

The perfect home and garden for all seasons



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TRANSFORMING a village property into a spacious family home with a beautiful garden is not the type of project that would appeal to many buyers.

But Tracy Pownall-Carton, and her husband Paul, were happy to take on the challenge when they bought a cottage at Dolly End in west Oxfordshire. Six years later, Number 1, Wood Lane is on the market at a guide price of £750,000 and is now the perfect home and garden for all seasons.

Mrs Pownall-Carton, a trained horticulturist and designer, said: "We moved here six years ago primarily because of the property's location and the size of the plot. It is so quiet, surrounded by farmland, with the lane seeing more people walking dogs and riding their horses than cars."

"The cottage did not have much of a garden, but we saw that as an advantage. It meant that we had a blank canvas of just over a half-an-acre to create exactly what we wanted."

The transformation of the house and garden began in 2004.

"The garden... our aim has always been to create a garden for year-long interest and vegetable production while still ensuring it is a family garden."

"The garden has matured well and we put that down to good soil. The preparation incorporated more than 60 tonnes of compost."

"As the beds have matured we have planted thousands of bulbs, indeed another 3,500 are being planted this autumn."

The house itself has also seen major changes.

Mrs Tracy Pownall-Carton (pictured above), said: "The property was entirely unsuitable for modern family living. There was nowhere to sit and look out at



the lovely views or the garden.

"Basically, we took the building back to scratch and started again. We have extended the property, removed internal walls and done away with long dark hallways. The house has been re-plumbed and rewired, and given new windows and roof."

These changes have opened up the space and wherever you sit there are

It is now a five-bedroomed property with a sitting room, dining room, study, three bathrooms, family room/breakfast room and an open-plan kitchen (pictured right above).

She added: "It has been extremely hard work but we have created a family home with plenty of space to entertain and have friends and family to stay."

The couple are looking for a new challenge and want to move to County Cork, Ireland, where they are looking for a five-acre plot to transform.

● To arrange a viewing, call **Hamptons International** on 01865 512332



Down by the old mill stream



AN idyllic historic house, mentioned in the Domesday Book, is on the market. The Mill House, Marcham, is set against the stunning backdrop of the River Ock, and combines ancient character with every possible modern luxury.

At the end of a no-through lane, this seven-bedroomed property stands in more than six acres of land and is bordered by the mill stream.

It features an outdoor pool and hot tub overlooking the pretty gardens and open countryside — perfect for summer parties.

When the weather grows cold, the interior can be heated with three log fires or you can snuggle up beside the Aga in the kitchen.

The impressive 13.5 metre lounge is ideal for entertaining and dining and the spacious kitchen provides a cosy heart to the home.

A separate living room offers a perfect escape for a large family.

There are five bedrooms in the main house and a further guest bedroom at the southern end of the property.

Across the cobbled courtyard are stables and storerooms. A spiral staircase leads to a coach house which has its own living and sleeping area, kitchenette and shower room.

There is a double garage and car port. The land is divided into two fields, one of which is a former cricket pitch, and a perfect paddock for horses.

Marcham Village and the post office are within walking distance. The property has good links to the A34, M4 and Didcot Parkway railway station.

Marcham has an abundance of local activities, including an history society and amateur dramatic group. Frilford Heath Golf Club is within a short drive.

The property is on the market for £2.2m with Kemp & Kemp, Summertown. Call 01865 510 000 for more details.



IF YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL, CONTACT THE OXFORD TIMES CHIEF PROPERTY WRITER **GEOFFREY HEDGE** ON 01865 425475 OR **ANDREW SMITH**, PROPERTY EDITOR ON 01865 425460

Bricks and mortar better than stocks and shares

THE county, and the city of Oxford in particular, seem to be faring better in the prime country market than other regions of the UK, according to Knight Frank.

Damian Gray, a senior partner at the Oxford office of Knight Frank, said: "Because of the economic turbulence, we have been closely monitoring and comparing market performance, especially at the upper end of the market."

"The number of properties where sales were agreed, across our national country homes offices, for a period just after the collapse of Lehman Brothers, was 20 per cent higher than in 2007 and almost 30 per cent up in Oxfordshire."

The number of exchanges was also up in the county compared to last year's levels."

He added: "Encouragingly, in Oxford, in comparison to 2007, the number of viewings was up nearly 40 per cent. These figures provide clear evidence that buyers have been attracted to the market by more realistic guide prices and have realised that 'real estate' is perhaps a 'safer' asset class than stocks, commodities, currency and other financial investments."

Oxfordshire hits the spot for property millionaires

RESEARCH from Savills shows that Oxfordshire is the county of choice outside of London for buyers with more than £1m.

While London accounted for just under a third of all demand, Oxfordshire was in second place with 16.5 per cent.

Lucian Cook, director of research at Savills said: "It is perhaps surprising that Oxfordshire is now

more popular than the more traditional alcohol/broker counties but it does suggest that buyers are prepared to put up with a longer commute in order to live in a more rural location where there are plenty of good schools and a number of vibrant towns."

Thirty five of the 76 homes that the Summertown office of Savills has sold so far this year have been priced at £1m.

Nick Ridge, of the Banbury office of Savills, said: "For north Oxfordshire it is very much the draw of the honey-coloured stone — warm, soft and pleasing — that attract these buyers."

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