

THE MODERN HOUSE



*Chichester, West Sussex
Sold*

Runcton

This astonishing house, set in wonderful landscaped gardens extending to approximately 3 acres, was designed by the highly-regarded architect Walter Greaves as his family home in 1980. It is one of very few late 20th century houses to have been granted a rare Grade II* listing by Historic England, who describe it as “a particularly finely-executed example of post-war architecture”. It has never before been on the market.

The 5-bedroom house can be found down a quiet lane in the attractive Sussex village of Runcton, just two miles south of Chichester. The setting is idyllic, as the distinctive forms of the timber-frame and cedar-clad building (“a complex skyline of flat and mono-pitched roofs” as Historic England describe it) nestle into the surrounding landscape. A small river wends its way through the site, a feature that Greaves and wife Annabel designed the gardens around. There is also a tennis court in the grounds.

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*South-East England
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The project was a “personal labour of love” for Greaves, “on a site he knew well”. As Historic England point out, it was a project conceived over years on a site that formed part of the garden of the architect’s previous home and is described as “the finest work of an architect of considerable talent... the ultimate expression of his love of timber, creative approach to spatial planning and his meticulous skill for detail”.

“The expressive exterior relates strongly to its natural setting”, the listing description continues, whilst the “organic freedom of form produces soft, spacious interiors”. The living room, in particular, with its gently curved corners, bespoke shelving and views of the garden, is an incredible space.

The ground floor comprises the living room, a dining area and kitchen leading through to a large utility room as well as two bedrooms, a bedroom / study, further utility room, bathroom and WC. Also on the ground floor is an integral double garage / workshop with an additional cloakroom and a bedroom over. On the first floor there are two further bedrooms – one of which is a particularly impressive master with a wonderful outlook over the surrounding land – and a family bathroom.

One of the distinctive features of this “house of striking originality and interest” (to, again, quote Historic England) is the elegant built-in furniture designed by Greaves. As well as extensive shelving, this also includes window seats and cupboards. Also of note is the cantilevered, open-tread timber staircase with thin steel balusters. As Elaine Harwood notes in her book on England’s post war listed buildings, this is a “generous yet carefully detailed house with subtle yet beautiful features”.

The house has been lovingly maintained over the years and timber that clads the house, both inside and out, has recently been fully replaced.

Walter Greaves (1924 – 2004) was a greatly admired architect who started out his career working with Peter Moro on London’s acclaimed Royal Festival Hall and went on to develop his own successful practice specialising in private homes. For more information on Walter Greaves see the History section.

Runcton is a small village located two miles south of Chichester and close to the West Sussex coast. It has a pub (The Walnut Tree) and farm shop (Runcton Farm Shop) and a primary school nearby in North Mundham (rated good). Other well-regarded schools in the area including Dorset House, Westbourne House, Great Ballard, Lavant House and Windlesham House.

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Chichester is a small cathedral city with a rich history and a vibrant cultural scene which most notably incorporates the renowned Festival Theatre and Pallant House Gallery. It is a settlement that dates back to Roman times and is renowned for its outstanding architecture of all periods. It has an excellent range of shops, good restaurants and other services. It has a mainline railway station which runs services to London Victoria in approximately 90 minutes.

Other attractions nearby include Goodwood (where there is a sculpture park, race course and festivals throughout the year), the South Down Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Chichester Harbour and nearby beaches including West Wittering.



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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”.