

THE MODERN HOUSE



Wareham, Dorset
Sold

Bere Regis

This artfully crafted three-bedroom former school in Dorset was the subject of extensive remodelling and renovation in 2013 by the acclaimed architecture practice McLaren.Excell. Occupying a quiet and sought-after pocket of the Dorset countryside, the total footprint of around 1,650 sq ft has been apportioned with real sensitivity and care for the architectural bones of the building. The result is an impressive double-height, open-plan living space with a cantilevered mezzanine. The interior is warm yet refined, finished in a palette of natural tactile materials. A private walled garden is tucked away behind the house.

We've written about life in this house in more depth.

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The Architects

McLaren.Excell is an award-winning design-led architecture and interior design practice, a collective of architects and designers based in central London. The practice is co-directed by Luke McLaren and Robert Excell, working primarily on private residential and commercial projects. Established in 2011, the practice has taken on diverse projects, steadily creating a reputation for producing buildings with a calm authority and a finely nuanced sense of place.

The Tour

Starting life as a thatched barn in the early 19th century, the house was later remodelled as a village school in the 1840s; in the 1940s, the building became a single-storey house. In 2013, McLaren.Excell was commissioned by the current owners to remodel the house, breathing new life into the foundations while respecting the historical context of the building.

The house lies off a quiet country road, which winds through the historic hamlet of Shitterton. A private driveway and garage provide off-street parking and access to the primary entrance, which is set on the easterly façade. Upon entry, the impressive sense of scale and volume is immediately evident. Optimising the proportions of the main hall was integral to the design. Over a meter's height was gained by exposing the dramatic pitch of the roofline and removing the original floorboards.

Providing excellent versatility, the layout is arranged in a fluid, open plan. A modern kitchen is set at one end, and a central island is positioned adjacent to the dining area. Huge sash windows span the length of the easterly wall, softly illuminating the space with plenty of southerly light. A shallow open stairway is a subtle division between the dining areas and the living space on the lower split level. Here, a modern log burner forms a natural focal point. Clean lines of block walling partition the snug on the northern side of the house, where utilities are neatly disguised behind ply-lined walls. A line of joinery along one wall creates a quiet space to work or read, and a glazed door leads directly to the garden.

The modern bathroom, with both a bath and shower, is neatly arranged at the far end of the house, alongside the largest of the three bedrooms. Storage is built into the stairwell void, utilising every inch of space, and picture windows frame the garden.

Two further bedrooms occupy the mezzanine, which cantilevers elegantly into the volume of the main living space. Full-height doors swing open, adding a playful touch while retaining a visual connection to the rest of the interior.



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Outdoor Space

Externally, the walled gardens feel secluded and private, primarily laid to lawn, with mature shrubs and trees create a dappled shade in warmer months. There is further scope and space to add a plot for growing vegetables and flowers and also a garage and a garden shed for storage.

The Area

Shitterton is a charming, historic hamlet, characterised by thatched cottages and quiet country lanes. The location of the house provides easy access to the surrounding open countryside and an extensive network of bridleways, walking and cycling paths, including Black Hill, a Specific Site of Scientific Interest and popular spot for dog walking.

Several major environmental projects have had a significant local impact in recent years, including a 100,000 tree-planting project and a comprehensive rewilding scheme, which will see 170 hectares of fields and meadows returned to woodlands and wetlands.

Bere Regis is also well located for access to Hartland Moor, and the highlights of the Jurassic coastline can be accessed by car in around 20 minutes. The Jurassic Coast begins at Orcombe Point in Exmouth, Devon, and continues for 95 miles to Old Harry Rocks, near Swanage, Dorset. It is a hugely diverse and beautiful landscape underpinned by incredible geology of global importance. In 2001 it was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site for the outstanding value of its rocks, fossils and landforms. It remains England's only natural World Heritage Site.

For daily amenities, the Saxon market town of Wareham is easily reachable by car in around 20 minutes and has a good selection of independent shops, restaurants, cafes and country pubs.

Wareham train station provides a mainline rail link to London Waterloo. There is also easy access via the M27 and M3 to Poole, Bournemouth and Southampton Airports.

Council Tax Band: E

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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”.