

THE MODERN HOUSE



*London E1
Sold*

Varden Street

Settled amongst one of London's hidden Georgian terraces along Varden Street is this exemplary three-bedroom townhouse, meticulously renovated by historical paint expert, Pedro da Costa Felgueiras of Lacquer Studios. The award-winning design represents an artful fusion of early 19th-Century detail and thoughtful modern concessions that combine to create a wonderfully individual central London home.

It is eminently clear that the original fabric of the building is fundamental to the owner's renovation. Original fittings such as panelling and staircases were repaired during the process, and the rear gardens reinstated on what had become a car park. Bespoke paints that were hand-mixed using linseed oil and antique powder pigments enabled da Costa Felgueiras to create historically relevant tones to rejuvenate the interiors.

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The house has been extended at the rear, an elevation which is now clad in painted weatherboarding, and a mansard fitted with handmade pan tiles was added to the roof. A brick-built garden studio now resides at the foot of the garden, providing a serene workspace, additional storage and a separate WC.

Entered at raised ground-floor level, accommodation is divided over four storeys. The lower ground floor of the house is an open-plan kitchen and dining room that opens at the back through double doors to the garden. Modern underfloor heating sits beneath the reclaimed flagstone floor, alongside a working fireplace that represents the more traditional way of heating the house. The original coal bunker, positioned beneath the street, has been refitted as a utility room and wood store with handcrafted cabinetry. Along the narrow hall is a charming anteroom that opens to the garden, denoted by the owner as the “Spitalfields Room”, owing to its unusually high ceiling and ornate decoration.

The ground floor has a double reception room, with wood panelling, reclaimed timber floorboards and two fireplaces places with stone surrounds. There are two bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor, and a further bedroom and elegant en-suite bathroom built into the mansard roof.

The houses in this terrace were originally built between 1810 and 1815 by the Royal London Hospital’s charitable foundation as a way of supporting the hospital before the NHS was established. The dwellings counted a surgeon, sea captain, plumber and shopkeeper among their first residents. The properties on Varden Street and Turner Street later fell into complete disrepair and were abandoned for 20 years, eventually being de-listed and threatened with demolition in 2005. In 2007 The Spitalfields Trust defended the houses, saving them from demolition by creating a masterplan to regenerate the terrace using skilled craftsman and artists, many of whom now live there.

Pedro da Costa Felgueiras set up Lacquer Studios in 1995 and specialises in Oriental and European laquer, as well as historic paint techniques. Well known in the trade for his attention to detail and ethos, he is seen by many as a custodian of traditional methods. His reputation has earned him commissions that include re-painting the 18th-Century home of Gilbert and George, overseeing the re-painting of Strawberry Hill House in Twickenham and working on the Great Pagoda at Kew Gardens. Although most of his time is spent restoring old buildings, he is also known for his smaller-scale work for clients such as Burberry and the late Isabella Blow, collaborations with other craftspeople such as artist Marianna Kennedy, and his own furniture produced for The New Craftsmen.



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The house is in the Myrdle Street conservation area close to the Royal London Hospital. There is plenty of positive regeneration taking place in the surrounding streets, including the establishment of the Elizabeth Line / Crossrail at Whitechapel which will link the area to Bond Street (10 minutes), Canary Wharf (3 minutes) and Heathrow Airport (38 minutes). Whitechapel station is a few minutes' walk, with services on the District, Hammersmith & City and Overground lines. Liverpool Street, Fenchurch Street and Shoreditch High Street are all within easy walking distance.

Read our recent interview: Open House: historic paint specialist Pedro da Costa Felgueiras' restored Georgian house in Whitechapel



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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”.