

THE MODERN HOUSE

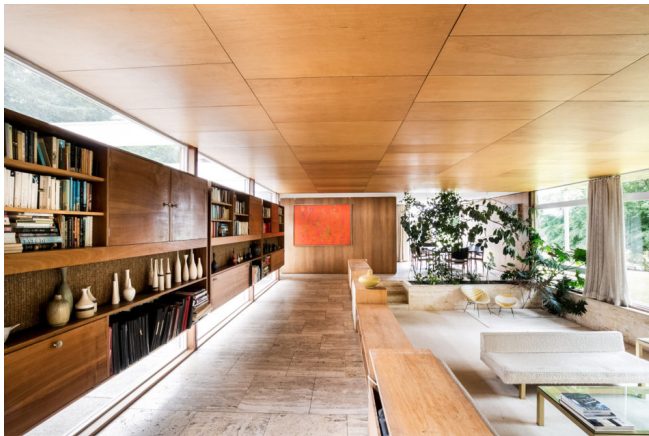


Selkirk, Scottish Borders
Sold

Klein House

In 1957 the celebrated architect Peter Womersley designed one of the finest houses to have been built in Britain during the Mid Century period. It was commissioned by the renowned textile designer Bernat Klein and situated on a beautiful plot of approx. 3 ¼ acres, 35 miles south of Edinburgh, with far-reaching views of the Borders countryside. Today the four bedroom house with a studio wing, which now has a rare Category A listing from Historic Environment Scotland, is still in largely original condition and being put on the market by the Klein family for the first time.

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The design of the single storey house is essentially a rectangle subdivided into eight foot modules, with the form having been played with by Womersley to create courtyards and a carport seemingly within the structure of the building (it has been described by the architectural historian Alan Powers as “a clear rectangle outlined in white painted timber... sitting lightly on a sea of green grass”). The creativity of the design has been enhanced by the inventive use of a broad mixture of materials – including travertine floor tiles and exotic hardwoods such as idigbo and obeche – and also colourful internal and external tiling added by Klein.

The house is entered via the car port, with the front door opening onto an entrance hall that leads into the main living area. This is one of the most spectacular spaces seen in any residence of the period. Although not vast in size, it is exquisite in design, featuring travertine floor tiles, polished obeche wood ceiling, bespoke fitted furniture and a sunken central seating area. Walls have been panelled with hardwoods including idigbo, rosewood and walnut and to one side there is floor to ceiling glazing which allows the light to flood in. Dividing the living area from the dining area is a ‘wall’ of plants.

The living area incorporates a study area and library, which leads through to the master bedroom with a dressing area and en suite bathroom.

The dining area leads through to the kitchen, which still features the original units. Opposite the kitchen is a shower room, utility room and small bedroom. Beyond this is a larger family room (which was once divided into two bedrooms) and a further bedroom which also benefits from an en suite bathroom.

The studio wing at the far end of the house was added in 1982 and although not designed by Womersley, it was added with his approval, not least because adaptability was part of the original design brief. This is a large, open room with floor to ceiling glazing on both sides and wonderful rural views which could be used as a studio, as was originally intended, or further accommodation.

The house sits centrally on a beautiful rural plot of approx. 3 ¼ acres in size (subject to measurement). It is a gently sloping clearing partly surrounded by woodland and bordering on open fields (from which it is separated by a dry stone wall) with far reaching views over the Etrick Valley towards the triple peaks of the Eildon Hills. The site is largely lawn, with small areas of woodland.

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Peter Womersley (1923 – 93) was a celebrated British architect who produced some of the very best buildings of the Mid Century period, notably a number of private houses including the wonderful Farnley Hey. Womersley was recently described by the prominent architecture critic Rowan Moore as “quite simply, one of the best British architects of the 20th century, and until recently one of the most overlooked”. He adds in an article published in *The Observer* that “his buildings are adventurous but poised; lucid, brave in conception and considered in their detail.”

Bernat Klein (1922 – 2014) was an influential textile designer whose fabrics, used by the likes of Christian Dior, Balenciaga and Yves Saint Laurent, did much to define high fashion in the 1960s.

This part of the Borders is renowned for its unspoilt beauty and salmon fishing in the River Tweed. Nearby towns include Selkirk, Galashiels and the popular and pretty town of Melrose. Melrose has excellent schooling, dining and shopping opportunities and a thriving cultural scene including the annual Borders Book Festival. There is an excellent café, delicatessen and bookshop, The Main Street Trading Company, in nearby St. Boswells.

The recently opened Borders Railway, which runs from Galashiels, runs services to central Edinburgh in approximately 50 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”.