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# Divine residence

A former rectory in Kingsbridge, **Dodbrooke House** offers peace and seclusion yet close proximity to the bustle of this lively market town. Words by *Imogen Clements*.



It's interesting, Kingsbridge doesn't get anything like the column inches that nearby Salcombe commands, and yet it's a town that has everything – sea, shops, schools, and a bustling high street. What it doesn't have is a massive tourist influx each season. In that regard, it's very much a primary residence town.

Kingsbridge sits on the South Devon coast at the head of the Salcombe estuary in the South Hams. This area is considered one of outstanding natural beauty; you have easy access to the sea, as Kingsbridge is situated at the head of the estuary, as well as to green rolling hills that surround it; and the town is big enough to have a wide array of retail and eatery options, but not so big that every other door is a chain franchise.

On the contrary, Kingsbridge is a middle-size market town that's refreshingly independent, offering high-level designer operators on its high street and stockists such as Treyone Kitchens and Herring Shoes, as well as bistros that include the immensely popular Crab Shell Inn overlooking the quay, a cinema, leisure centre with pool, medical and community hospital. Essentially pretty much all that's required to serve a multi-generational community.

It also offers highly attractive properties. Case in point is Dodbrooke House, one of those rarities that combines space, light, tranquillity and convenience. A Georgian rectory, it is ten minutes' walk from the heart of Kingsbridge, yet secluded, located down a private drive adjacent to the 15th century Grade I-listed St Thomas a Becket church.

In close proximity to an excellent primary school, Kingsbridge Community Primary School, it is an attractive family home, with five bedrooms and large reception areas lit by wide bay windows. The house is accessed via the gravel drive at the rear and there is a large turning area where, along with the main house, sits a two-bedroom annexe, Dodbrooke Coach House, which offers scope for holiday letting, au pairs/nannies or as a granny flat. At the front of the main house there is a sweeping lawn in which stands an impressive beech

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*There are period ecclesiastical features throughout, including gothic windows, universal arched doorways and a striking barrel-vaulted ceiling in the master bedroom.*

tree along with an unusual tulip tree. According to the vendor, Nick Massey, the latter produces quite beautiful blooms, come the spring. The garden also boasts a magnolia tree with its own abundant white blooms, rhododendrons, camellias, and numerous but apparently very manageable shrubs and beds.

The current owners bought the house in 2013, having been looking to downsize. Although Dodbrooke House didn't quite meet the 'downsize' brief – there are very few for whom a five-bedroom house with two-bedroom annexe would be a downsize – they fell in love with it at first sight.

“There was work that needed doing throughout, but we both loved the fabric of the house,” recalls Nick, which compelled them to do the very best justice they could to it internally. “We hired a project manager in Mike Martin and through him amassed a great team. Of particular note was an extremely good husband and wife team in Gavin and Sarah Woodford, from Woodford Architects. Sarah went through the house from top to bottom and she applied a very simple colour scheme throughout, considering in detail the transition from one room to the next, and being highly respectful of the house's original features.”

Dodbrooke House is a Grade II listed late Georgian property built in 1834 with local hand-dressed stone. Formerly the rectory of the Parish of Dodbrooke, there are period ecclesiastical features throughout, including gothic windows, universal arched doorways and a striking barrel-vaulted ceiling in the master bedroom.

“We didn't need to do any structural work, nor want to. However, the original oak staircase was boxed in, in a rather bizarre fashion, so with the help Gavin Woodford, we opened it up and revealed the staircase to have it take centre stage in the hall. It's quite wonderful.”

Nick pulls out this as a star feature of the house, along with the numerous beautiful original fireplaces, then goes on to mention the special and unique door handles, high ceilings, the dry cellar that's original to the house, which has a pool table and stores the family's wine. But to tour Dodbrooke House, every room is styled to perfection, designed beautifully with an alluring mix of textures and an optimal degree of colour that never detracts from the sheer class of this home.

“It is a welcoming house – everyone always says there's a warm atmosphere to it. Within the context of Kingsbridge I can't think of a lovelier family home,” says





Nick. Which, of course, prompts the natural question: why is he selling? It wasn't their intention, but life, as it often does, has intervened and for family reasons they're having to put it on the market.

The result being that whoever takes on Dodbrooke House, takes on a beautiful family home that's newly renovated and ready to move into.

A house such as this – secluded and private yet close to town, with excellent schools in close proximity and easy access to the estuary with its stunning scenery and sailing opportunities – would tick the boxes of pretty much every member of the family, even that of the surly teenager, who could set up home in their own adjacent Coach House.

With five bedrooms and an additional two-bedroom cottage, Dodbrooke House is priced at £1.5m, and the next owner buys it safe in the knowledge that they will need to do little to it. It's all been done, and very tastefully. It's just a case of moving in, sitting back and enjoying it. **M**

Dodbrooke House is on the market with Marchand Petit for £1,500,000. Tel: 01548 857 588  
[marchandpetit.co.uk](http://marchandpetit.co.uk)