

INIGO



Westwood

ASHBOURNE, DERBYSHIRE

£995,000 FREEHOLD

This wonderful eight-bedroom Victorian house lies in Ashbourne, a Derbyshire Dales market town situated just beyond the southern tip of the Peak District National Park. Its double-fronted red-brick façade is a picture of late 19th-century design, with plenty of sash windows, two wide bays, and a striking arched entryway. Inside, a wealth of charming original features are dotted across its 4,000 sq ft plan, which is divided between the main six-bedroom house and a two-bedroom annexe. The surrounding gardens are a rural idyll: meandering lawns are filled with mature and fruit-bearing trees, with a greenhouse and raised fruit and veg beds for the green-thumbed. Beyond is rolling pastureland that, when viewed from inside the house, seems to stretch out endlessly.

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Setting the Scene

Known for its wealth of Georgian and Tudor architecture, Ashbourne is a delightful market town, around a 30-minute drive from Derby or an hour and 15 minutes from Birmingham and Sheffield respectively. The town was granted market town status in 1257 and still holds a weekly market. The Victorian novelist George Eliot described the 12th-century spire of St Oswald Parish Church as the "finest single spire in England".

Built in the 1890s, this house has retained much of its late Victorian appeal. Its period proportions are generous, and its rooms are imbued with a distinctive 19th-century ambience. Newer interventions have been integrated with sensitivity to the building's origins, and a paint palette has been picked out with the building's refined character in mind. The two-bedroom annexe was built around the same time and has two bedrooms as well as a living space. As is the case with the main house, the connections to the grounds are unfaltering, with the greenery of the outdoors brought in through tall windows and French doors. For more information, see the History section below.

The Grand Tour

Approached from a long and meandering drive, the setting is exceptionally private.

The house's blue front door is slightly recessed and is set between a pair of brick pilasters and beneath a stone arch and semi-circular fanlight. It opens to a particularly pretty porch and hallway with ornate Minton tiles underfoot. Tucked to one side is a built-in cupboard with room for hanging coats and the like.

There are two living rooms on either side of the hallway, both with similar proportions. Wood-burning stoves warm the inviting spaces, one framed by a handsome dark marble surround, while the other is housed inside a sophisticated dark green-painted chimney breast. The living room to the left is painted an ochre colour up to the dado rail, with the white above elongating its already generous ceiling height.

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The second living room is a particularly romantic space; a tripartite bay is fitted with three sweeping sashes and has a built-in beneath to sit and look over the surrounding countryside. French doors open to the garden from one side, while a door at the rear passes through to the kitchen; as a result, this room could equally make for a brilliant formal dining space, if required.

A similarly large room, the kitchen is formed of inky blue-painted wooden cabinetry, made locally by H. Lee and Son; there is also a contrasting duck-egg blue Aga. There is plenty of additional storage space in two high-level alcove-fitted cupboards that flank a wide mantel perfect for displaying pots filled with pickings from the garden. Large limestone flags run underfoot, their neutral hues a considered counterpoint to the darker joinery. The original pine larder is still intact.

Across the hall is a room currently used as a study, though its versatility would suit various configurations. A log-burning stove is housed within a wide marble surround here, with light streaming in through a pair of two one-over-one sashes. The primary home's ground-floor plan is completed by a handy utility space and a neat shower room.

The main house's six bedrooms all lie upstairs, five of which have a sink and all have arresting views across the undulating landscape. The primary bedroom is an especially airy room with a wide marble fireplace and delicate powder blue-painted walls. A family bathroom serves all of the bedrooms here and has a deep bathtub and a glass-framed walk-in shower, as well as a window with garden views. There is an expansive loft partially boarded out, perfect for storage.

At the rear of the ground floor is the two-bedroom annexe. The space is accessed via its own entrance of timber-trimmed brick and stone steps, though a rear door to the main house lies adjacent (it is also attached to the main house via an open-plan hall). A generous bedroom, set beneath the cocooning pitch of the roof, lies upstairs, with the second bedroom (or study, if desired), living space and bathroom downstairs.

Outside is a useful array of outbuildings, including a single and double garage and a charming writer's shed-studio.

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The Great Outdoors

Grounds of approximately 1.4 acres surround the house and are filled with lovingly conceived garden "rooms". To the front of the house, a large, flat lawned area is a former pleasure field intended for tennis, croquet and badminton. Edged with intricate stone walls abounding with mature species ferns, box hedge and pollinator-favourite, mahonia, the lawn is cast in dappled shade on summer's days from substantial oaks and limes.

To the side of the house is the Portuguese-inspired garden. Centred around blackberry bushes, the space is an intimate reimagining of Italianate planting. An original greenhouse flourishes with long bunches of late-ripening tomatoes. A large patio area runs in front of the greenhouse and the side of the façade.

Further to the side and rear, stone walls encircle the plot, which rises gently with a willow tree, a broad-leaved weeping willow. Well-established orchards and a kitchen garden of vegetable beds are punctuated by timber chicken coops, and raspberry canes rise among the perennials. Pears, apples, quince, plum, damson and medlar trees droop with ripe fruit in the late summer and autumn, creating a bounty from the land. A potting shed, writing shed, and multiple garages complete the abundant outside space.

Out and About

Perfectly positioned in the sought-after town of Ashbourne, part of the equally lovely Clifton parish, the house is surrounded by the Derbyshire Dales. Dovedale, at the lower periphery of the Peaks, is a short distance away, where spectacular scenery includes picturesque stepping stones and ancient caves. A beautiful walk between the dales to the medieval village of Tissington, taking in the Tissington trail, takes around two-and-a-half hours or under an hour by bike. An ideal spot before or after a long stroll or hike is The Okeover Arms, an 18th-century, Grade II-listed pub nestled on the edge of the park.

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Ashbourne itself has a host of landmarks to take in, from the longest inn sign in the world to the striking façade of the Grade I-listed Old Grammar School. The limestone plateau of the White Peak is bounded by Ashbourne and is less boggy ground than the Dark Peak, making it an easier hike. There are plenty of handy local amenities, including independent shops, boutiques and restaurants as well as supermarkets.

Clifton is a quaint village southwest of Ashbourne, with a Hall that dates to the late 18th century. As well as a school, cricket club and village grounds, it is best known as the site of the old corn mill, which holds the Royal Shrovetide football game: a medieval football match played once a year on Shrove Tuesday.

The area has excellent schooling options, including Ashbourne Primary School, The FitzHerbert, Busy Bees at Ashbourne and Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School.

The area is within easy reach of both Derby and Stoke-on-Trent, with Birmingham and Sheffield only slightly further afield. Uttoxeter station is a 20-minute drive and has services to London St Pancras that take just over two hours. Both the M1 and the M6 are close by with links to the National Highway.

Council Tax Band: F

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About

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