

Orford property - the sum of two exquisite parts

Submitted by: Suffolk Coastal Estate Agents

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Utterly charming and exquisitely Margo's Cottage & The Coach House, Orford, Suffolk:

<https://www.suffolkcoastal.com/property/residential/for-sale/suffolk/orford/church-street/TIM151>

Comment from the owner (Julie Reed).

I love Orford in Suffolk, there is a magical peace about the village, perhaps it is helped by it is a village you drive to, not through? And I also love bringing properties back to life, not developing just helping them become homes. So, when my eldest son showed me the sale details of 115 Church Street in early 2018, thinking of moving already I went along for a viewing. The cottage, the end of a terrace of four built in 1878 for the estate workers of Sir Richard Wallace, he of The Wallace Collection fame, is sturdy, built in red brick with a traditional pan tiled roof, but with gothic shaped details, the front door and windows. Built right at the edge of the road opposite the beautiful village St Batholomew's Church, I had walked past many times, but never noticed how the cottages are all of different sizes as they are built with clever subtle perspective used meaning even each front door is of a differing size. Being at the end of the terrace 115 has a fabulously over the top magnificent front door and large front window, but it also is much taller than its neighbours so the top floor bedroom has full height, and has additional side windows which let in wonderful light. When I first viewed the property, it was a dismal February day and the cottage was colder inside than out as it had been unoccupied since Margo Glaister had died, a famed potter and artist whose works were sold at Pinney's Smokehouse on the Quay. She and her husband Ray had lived in the cottage for nearly fifty years. Despite being empty of furniture their presence in the property was evident with little moments shown in the items remaining and it was obvious it had been a much loved and enjoyed home. The old stables, diminutive coach house had been a studio and the first floor removed to create a double height space, then for spiders mostly! In one of the sheds at the bottom of the overgrown but charming garden, accessed through undergrowth was Margo's pottery studio, it was like the Marie Celeste, abandoned without notice, her potter's wheel and clay hardened in bins, and little pieces of inspiration everywhere. The property delighted my senses, the delicate nature of the old windows, so fragile with age, but still working, the height of the ceilings which made the space feel elegant, the tiny turning staircase with differing tread heights, all told a story. With clever use of space to put an ensuite bathroom off the main bedroom, the wooden purpose-built cupboards throughout the property all having a practical application. Margo and Ray had used the space to live their lives, and not created a bland palate, it was like a blueprint to show their interests to those who never met them, sailing, reading, art, leaving a glimpse of themselves. And then just as I was leaving the last cupboard, I looked in was in the dining room and there like a little message for me, used as a backing for the back of the cupboard, was a piece of the same wallpaper, pink 1960's style cats, my dear father had used to redecorate my bedroom when I at 8 years old was in hospital having my tonsils out. Any ambivalence about the property disappeared with the sight of that wallpaper and I made an offer.

Working with my dear architect friend John Clarke of Hox Designs, www.hoxdesign.co.uk and the talented craftsmen builders B A Boyle & Son, www.baboyle.co.uk we set about restoring the cottage and the Coach House. Basics like total rewiring and plumbing and heating were all required, but I did not want to take the integrity away from the cottage or the Coach House. The delicate nature of this sturdy unimposing

cottage and coach house was not missed by me and I wanted to enhance. So in the cottage I resisted the urge to knock ground floor into one open plan area, thereby making it like so many cottages where the taking out of internal walls does not to my mind make more space. In Margos I like the fact the utility room is essentially hidden within the downstairs shower room, and the diminutive kitchen which has space for a cook with good appliances, but no more. And I love the Bert and May tiles www.bertandmay.com used in patchwork format the newly created first floor bathroom, and then through to the kitchen in Margos and The Coach House. I found old plans of the Coach House showing the two bedrooms on the first floor and applied to reinstate these and the winged staircase was cleverly hand built on site by Brendon Boyle to make full use of the space it makes a little pleasing moment when you go upstairs. We also reinstated an old boarded up window, giving it an inverted dormer, which provides more light to the newly created second bedroom. And then the French windows with Juliet balcony in the tiny Church view bedroom I suppose is another grand gesture in a diminutive space, reflecting the original buildings stature of small but mighty. I like to live and breathe a project of property enhancement, I suppose it is my way of leaving a blueprint of who I am to those who come to stay for holidays, both properties are successfully holiday let via www.airmanage.com .

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The property is being marketed for sale by Suffolk Coastal Estate Agents – Guide price: £925,000.

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Photo is of the owner Julie Reed (photo credit: Lucy Halpin)

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About Suffolk Coastal estate agents:

Suffolk Coastal is an independent estate agency specialising in the sale of homes across Aldeburgh, Thorpeness, Orford, Snape, Woodbridge and villages across the Suffolk coast.