

INIGO



Laburnum House

DOWNHAM MARKET, NORFOLK

£945,000 FREEHOLD

Elegant with its quintessential Georgian symmetry, this beautiful Grade II listed house in Downham Market, Norfolk, has been exquisitely reappointed under current ownership. It spans some 2,665 sq ft, with five bedrooms and a series of peaceful living spaces where original materials and features are brought to the forefront. Outside is an expansive garden, with vegetable patches, fruit trees and an annexe, built around the same time as the house itself. Downham Market lies to the west of Norfolk and is a wonderful town with plenty of places to dine and shop. Its railway station is a two-minute walk from the house, with services that run to Ely, Cambridge, King's Lynn and London King's Cross, in around an hour and a half.

Setting the Scene

With its origins in the Dark Ages, Downham Market is one of Norfolk's oldest market towns. Among its most curious features are a black and white clock tower presented to the town in 1878 and, even earlier, a medieval church. Much of Downham Market's architecture is built using a local stone, carrstone, which gave it the name 'gingerbread town'.

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Laburnum House was originally built for the manager of the local mill, with its annex accommodating his office and room for his clerk. It lies in the west of the town, set back from the street behind an astonishingly pretty approach. Its form is of buff brick, with a half-glazed door behind a stately portico. Inside, a wealth of period features remain, from original joinery and windows to impressive fireplaces.

The Grand Tour

Entry is to a grand entrance hall with soaring ceilings, deep cornicing and wide wooden floorboards – features which are repeated throughout this remarkable house. An original doorbell sits in an alcove atop the front door.

A voluminous sitting room is positioned to the right of the hall, filled with light from two majestic sash windows with slim glazing bars and vertically rising shutters. A fireplace with marble surround is perfect for hunkering down on a winter's evening; cast-iron radiators provide additional warmth here and throughout the house. Across the hall is a generous dining room with ample room for entertaining. Large sash windows provide delightful views of the lush greenery beyond.

Stairs descend a half level to the kitchen and snug. The snug sits to the right of the plan, characterised by a large sash window and a cast-iron fireplace. From here, the cellar is accessed via a discreet white-painted door.

Kitchen cabinets and walls are washed in a fresh white tone, with textured tiled splashback. A black double-oven Aga nestles neatly in an alcove. A window positioned over a butler sink looks towards the side garden, which is accessed via a glass-panelled door, and an adjacent smaller door leads to the cellar. To the rear of the plan is a WC, log store and bootroom.

From the hall, a staircase with a white-painted balustrade, scalloped strings and a sweeping handrail rises up to the first floor. Four expansive double bedrooms occupy the space, each with high ceilings and an abundance of light spilling in from sash windows. An en suite WC is attached to the principal bedroom, which has a cast-iron fireplace and a smart picture rail.



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Two bright, smaller rooms are found at the rear of the plan, which can be used as cosy single bedrooms, studies or playrooms. A large bathroom has flagstone flooring, a roll-top bath, a double sink and a splendid fireplace.

The Great Outdoors

The house is surrounded by lush walled gardens, where borders brim with fragrant lavender, purple catmint and roses. The garden is a jam-maker's delight, with established raspberry and strawberry plants, as well as pear trees. A vegetable patch provides opportunities for home-grown produce, while carefully maintained lawns are perfect for picnicking, playing and entertaining.

There is also a outbuilding adjacent the entrance of the house. Built at the same time, to accommodate the mill manager's office, this handy space would work well as a home office, studio or children's den.

Out and About

Downham Market is one of Norfolk's oldest market towns. It has a wealth of period architecture, from a Victorian clock tower to a medieval church. Something of a hidden gem, the town is a short distance from the Norfolk Coast National Landscape, where open beaches meet colourful beach huts and wonderful fish and chip shops.

There are plenty of wonderful shops and places to eat in Downham Market, from The Norfolk Cheese Company and The Seat Coffee House to nearby pub The Hare Arms and restaurant Allium. The town has a bi-weekly market, two excellent butchers, a wonderful deli, The Pantry, a renowned local bakery, Mabel, and a branch of Waitrose. There are also two golf clubs nearby, Denver and Ryston, and a farm shop in Stow Bardolph.

The River Great Ouse is a short stroll from the house and opens to miles of walks along its banks. Oxburgh Estate is a short drive away and is managed by the National Trust. It was built in the 15th century and underwent an extensive refurbishment in the mid-19th century under John Chessell Buckler and Augustus Pugin. Its moated grounds and parkland are a wonderful way to while away a weekend afternoon. Ely is a 30-minute drive away and is home to a magnificent cathedral as well as a thriving independent scene.

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Bury St Edmund's is around 55 minutes away by car, while Norfolk's only city, Norwich, can be reached in around 75 minutes; Cambridge is a similar distance from the house, while King's Lynn, Fakenham and Thetford are all within 40 minutes' drive.

There are state-run schools in Downham Market and the well-considered Denver VC primary school is around a mile from the house. Private options within driving distance include King's Ely senior and prep school and Wisbech Grammar School.

A two-minute walk away, Downham Market station runs Great Northern services to King's Cross in around 94 minutes via Ely (17 minutes) and Cambridge (38 minutes), or north to King's Lynn in 14 minutes.

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.