

Upside down and insides out

Plum-set Kinsale Mall house overlooks harbour, marina and town with equal aplomb, says **Tommy Barker**

IT'S almost one surprise after another once you go through the quite-modest front door of this Mall, Kinsale, elevated town-centre home.

Set in a row of older-era homes — some aged 100 years, while one cluster of Alms or Gift Houses a few doors away is 335 years of age — The Mall is an esteemed, high-up viewing perch overlooking Kinsale town, harbour, and scanning the bulge of prime waterfront property beneath that is Scilly.

From the outset, you mightn't think that this semi-detached home has any particularly worthwhile views but you'd be wrong.

To capitalise on the view, this is an entirely 'upside down' layout, with its four bedrooms and bathrooms at ground level. From the first floor's four good-sized windows (set into a traditional Kinsale feature, a part slate-hung facade wall,) the view unfolds over rooftops down to the harbour, past winding narrow streets.

This Mall home has been in private ownership for a decade or two. It was given a second significant revamp and extension about than 10 years ago, so all the fittings, bathrooms, tiling and kitchen feel fresh. Also modern in feel is the elevated/first-floor large deck, with glass balusters, which gives gangway access over a rear courtyard to a very sizeable, walled-in, mature back garden.

The garden size alone is stand-out for a Kinsale town property, say estate agents Brian Olden and Malcolm Tyrrell of Cohalan Downing Associates, who pin a €795,000 asking price to this property. It has over 2,700 sq ft within, and has a partial, pitched ceiling second-level in the rear extension, with glazed apex overlooking the south and west aspects grounds (a crafty periscope would be needed to get higher up water views from this rear eyerie.) The house's unusual, but effective, layout is evident from the get-go, with bedrooms left and right of the tiled, central entrance hall, with a bit of hide and reveal going on; the master bedroom shares its good-quality en suite with bedroom four, while another bedroom's en suite

with bath and double shower also serves as a main bathroom, and two other bedrooms share an en suite shower room with twin sinks. Also, in the house's mid-section is a guest WC, and a wine cellar.

Several of the rooms have exposed, painted old stone walls to the front, and the back two bedrooms have rear courtyard access via Rationel-style French doors. Flooring is mostly porcelain tiling, walls are all in neutral shades and many of the house's ceilings are decked out in a distinctive, rough-sawn timber plank for a sort of on-board marine look. They're all painted, as is much of the internal joinery, stair spindles etc.

The more fastidious viewers will want to re-do some of the low-

grade paint work on the woodwork, though, starting with a good sanding back for a smoother, slicker feel and finish, as the current job is slap-dash.

However, on the 'up-tick,' this also is a house that will benefit from attention to painting on the more artistic front; its rooms are unfurnished and appear quite the bare canvas, but this will be a great home for displaying artworks, pictures, sculpture and more, especially its gallery-like, scene-setting first floor kitchen/living/dining room.

This great space is 40' long and 16' wide with a great sense of proportion. It has a kitchen tucked into one end with breakfast bar/island, banks of built-ins, Bosch appliances, while its worktops are

a mix of varnished hardwood and black granite. The room has a part-double aspect, full width of the original dwelling, with extra, half-vaulted ceiling height.

The added-on rear second living room is large, is double aspect, has a low-set wide gas insert fire and a virtual wall of glass with westerly access, with large sliding door opening to the upper deck.

Handily, there's a shared access lane between this property and one to the west, giving front-to-back grounds access and the rear is part-excavated for paved stone terraces and landscaping, with a large lawn on high, and the grounds run back to a mature boundary, with fenced off area for screening composting, garden waste, storage, etc.

As this €795k Kinsale one-off gets a mid-summer market launch, it's more than likely to appeal to couples, overseas buyers/second-home hunters, and even corporates, rather than standard family buyers, given its configuration, and would be spot-on for evening entertaining and parties going from inside to outside.

Parking is on-street, and access roads are characterful, but relatively narrow thanks to Kinsale's olde-town layout, hilly gradients, and almost random placing of buildings over the centuries.

The Mall itself features on Kinsale's popular walking routes, so tourists bearing cameras are a regular sight. Absolute catnip for the cameras is just 50 yards away from this property, and it's the cluster of five, late-1600s built Alms Houses, bequeathed, in the quaint words of the day, to the distressed and impotent Protestant citizens of Kinsale.

Established by the locally-born Sir Robert Southwell, the diminutive 'Gift' homes were put up for sale in poor order in 2015 by the Bishop of Cork, with a €350,000 guide via Malcolm Tyrrell of Cohalan Downing and the Price Register shows them making €416,000, all in.

VERDICT: An under-the-radar hilly Kinsale one-off.



The Mall, Kinsale
€795,000
Size: 253 sq m (2,728 sq ft)
Bedrooms: 4
Bathrooms: 3
BER: C2



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