

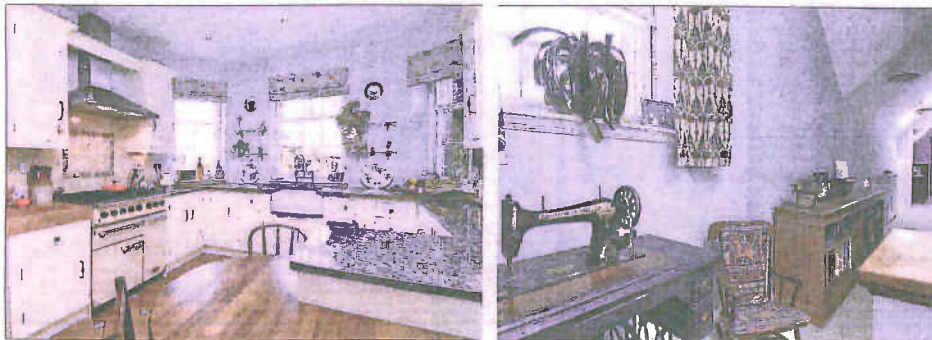
PROPERTY OF THE WEEK



Clockwise from main: The rear garden; the hall, the kitchen; the living room



Where west is best



This wing of a historic house in the village of Dirleton oozes country cottage charm. By Kirsty McLuckie

JEAN Ait didn't have to move far when she bought the West Wing of Oatfield House five years ago, as she had previously been living in an apartment within the main house, and had been attracted to the West Wing for its substantial gardens.

Oatfield House is situated in the East Lothian conservation village of Dirleton, which lies about 20 miles east of Edinburgh and close to North Berwick and Gullane. The property was built

around 1794 while the West Wing was added a century later, in around 1900. Situated in a quiet corner of the village green, the location of this property is doubtless its first selling point as the house has a great outlook over its private front garden southwards towards Dirleton Castle – a medieval fortress that has stood in the heart of the village since the 13th century and which is now in the care of Historic Scotland.

Although the West Wing's previous

owners had upgraded the property, Jean put her own aesthetic stamp on the place after moving in. The house is arranged over two floors, with the living room and dining room to the front of the ground level, and the kitchen overlooking the walled garden to the rear. The upper level has three bedrooms and a bathroom, along with storage spaces, and the partially coombed ceilings upstairs give these rooms a more cottage feel.

Jean softened the previously all-white palette with subtle wall colours that amplify the light. "To my mind, white wasn't quite right for the age of the house," she says. Likewise, she replaced the lino kitchen with a hand-built design from Christopher Howard in Gullane featuring cream-painted timber

units and granite and timber worktops, combined with a range-cooker, again in cream, and a Belfast sink. The terracotta-tiled floor adds warmth to the palette (and real warmth thanks to the underfloor heating) while the chalky blue-green wall colour is a great complement to the other finishes.

Both the sitting and dining room have wooden floors while the latter features a stove set into a simple opening. "This is a lovely cosy little room in the winter," Jean says. There is also an additional bedroom and en suite in the stone-built garden room within the rear garden, which was originally used as the wash-house for Oatfield House – there's even an old well in the garden. A previous owner – an artist – had used this garden room as a studio, and likewise it

could make a great home office. As it is, this space offers a distinctive guest suite opening onto the walled garden.

Indeed, just as the gardens were the main attraction for Jean, so they have also required the most work and investment of time in creating them. The front garden was transformed after Jean laid a new lawn and planted the beds, while the rear garden, which had little planting in its before state, has been imaginatively redesigned including seating areas for different times of the day.

Whoever buys the West Wing next is inheriting a really characterful house, and, thanks to Jean, the gardens are now a significant part of that charm. This property is about much more than square footage: it's about style, ambience, and setting.

Inside knowledge

West Wing of Oatfield House, in the East Lothian conservation village of Dirleton.

The accommodation is arranged over two levels, with living room, dining room, kitchen/breakfast room, utility and WC on the ground floor, and with three bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs.

There is also a garden bedroom with en suite shower room within a separate stone building in the rear garden.

There are substantial, well-designed gardens with a walled garden to the rear and an open plan garden to the front of the



property, along with a single garage and private parking for up to five cars.
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