





One of the oldest surviving school buildings we know, and complete with bell tower! This is a chance to be the custodian of something really special.

Steeple Aston is an ancient settlement with roots going back to Roman times, maybe earlier. Today it is one of the most popular villages in the area, offering the rare mix of its own shop and Post Office (a few minutes' walk), a popular pub, a primary school dating back nearly 400 years, and a 1000 year old church, all set in pretty, rural location. The community is enthusiastic and vibrant with activities ranging from WI to bell ringing, football and cricket, and it is in the catchment for Deddington health centre. Designated a conservation area in 1988 it is set in glorious surroundings with the river Cherwell running through the valley. It is also well placed for commuting by road or rail to Oxford and London, Banbury and Birmingham.

When our client bought the Old School in the 1990's, it had reached a parlous state, being let to servicemen as bedsitting rooms. Most would have turned their nose up at something needing clearly a good weight of work - but as an architecture obsessive our client could see past all that. Then commenced a lengthy period of renovation that kept true to the full spirit of what is a lovely and special building. The stairs were reconstituted, stone mullions sensitively remade to perfectly match the originals, and bespoke double glazing fitted. What has resulted is a house that is still gently patinated and immensely likeable, quirky but not difficult to use. Entertaining here must be a very special event, but a cozy night in front of the fire would be an equally lovely experience! Note that those searching for an acre of garden won't find it here, but the compact rear space is discreet and peaceful enough for a quiet read or a barbecue with friends - and a walk through fields can be enjoyed only a few minutes' stroll away.

Entering the front door, an inner hallway with a brick tiled floor gives access to the first of two staircases as well as leading off to a cloakroom on the right. On the left, the timber door opens into the most glorious of reception rooms. As is typical of a school room, the stone mullioned windows are set high up to ensure pupils are not distracted by outside influences! This has the fortunate byproduct of ensuring this room is exceptionally light even on a dull day. On the right a timber staircase leads up past another stone mullioned window in what was originally an outside wall until the building was extended. And overhead the timber beam design is unusual but alluring, forming the shape of a cross. This is a wonderful and grand space perfect for entertaining, but our vendor also informs us the acoustics are wonderful for those who love their music. To the rear, steps drop down through a doorway into another reception, walled off but also, unusually, featuring panels that can be opened or shut to integrate it with the main room. The fireplace is grand and beautiful, making this room a gorgeous snug space for winter evenings - and with the panels open it heats the main reception, too.



- | If walls could talk!!
- | So much history & charm
- | Vaulted ceilings, beams & stone
- | Up to five bedrooms
- | Huge kitchen/ dining room
- | Two further receptions
- | Discreet walled garden
- | Ample parking on street

- | Lower Heyford station 2 miles
- | General store 5 mins walk
- | Highly rated local school
- | M40 junction 10 6 miles
- | Superfast broadband

Approximate distances & times

- | Mains water, electric, gas c.h.
- | Cherwell District Council
- | Council tax band E
- | C. £2,413 p.a. 2020/21

A pair of glazed double doors lead to the kitchen. The same parquet floor that featured in the main reception continues through here. In all, the room extends to over 30 feet long, making it an extraordinarily practical space. To one end the kitchen constitutes a stainless steel surface wrapping round a double butler sink, next to which is a professional-grade stainless steel range. Other than the double cupboard built into the rear wall, nothing else is fitted as the size of the room enables you to choose whatever furnishings you like - and in a house like this an old dresser or butcher's block is more appropriate than standard units. Consequently our vendor has various dressers, cabinets etc placed in here with masses of room to spare. A dining table at the other end provides amply for a dozen people if needed, with ample space between in which a sofa and easy chairs currently sit. It really is a fantastic all-day space. And in addition there are more panels, just as in the main reception, opening into the living room. Completing the downstairs, a utility room to the end of the kitchen hosts another Belfast style sink, and from here one door leads back out to the lane while a panel covers the double doors that could be reopened to lead back to the entrance hall if needed.

From the main reception the stair leads up to the first floor rooms. Turn round on the galleried landing and you are rewarded by the view, and from this height you really can sense the scale of how unusual and interesting this house is. If we had to pick a favourite bedroom it would be the room on the left of this landing. The detailing is so attractive, with ceiling timbers demonstrating the age of the building as they are of a style and size rarely seen today. A double bed is dwarfed in this room by the floor area, yet it feels welcoming and calm. More mullioned windows bring in light from two sides, and with shutters there is not need for curtains at all. There are two further bedrooms on this floor, both of which provide a guide to the evolution of the building as they have a more recent (although that's a comparative term!) criss-cross timber roof structure. As with everything in this house, they are large and characterful. And one amply demonstrates the mix of fun and practicality in this house, with the original windows that overlook the main reception, covered with a set of large shutters or opened to peer down on those below.

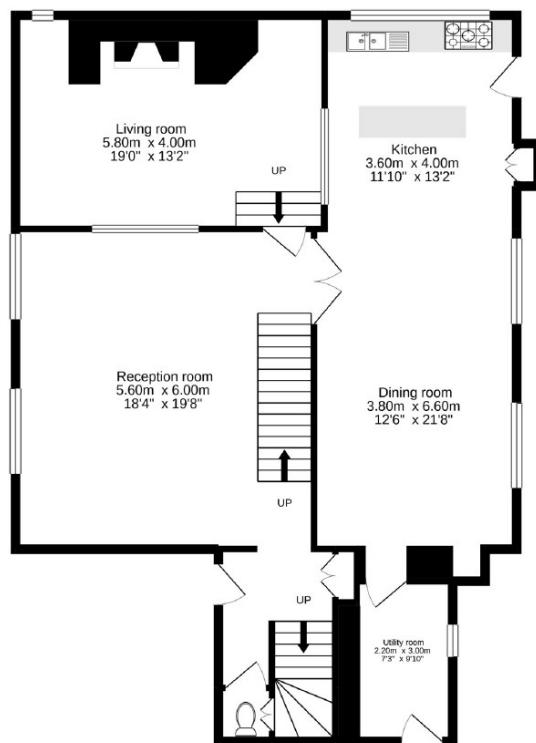
And going back to the entrance hall, take the timber stairs to the first floor. As you rise, look up ahead of you and take in the view. Two windows, one above another, bring in masses of natural light. The stairs turn halfway up and at the top, timber floor boards lead you through a door, beyond which the room expands away from you to some considerable size, even further enhanced by the vaulted ceiling overhead. It is an absolutely gorgeous, characterful room, with deep-set windows to the front offering a pretty view over the tops of the trees opposite. Windows on three sides ensure it's very light in here, and the dimensions are such that the choices of how to use it are endless. And off to the side there is a bathroom with that same lovely timber floor. At the end, a further room exhibits the same character and ceiling shape. As a result this whole top floor could work extremely well as a suite with dressing room, perhaps a wonderful hobbyist space, or the ideal place to exile that surly teenager...

Outside, the house sits amongst other historic buildings on the side of a road that hosts only village traffic hence it is quiet. Parking is always available on street with no restrictions, although those with a Smart car or similar could park to the right of the house if they really wish. Two doors access the house on the right, one into the main hall and the other the utility, with a pair of low walls flanking the entrance to the hall. Behind the house, the garden is very discreet, completely hidden from outside and enclosed by stone walls. Our clients have always enjoyed the space as a paved area for quiet afternoons and the occasional party, so they have set it up to need little maintenance. Having said that, they have an intriguing mix of plants here including a palm tree! Immediately behind the house is the terrace area, the land then rises a few feet to a further terrace with steps accessing. And for those wanting more space a few minutes' walk takes you to open countryside.

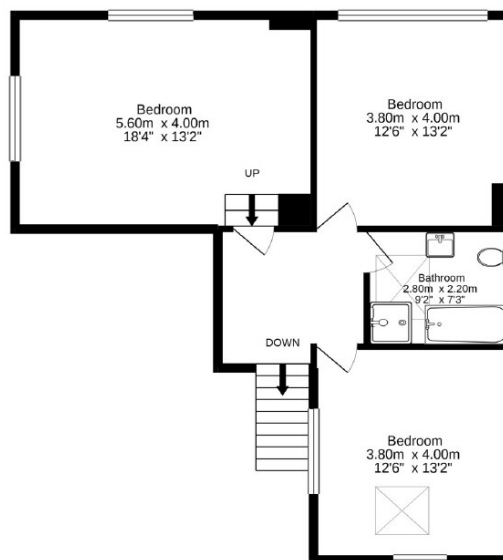




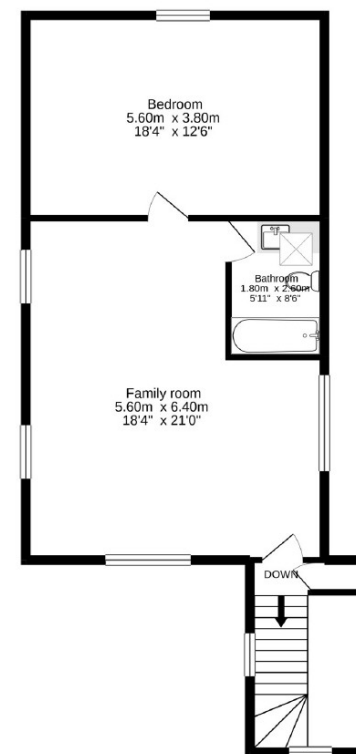
Ground floor
105.5 sq.m. (1135 sq.ft.) approx.



1st floor
65.0 sq.m. (700 sq.ft.) approx.



2nd floor
65.1 sq.m. (700 sq.ft.) approx.



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TOTAL FLOOR AREA : 235.6 sq.m. (2536 sq.ft.) approx.

Whilst every attempt has been made to ensure the accuracy of the floorplan contained here, measurements of doors, windows, rooms and any other items are approximate and no responsibility is taken for any error, omission or mis-statement. This plan is for illustrative purposes only and should be used as such by any prospective purchaser. The services, systems and appliances shown have not been tested and no guarantee as to their operability or efficiency can be given.

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to discuss this property or to arrange a viewing please call, or drop us a line
interested@cridlands.co.uk

01869 343 600

www.cridlands.co.uk

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