

THE MODERN HOUSE



*London N7
Sold*

Orleston Mews

This exceptional four-bedroom, timber-framed mews house was completed in 1987 to a design by renowned architect Marcus Lee. Formed of beautiful Balau timber sourced in Southeast Asia, the house is designed on a key plan, and occupies a secluded spot on Orleston Mews, unfolding between a courtyard garden at the front and an idyllic paved garden at the rear. The house comes with three residents' parking permits.

Lee worked for over two decades at the Richard Rogers Partnership and the influence of Japanese and Californian architectural principles is clear in this home, where the structural component, namely the Balau timber frame, informs the warm, flowing internal aesthetic. Large sections of galleried glazing combine with this organising principle to create an elegant, flexible set of spaces, secluded at the end of a private mews just a short walk from Highbury Fields.

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The Architect

While at the Richard Rogers Partnership, Marcus Lee was involved with many of the practice's flagship designs, including the Lloyds Building and Heathrow Terminal 5. After 21 years, he left to establish his own practice, FLACQ, which later merged with Arup Associates. His beautiful design for Framehouse was featured on Grand Designs and won a RIBA award for architectural excellence before it was sold by The Modern House in 2015. Lee is currently a director at the Nordic Office of Architecture.

The Tour

The house sits at the end of Orlestone Mews, a secluded residential mews less than five minutes' walk from Highbury & Islington Tube. It is set behind a private courtyard garden, lined with planters of mature shrubs and a birch tree to one side. The front elevation is formed of timber and glazing, crowned by two asymmetrical pitches.

A glazed, timber-framed front door opens to reveal the flowing nature of the plan; uninterrupted lines lead from the front courtyard to the back garden, with floor-to-ceiling glazing breaking down the visual boundaries between inside and out. Black Norwegian Otta Phyllitte runs underfoot, a naturally riven stone that chimes wonderfully with the Balau timber used throughout.

The ground-floor plan is arranged around a beautiful staircase constructed of 200-year-old Honduras pitch pine, which raises up in a sculptural form to the first and second floors. Open-tread stairs, louvres and balustrades encourage the flow of natural light across the floors. A formal dining area occupies the front of the plan, while at the rear, there is a living room arranged around a beautiful Danish wood-burning stove. This section of the house also opens directly to the garden via glazed doors.

The linear kitchen is configured along the southern aspect. It has integrated Smeg appliances and units with frosted glass fronts. It adjoins an informal dining area with double-height ceilings and glazed doors that open directly to the back garden. The house has a very large basement which the current owners use for its fantastic storage capacity. There is also a laundry room, utility room and boiler room on this lower level.

The first floor comprises two large double bedrooms, a library, a study and a large bathroom. The main bedroom sits at the rear, overlooking the garden, and has an en suite shower room; there are also dual aspect, full-height windows looking out to the treetops.



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The dramatic second floor of the house capitalises on large skylights running almost the entire length of one of the roof's pitches, to bathe the lower levels, particularly the library, in natural light. The majority of this floor is occupied by a second living room or snug, with views of the back garden via a large, triangular section of glazing. There are two further bedrooms, each at opposite ends of the plan, ingeniously conceived within mono pitches.

Outdoor Space

The courtyard garden at the front of the house has been laid with cobbled stone and has a fully integrated outdoor lighting system. The slated gates at the front allow the courtyard to be closed off entirely to the mews.

The back garden is a wonderful extension of the internal entertaining spaces. A decked area sits beneath a pergola, backdropped by the exposed brick of the garden wall. Beyond, the garden turns to cobbled stone underfoot, while trees and plants abound, including a mature maple tree that provides both privacy and shelter.

The Area

The house lies within easy reach of bustling Upper Street but offers a sense of seclusion and tranquility synonymous with mews houses. Highbury Fields is less than five minutes walk and has tennis courts, a playground and a swimming pool within Highbury Leisure Centre. Highbury Barn is just around the corner, with its wonderful butcher Godfrey's, Bourne's Fishmongers, Da Mario deli and the excellent original branch of La Fromagerie. Upper Street is home to further desirable destinations, from Ottolenghi to Gail's; the Almeida Theatre to the newly opened Islington Square.

Nearby Newington Green is home to contemporary café and bakery Jolene, a greengrocer, an Italian deli, a florist and a health-food shop, as well as numerous restaurants. King's Cross and Coal Drops Yard are within easy reach, and the Regent's Canal path at Angel is a short walk from the house.

Orlestone Mews enjoys excellent access to public transport. The Victoria Line, London Overground and National Rail services from Highbury & Islington are a few minutes walk from the house; the Piccadilly Line is accessed via Caledonia Road Station, and there is a fast train into the City from nearby Highbury and Islington station. There are plenty of bus routes both into and out of the city.

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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”.