

VIRTUALLY UNMISSABLE



29 BEECHWOOD PARK Ranelagh Dublin 6 €725,000

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Era: Pre-war
Size: 133sqm (including attic)
Agent: Young's (01) 497 5581
Viewing: Via Zoom, by appointment

LIKE everyone else, estate agents are having to adapt to new ways of doing business during lockdown. And so, while 'in person' viewings are on hold in terms of properties available for sale (viewings for rental properties are continuing in certain circumstances), agents are getting to grips with the technology that will allow them to show the properties on their books to prospective purchasers.

Jane Young, of Young's, invited me to be a guinea pig for her first group virtual viewing of 29 Beechwood Park, an attractive two-bedroom semi-detached house located off the desirable address of Dunville Avenue in Dublin 6. Until this point, she told me, she had been conducting viewings over the phone with each individual, talking them through the pictures and video on their screen.

No 29 was first launched on to the market at 9.30am last Tuesday morning and Jane reported that she had had 17 separate enquiries expressing interest in joining a virtual viewing by the time that she and I spoke last Wednesday afternoon.

Jane's preferred choice of app is Zoom, with which many of us have become familiar over the past few weeks. The rules for a virtual group viewing, she explained to me, are that participants keep their microphones on mute, and ask any questions via the chat feature on the app.

If anyone has any technical problems, she encourages them to drop out of the group viewing and she will schedule a separate individual viewing afterwards.

I had wondered whether Jane would be in the property herself, but in fact, she is at her desk, and runs the video that she has of No 29 while simultaneously talking me through what I can see on screen.

The video gives a good sense of the house,

and Jane regularly refers back to the floor plans on screen to explain how the rooms relate to one another.

The video of No 29 was shot before the current lockdown and lingers on some of the attractive period features of the house. And with hindsight, Jane feels that she might have paid less attention to the period details in favour of more basic coverage focussed on clarifying the layout, had she foreseen how the video was likely to be used.

Despite this, No 29 comes across very well on screen. It's located in a quiet horseshoe cul-de-sac opposite a row of good and useful shops on Dunville Avenue, which includes a proper hardware store and The Best of Italy, an excellent greengrocer that stocks just about every delicious Italian ingredient that you can think of. (No one ever runs out of pasta around here.)

On hot days during the summer, local children line up here for an ice-cream treat after school — there is an entrance to Scoil Bhride from Beechwood Park. Gaelscoil Lios na nOg is also located on Oakley Road and there is a good choice of secondary schools within walking distance.

Also on Dunville Avenue is the institution that is Morton's, a well-stocked, small, upmarket supermarket, with a Lawlor's butcher counter, as well as a pharmacy, boutique, gift/stationery store, furniture shop and Green Beards, which cold presses the most delicious juices. Peperina, an Italian restaurant, is popular with locals.

To the front of the house is a front garden in lawn — parking is on street with permits for residents. To the right of the entrance hall is a drawing room, with a feature sandstone fireplace, that occupies the bay-windowed room to the front of the house; this interconnects with the dining room to the rear.

In the return is the kitchen with a sun room

that opens out onto the paved garden to the rear.

The vendor purchased the property 10 years ago and, having no need for three bedrooms, incorporated the small box room to the front of the house, over the front door, into the main bedroom.

The stud wall that was removed to facilitate this could easily be reinstated if this third bedroom at first-floor level was required. The second double bedroom, to the rear of the house, is en suite and there is also a family bathroom.

Upstairs, the attic space has been converted and is currently arranged as a bedroom, but could make a useful home office.

Within half an hour of the Zoom viewing, Jane phoned to let me know that 16 of the 17 prospective purchasers who had said that they would join the viewing had logged on, and that she already had an offer of €650,000 (accompanied by proof of funds) from one of those who had attended virtually, as well as expressions of interest from others, one noting that they would need to view in person before making an offer.

"We are not where we need to be yet," she told me, noting that the offer was €75,000 under the asking price, "but I'm taking that as an encouraging sign that we will be able to keep progressing transactions during this time".

"In the case of No 29, the house is empty so if a surveyor is able to visit, then we would be able to facilitate that in a contact-less way.

"The only stumbling block that I can see is that the crew who normally shoot our videos are not available to work at the moment, so we have a bit of a backlog of properties that are ready to go to market but for which we do not have video footage available."

Words by Katy McGuinness

4 OF A KIND... WITH A HOME OFFICE



Crumlin red-brick

The 136 red-brick houses built by Crampton in Crumlin were commissioned by Lord Iveagh for the Guinness Trust (now the Iveagh Trust) in 1926 and leased to senior employees. No 288 Crumlin Road has been smartly refurbished and has 96sqm of living space with a further 24sqm in the converted attic. There's an open plan living/dining space on the ground floor, two double bedrooms and one single on the first floor, with the converted attic (with en suite) used as a bedroom. The single bedroom is in use as a home office, and there is also a block-built garden room that could be used by a second person working from home. No 288 retains its original red deal floorboards and brass handles, and has off-street parking for two cars.

AGENT: Hunters (01) 493 5410



Churchtown conversion

37 Meadow View in Churchtown is a three-bedroom family home with 100sqm of living space, located close to the villages of Dundrum and Churchtown and convenient to public transport. The 15sqm attic has been converted into a bright workspace with Velux windows and fitted shelves that could be used as a home office nicely tucked away from activity happening in the rest of the house. On the ground floor there are two interconnecting reception rooms, a sun-room, kitchen and handy downstairs lavatory, while upstairs there are three bedrooms and a family bathroom. The paved garden faces west, and has a storage shed. The passage providing side access to the garden is covered over and plumbed for appliances, and there's parking for two cars to the front of the house.

AGENT: Lisney (01) 296 3662



Milltown penthouse

Working from home would be an attractive prospect if your office was based in this airy duplex penthouse at 12 Convent Hall in the Mount St Anne's development in Milltown, Dublin 6. The apartment has been converted from the original convent building and features high-pitched ceilings, exposed brickwork, internal archways, original hardwood beams, a cast-iron staircase and original fireplaces. There are magnificent views towards Howth and the Dublin mountains. In total, there's 164sqm of living space, with three double bedrooms (one en suite) and the family bathroom on the lower level, and the living space — including a dedicated office area — upstairs. Two parking spaces are included, and there's private direct access to the Luas stop.

AGENT: Owen Reilly (01) 283 0200



Kilquade retreat

31 Kilquade Hill is a family home with 461sqm of living space and a three-quarter acre garden, located close to the N11/M50 and the coastal village of Greystones. The dual-aspect contemporary kitchen is fitted with top-of-the-range appliances and a central island, and is positioned next to a dining room designed to accommodate large gatherings. There's also a family room and a living room that opens out on to the deck. The home office set-up is old school, with built-in mahogany units and shelving. Three of the six bedrooms are en suite, and the basement has a bar, home gym and sauna, while outside the deck is fitted with a hot tub, and landscaped gardens feature a stream, pond and colourful planting. There's plenty of parking space, as well as a double garage.

AGENT: Sherry FitzGerald (01) 287 4005



Byzantine Palazzetto, Venice: €3.45m

VENICE is different these days — with the cruise ships and tourists gone, the fish are returning and the water is clear, making the city more special than ever. This beautiful piano nobile occupies almost all of a historically important Byzantine palazzetto, the facade of which fronts on to the canal on the Campiello San Toma. It is in excellent condition, restored a decade ago, and offering a blank canvas to create the interior of your dreams. From the square, a private bridge leads to a spacious courtyard with original antique wall frescoes, from which a beautiful staircase leads up to the property. Internally, the ceilings are 5m high and there are terrazzo and parquet floors. There are two large bedrooms and two bathrooms, a single bedroom or study, and a spacious living room, formal dining room and large kitchen, plus staff accommodation. A separate two-bed apartment is available for €850,000.

AGENT: venicesotheyrealestate.com



Island View, Skerries: €795,000

THESE days, sea views and fresh air seem more valuable than ever, particularly in the capital. Island View is a four-bed, two-bathroom bungalow on a 0.66-acre site of mature gardens with uninterrupted views over Skerries Bay and its islands. The large kitchen/dining room to the rear opens on to an extended deck, positioned to make the most of the vista. It's a short walk to the beach, Skerries golf and rugby clubs, and the local shops. New owners may wish to address the BER of G, and an architect could undoubtedly come up with plans to further capitalise on what is an extraordinary location, but it is not difficult to imagine how this could be transformed into something very special indeed. A price drop of €80,000 earlier this month, following on from a €75,000 reduction in February, may make the prospect still more enticing. Alternatively, the house is available with 5.6 acres of land zoned HA priced at €1.2m.

AGENT: Sherry FitzGerald Cumisky (01) 841 3000