

# THE MODERN HOUSE



*Solihull, West Midlands*  
*Sold*

## Knowle

Please note that the asking price includes the land only.

This is a remarkable opportunity to build what will be one of the most spectacular houses to have been built in the UK in recent years.

Permission has been granted to construct a two-storey house approximately 53m (174 ft) in length and 9m (30 ft) in width designed by the renowned architect David Sheppard on a 6.5 acre plot with far-reaching rural views on the outskirts of the sought after village of Knowle.

Although grand in scale, the house, given the name 'Hedge House' by the architect, has been designed to be economical to build. Sheppard's intelligent and inspired concept for the construction – using locally-sourced recycled brick and larch from the Forestry Commission in Cannock – will not only ensure that costs are kept down but that the house can built in phases. For more information on the proposed construction please see the history sections.

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Perhaps the most notable aspect of the design is the integration of two substantial internal gardens. Although the majority of the internal area will be given over to living accommodation, a significant proportion will be devoted to magnificent gardens that are incorporated within the envelope of the building.

Arrangement of the internal accommodation is, of course, entirely flexible but Sheppard's original scheme envisages a ground floor with a garage, utility room, kitchen / breakfast room, dining room, living room, two WCs and a shower room. All rooms are generously sized and the main spaces are interspersed with a herb garden and tropical garden.

The first floor is planned to have a master bedroom, four further bedrooms and a study / gym. All bedrooms will have en suite bathrooms and there will be a balcony off two of the bedrooms.

Ceiling heights are due to be significantly higher than standard, creating a light, airy house with a real sense of space. Sheppard has said that he "sees the building evoking a sensual, almost sacred atmosphere [created by] the purity of line, geometry and simplicity of space".

He adds that "we aspired to make Hedge House both exceptional and innovative in terms of the material choice and how it is made; a holistic approach using only two materials, wood and brick. This means in the literal sense using wood and brick as our only palette of materials, to all walls, floors, ceilings, inside and out achieving a rigorous consistency and longevity to the building fabric."

Sheppard's striking rectangular design is intentionally reminiscent of the agricultural buildings seen in the local area, not least as it is surrounded by farmland. The landscaping scheme proposed by Sheppard also shies away from the formal gardens normally associated with large-scale residences in favour of a more natural approach to include a pond, reed bed, fruit trees, wildflower meadow and vegetable plot.

Sustainability is unsurprisingly one of the drivers of Sheppard's design, not only in the use of local materials but also in his proposals for photovoltaic panels, air source heat pump and internal gardens fed by harvested rain water. The roof is also planned to be planted with native grasses and wild flowers.

It is of course incredibly rare to have permission for such a substantial building granted on what is green belt land. The fact that permission was given is a testament to the imaginative and engaging design created by Sheppard, which was seen to be a welcome addition to the local landscape.

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Sheppard is an acclaimed Devon-based architect who has received numerous awards (including the prestigious RIBA Stephen Lawrence award) throughout a long and successful career.

The gently undulating 6.5 acre site, currently a field grazed by sheep, can be found off Kenilworth Road on the outskirts of the village of Knowle. Knowle is a village close to the border of West Midlands and Warwickshire that is considered one of the most attractive and desirable in the Midlands. It has a busy high street, a junior and secondary school and a range of other services. It is just two miles from Solihull, which provides a much broader range of facilities, and is close to the city of Birmingham. England's second city, Birmingham has been notably revitalised in recent years, with The Guardian recently reporting (in an article about the number of Michelin starred restaurants in the city) that more 25 to 34 year olds had moved there in the last year than anywhere else in the UK (including London).

Knowle is a fifteen minute drive from Birmingham airport which not only provides international flights but also has a railway station that runs services to London Euston in approximately 75 minutes. There is a closer station at Dorridge, which runs trains to central Birmingham and also has direct service running to London Marylebone in 1 hr 45 mins.



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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”.