

THE MODERN HOUSE



*Whitstable, Kent
Sold*

Borstal Hill

This excellent locally-listed 17th-century cottage is found on a coveted part of the Kent coast. The three-bedroom house, on Borstal Hill in Whitstable, has been brilliantly reimaged. Its elegant façade conceals a wonderfully bright modern interior with living spaces that open fully to gardens designed by Farlam and Chandler.

The house is located within the town's historic centre, now designated a conservation area, and is a 15-minute walk from both the beach and the train station.

The current owners, both skilled craftspeople, worked to a plan by Canterbury-based architects, Urban and Rural Ltd, restoring and updating with a clear devotion to the building's history.

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Set slightly back from the road, with space for off-street parking, the charming original façade of the house has been retained. Inside is a small lobby with sliding pocket doors that part to reveal the living space. The ground floor is almost entirely open plan. A wood-burning stove is set within an exposed-brick fireplace beneath the original lintel. At the rear, a row of sliding glazed doors open the room fully to the garden. The kitchen cabinetry is bespoke with Richlite worktops made from recycled paper. There is a separate utility room, with a second front door at one end, and a terrazzo bathroom through a glass link at the other.

The design is exemplary in its coherence. Using a neutral palette of handmade London plane-faced plywood cabinetry throughout, concrete floors and large windows that frame views of Whitstable's tiled rooftops, the house works within its period proportions to create thoroughly contemporary spaces.

The garden extends seamlessly from the living spaces, with a patio formed from the same poured concrete as inside, and solid oak woodblock. The space is divided by two sculptural Corten steel sheets that rise from the wildflower beds to screen an outside shower and shelter the sitting area. Mature fig, plum and apple pleat trees are clustered around the neat lawn with cloud-clipped hedges. At the end of the garden is a studio room / home office with heating, plumbing and electric.

From the entrance lobby, a handmade staircase, composed of layers of plywood, echoes the shape of the original, spiralling around a central core that opens to form a handrail. On the first floor are two bedrooms, with a Jack and Jill bathroom finished in tiles from Bert and May. The room at the rear of the house has wonderful views from a long picture window, over the sedum roof of the extension and across Whitstable's undulating rooftops. On the second floor is the third bedroom, fitted with sisal carpets, more bespoke cabinetry, and with an en-suite shower room.

This part of Borstal Hill is replete with listed and locally-listed houses, most with clay-tile roofs and weatherboarding that are typical of the local vernacular. This is thought to have been one of the oldest, built in the early 1700s as a coaching house and stable for the toll house nearby, on the traditional route from London to the sea.

Whitstable is one of the most sought-after towns on the Kent coast, thanks to its impressive mix of independent shops, cafes and restaurants, wonderful historic architecture and thriving cultural scene. With its own Biennale, a wealth of independent businesses and easy access to London, the area supports a diverse community enjoying a vibrant life on the coast.

Whitstable is historically famed for its oysters. The epicurean tradition has continued locally with the annual Whitstable Oyster Festival, and in The Sportsman which has held a Michelin star since 2008.



*South-East England
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Whitstable train station runs services to London St Pancras, Victoria and Cannon Street, with journey times from 71 minutes.



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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”.