for summer breakfasts. Also on the lower-ground floor is a drinks cupboard with bespoke fitted carpentry and additional guest WC to service the kitchen and dining room.

The first floor is open and bright with two large double bedrooms. Each occupies the full width of the plan, with one positioned over looking the street and the principal arranged to the rear, with an en suite and a shallow balcony. Both rooms have a wealth of period detailing including intricate ceiling roses as well as deep skirtings and handsome architraves.

The second floor hosts an additional two double bedrooms and one smaller bedroom, ideal for use as an office or nursery. There is a well-appointed family bathroom with large bathtub and a separate shower. The landing itself is a bright and inviting space currently utilised as a study, with views overlooking Rochester Castle and the steeped roofs of the ancient buildings within the city walls.

The Great Outdoors

Accessed from the drawing room's French doors, the private garden is filled with beautiful ornamental greenery. It looks towards the River Medway below, and out towards the hills in the distance.

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The garden's structure is reflective of its early Victorian origins. Timeworn flagstones pave a route around decorated cast-iron railings that guard the drop to the breakfast terrace below. Beyond the patio the garden takes a parterre form. A wealth of mature planting including box hedging, pleached fruit trees and shingle paths providing visual interest. A stoic sycamore casts gentle shade across the garden in the warmer months and there is a useful wooden shed tucked away at the far end of the plot.

The current owners have constructed a single-storey garage on a separate plot a couple of doors up the road. This attractive structure is a thoughtfully designed addition to the home's environs and provides secure parking for one large car. The garage has mains electricity and there is potential to develop the roof space for additional storage, relevant permissions permitting.

Out and About

Victorian novelist Charles Dickens was so fond of Rochester that he chose its cobbled streets and half-timbered houses as the setting for some of his most best-known tales, including 'Great Expectations' and 'The Pickwick Papers'. Dickens' home in nearby Highman can still be visited today, and every year, Rochester celebrates the legendary author by hosting festivals in summer and winter.

The house is a 10-minute walk from Rochester's high street, providing easy access to a number of popular restaurants, pubs, and cafés. A walk to the town centre is not complete without a stop at Baggins Book Bazaar, England's largest second-hand bookshop.

The Rochester Greenspaces Trail was born from the collaborative effort of volunteers and spans six miles from the town centre to the Borstal area in the south. The scenic route takes between two-and-a-half and three hours to complete and allows walkers to experience diverse local ecosystems.

Jeskyns Community Woodland, with its 360 acres immersed in nature, is a 15-minute drive away and has a wide range of outdoor activities all-year round. Several nature reserves and organically farmed vineyards dot the region, making for ideal day-trip destinations.

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There are excellent primary and secondary schooling options in the area, including King's Rochester School, Gad's Hill School, St Andrew's School, and Rochester Independent College. State options include Rochester Grammar School (girls) and the Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School (boys), both brilliantly regarded Grammar Schools.

Central London can be reached by car in approximately an hour and a half, while Rochester station runs rail services to St Pancras International and London Victoria in less than 40 minutes. Several seaside towns are within reach by short car ride, including the coastal havens of Whitstable and Margate.

Council Tax Band: G

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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.