

THE MODERN HOUSE



Nr. Henley-on-Thames, Berkshire
Sold

Noble Barn

Described, in part, by architects McLaren Excell as 'the apotheosis of agricultural architecture' this exceptional Grade-II listed barn belies its humble origins as a dairy cattle shelter. Built c.1900 as the principal barn of the grand Ferme Ornée, the original fabric of Noble Barn marries the artisanal qualities of the Arts and Crafts Movement with the prowess of Victorian engineering, across approximately 4,500 sq ft of internal space. The intricate brickwork and louvred windows of the original are retained and brought to the fore through an exemplary intervention by McLaren Excell. The house can be found off a private road in Remenham Hill, overlooking the grounds of the Park Place Estate which surrounds it, high in the Chiltern Hills yet less than a mile from Henley-on-Thames.

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*South-East England
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The property is of rare and high architectural quality with an external polychromy of glazed-grey brick against a majority of red. The palette of materials used within is confident, restrained and considered, each carefully selected for resilience as much as aesthetic harmony. The result is a calm, muted feel, deferential to an agricultural past, yet distinctly Brutalist. Polished concrete floors, with underfloor heating, extend throughout the ground floor, extruded to form low-level furniture elements that in turn provide zones within the space. In the kitchen, black steel provides robust open shelves and cabinetry and is set against brushed-brass worktops and Valchromat joinery.

The property is arranged over two levels and measures over 30 metres from end to end. The ground floor is largely open plan, an important factor in allowing light to penetrate deep into the inner footprint through a perimeter of wonderful cast-iron louvre windows. At the eastern extreme, five sets of glazed double doors fill the living room with light and frame the private gardens and countryside beyond. Towards the western end, full-height, steel sliding pocket doors open to a second, more private living room with wood-burning stove and independent access to the garden. This could also be used as a generous third bedroom.

In order to satisfy the stringent protection of the building's integrity, two central pods serve as the only permanent partitions and conceal within them all necessary services. These are clad in Valchromat and steel with full-height doors in the same, and rest beneath, and not fixed to, stunning white-washed joists and floorboards overhead, creating sweeping, arterial corridors that flow either side of and between them. The larger of the pods contains a cloakroom, utility and WC, and a shower room finished in tadelakt. Fittings by Vola and Duravit are used in the kitchen and bathrooms throughout the property, in matte black on the ground floor and brass on the upper level. The second pod houses a larder on one side serving the kitchen, and on the other side a wonderful bespoke steel staircase to the former hayloft above.

The first floor opens to a wide landing, with rolled-steel floorboards, separating the bedroom suites. Ash trusses with iron bracketry have been left intact with larch boarding applied to the pitched ceilings and walls. The master bedroom looks east and is accessed through a long, open-plan dressing room and bathroom with double, concrete sinks by Immissio, and in contrast an elegant bath sourced by the current owners in the Loire Valley. The second bedroom is equal in size, served by a smaller dressing area with built-in wardrobes and a shower room, also in tadelakt. Sisal extends through both bedrooms and each has excellent, far-reaching views of the surrounding countryside.

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The barn has been insulated throughout, including beneath the substantial thermal mass of the concrete ground floor, which retains warmth in the winter and cools in the summer. Internal double-glazed casements have been fitted behind the cast-iron louvre windows, preserving the heritage assets and further insulating. A rainwater harvesting system has also been installed to benefit from the large expanse of pitched roof.

Gardens extend to approximately one and a half acres with paddocks, woodland and grazing fields beyond.

Remenham Hill is situated on the Berkshire side of the Thames boundary with Oxfordshire. Henley is less than five minutes by car and is a town of charming medieval streets peppered with Victorian and Edwardian architecture lining one of the most beautiful stretches of the Thames. It has an excellent range of boutiques and art galleries, a three-screen cinema, theatre and several very good restaurants and pubs. The town comes alive in the summer months for The Henley Royal Regatta and Henley Festival of Music & Arts. Nearby Marlow provides a further range of attractive facilities.

There are several good gastro pubs all within 20 minutes including The Hand & Flowers and The Coach in Marlow (both Tom Kerridge), The Five Horseshoes in Maidensgrove, The Dew Drop Inn and Hurley Hotel in Hurley, and The Dog & Badger in Medmenham.

Twyford Station is around ten minutes by car and offers direct services to London Paddington in approximately 45 minutes. The M4 is easily reached for access to Heathrow (around 30 mins by car), London (just over an hour), and the West Country. There are several highly-rated schools within close proximity, both state and private and for all ages.

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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”.