

# THE MODERN HOUSE



*Cambridge  
Sold*

## Histon

This wonderful four-bedroom house in the popular village of Histon, near Cambridge, was designed in 1972 by architect David Thurlow of the celebrated Cambridge Design Group. It forms one of a pair of semi-detached houses that have been recognised by Historic England for their design excellence with a rare Grade II listing – an exceptional honour for a post-war house.

Although relatively unassuming from the outside, the entrance into the house is spectacular. A double-height entrance hall ends in an entirely glazed façade overlooking the garden and is traversed by a seemingly floating timber bridge at first floor level that connects the bedrooms.

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The hallway leads into the galley kitchen at one end and to the dining area at the other. A subtle change in levels then delineates the expansive, triple-aspect living area. This magnificent space floods with light and has views out to gardens on all sides. Another change in level leads to a cosier, sunken space labelled on the original plans (and still used as such) as a 'TV Pit'. A study area can also be found as part of this cleverly conceived semi-open plan arrangement. The original brief, as recorded in a 1974 edition of *Architectural Review*, was for a house that was suitable for both private contemplation and grander entertaining; "a house large enough to accommodate a group of two to 100".

Also on the ground floor is a utility room and bedroom / family room with en suite bathroom.

The first floor features three bedrooms, one with a notable fanlight window, and a bathroom.

There is a drive way and car port that provides space for off-street parking. A private garden surrounds the house on three sides.

Originally the site was home to a barn that housed the village smithy and wheelwright, although all of these had gone by the time that Thurlow designed the houses in the early 1970s. To this day, however, the house is known as 'Christmas Barn', in recognition of the former agricultural building that historically belonged to a local landowner, Mr. R. E. Christmas.

Thurlow's design for 'Christmas Barn' has been widely admired and discussed ever since the houses at Histon were completed. Charles McKean, in his *Architectural Guide to Cambridge*, refers to "a clever pair of semi-detached houses":

"From the street side, a long, low roof with punctures for upper storey windows tops a quiet, single-storey building. The garden front is more dramatic, being almost entirely glazed. The real interest of the building is its section: under the apex of the roof there is a concealed upper storey, approached by an open gallery along the garden front, which contains bedrooms and bathroom".

For more information on the design and history of the house see the History section.

Histon is a sought-after village, just north of Cambridge (3 miles from the city centre). Histon and Impington (the neighbouring village that merges into Histon) have a nursery, infants', junior and secondary school. There is also a range of shops and other services. Histon is served by the Guided Busway with an estimated journey time to the Cambridge Science Park of just 3 minutes. Walking and cycling is also easy along a bridleway running along the route of the Guided Busway.

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Although a city that is relatively intimate in scale, Cambridge's international reputation ensures that it offers some of the country's best shops, dining opportunities and cultural events. World-renowned for centuries for its University and the quality of its historic architecture, it is increasingly being recognised as an international business hub, thanks to its growing technology and science industries.



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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”.