

THE MODERN HOUSE



Prickwillow, Cambridgeshire
Sold

Banham Studio

This elegant house was designed by the architect Jonathan Ellis-Miller for the artist Mary Reyner Banham in the early 1990s as a studio and country retreat.

Clearly echoing the influential American designs of Mies Van Der Rohe, Charles & Ray Eames and Craig Ellwood, the structure is steel-framed with magnificent full-height glazing giving far-reaching views across the Cambridgeshire Fens to the tower of Ely Cathedral. Built alongside Ellis-Miller's own neighbouring house, the pair have been the subject of numerous articles in architectural books and journals.

The majority of the internal space is occupied by a spectacular main room which, thanks to full-length floor to ceiling glazing on two sides and skylight fills with light. Forming an open plan space with this main room is a seating area which Banham has also used as a sleeping area.

A galley kitchen runs along one side of the building and there is a bathroom with has a separate shower in it. At the back is a bedroom overlooking the gardens.

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There is also a store room which has the potential to be converted for another use.

The full-height glazed doors in the main space slide open, leading to a narrow terrace with steps down to a garden. The garden is largely lawn, surrounded by a pathway and a pergola in one corner. There is a carport to the side of the building.

Jonathan Ellis-Miller is a celebrated London-based architect who was born in East Anglia. The Banham Studio and his own neighbouring house are two of his earliest designs are what kickstarted what has gone on to prove an incredibly successful career.

Mary Reyner Banham is a noted artist and the widow of Reyner Banham (1922-88), one of the most important cultural critics of the 20th century. Banham's best known books are *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* and *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*. He was a noted forward thinker, writing about sustainable design, Brutalism and even Pop Art before many other commentators had caught on these cultural trends. It was he that saw the potential in the young Ellis-Miller and, with his wife, he commissioned him to create this remarkable building although sadly he never lived to see it completed.

The Banham studio, which has never before been on the market, can be found on Kingdon Avenue, a residential road in the small Cambridgeshire village of Prickwillow. Prickwillow is a small Fenland village of around 300 residents. Although primarily an agricultural area, Prickwillow has a thriving arts community and is distinguished by the fact that it is home to a number of celebrated contemporary houses. The Manser Medal-winning *Black House* by Mole Architects (2004) is also on Kingdon Avenue, as is Ellis-Miller's own house. Other local houses include the renowned *Rusty House* (2007), also by Ellis-Miller.

Although Prickwillow has no amenities, the nearby cathedral city of Ely (three miles away) has plenty to offer. A short five minute car journey from Prickwillow brings you into Ely train station with direct links to London (1hr 20min), Cambridge (20min) and elsewhere. Aside from the magnificent cathedral, Ely offers a broad range of shops, great restaurants (such as the award-winning Cutter Inn and Boat House Restaurant), good schools and arts venues such as the Maltings. The countryside surrounding Prickwillow offers wonderful walks along the waterways of the Fens. For a wider range of services, Cambridge is approximately twenty miles away along the A10, with Newmarket fifteen miles to the south. The coast can be reached in under an hour.

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About

The Modern House is an estate agency that helps people live in more thoughtful and beautiful ways. We believe in design as a powerful force for good. Inspired by the principles of modernism, we represent design-led homes across the UK which celebrate light, space and a truth to materials. Esquire credits The Modern House with “rewriting the rulebook on estate agency” and GQ voted us “one of the best things in the world”.