

THE MODERN HOUSE



Coombe Park, London KT2
Sold

Greenways

One of the finest and most original houses to have been built in London in the past decade, Greenways is a sculptural masterpiece conceived by celebrated, RIBA-award winning architect Nick Eldridge of Eldridge London. In 2017 it was the recipient of the RIBA Manser Award, widely regarded as the UK's most prestigious architectural prize for one-off house design.

The house occupies a tranquil position within Coombe Park, a private gated estate at the southern end of Richmond Park in south-west London. It stands proudly as a contemporary interruption to the rows of neo-classical villas that line the estate, though the true weight of its innovation remains almost anonymous from the roadside.

Behind oak electric gates, only the upper level of the house is visible; an anodised-aluminium clad rotunda elevated on a single concrete column. A garage to the left also has oak electric doors and there is further space for off-street parking in the forecourt.

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Eldridge London's design remodelled the naturally sloping site so that only the glazed entrance was at street level, minimising the façade's already low impact by presenting a view through to woodland at the rear.

Oak stairs ascend to the upper (and lower) storey within a private cast-concrete drum, lit by a circular roof light overhead. On the upper level, elevated to meet the canopy level of an ancient oak tree within the garden, is the sweeping master bedroom and its ancillary spaces; bathroom, mirrored dressing room and nursery.

A processional staircase wraps the inner drum, its oak treads supported by brass rods. This descends to the principal level and a dramatic unfurling of space. Here, an open-plan kitchen, living and dining room inhabits the central part of the plan, looking out through curved-glass walls to the substantial tree-enclosed garden beyond. The living space is sunken, providing a sense of intimacy within the expanse, and is arranged around a custom chimneypiece with brass surround, overlooked by a striking wall of book-matched Calacatta Oro marble.

The oak flooring throughout the ground floor is by the Danish company Dinesen, with brass edging delineating the joints between sections. Brass detailing also features in the ceiling, where the spiral staircase rises to the ground floor. The curved walls of the house are made from structural concrete, gently polished to provide a hint of reflection.

The kitchen takes a rare linear form with a clean, simple row of oak cabinetry and an island of marble and stainless steel. Beyond the kitchen is a study, and sandwiched between them, a wine store.

Two large bedrooms can also be found on this level, one with glazing opening on to a small copse of silver birch outside. Both have intriguing, irregular-shaped shower or bathrooms in marble with Vola fittings which are used throughout.

There is a fantastic cinema room with bespoke, built-in seating and, submerged at the front of the house is an enormous arching space, currently a gym and playroom. This is lit by a massive eye-shaped roof light that cuts into the upper lawn. From here, there is access to a hidden utility room and several concealed storage spaces.

The garden is contained by a concrete wall softened by tall fastigiated hornbeams which envelop the site in a green curtain of foliage. The focal point remains the towering oak tree which was, in fact, the source of inspiration for the plan's design; a three-lobed geometry or 'trefoil' generated by the rotation of an arc around the oak's trunk. As a result, barely a straight line exists throughout the house; a testament to the skill of the construction.

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Eldridge London was also responsible for the design of the landscape and planting which includes a natural swimming pond also geometrically tied to the plan form of the house.

Despite its sense of isolation, Coombe Park is only ten miles from the centre of London. There are many excellent schools in the immediate area, including Marymount International, Rokeby and Holy Cross as well as Coombe Hill school.

Kingston upon Thames, situated on the river Thames is nearby as well as Wimbledon and Putney. The area also has a wide offering of leisure facilities including Coombe Wood and Coombe Hill Golf clubs, riding stables and various tennis and leisure clubs. There is easy access to both Heathrow and Gatwick airports via the A3/M25 networks.

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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”.