

THE MODERN HOUSE



West Wrattling, Cambridgeshire
Sold

Padlock Road

This exceptional home lies just over ten miles from Cambridge and is the third in a series of single-storey houses by acclaimed architect Jonathan Ellis-Miller. The design follows a striking minimalist aesthetic echoing the Californian Case Study houses, architecturally characterised by expansive glass walls, geometric elevations and a masterful command of natural light. The internal living space of over 2,310 sq ft flows seamlessly across an open lateral plan, with a constant visual connection to the beautifully landscaped gardens and terraces that surround the house.

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The Architect

Jonathan Ellis-Miller is a celebrated London-based architect who developed his craft under the late John Winter. His two earlier single-storey houses, The Ellis Miller house and the Reyner Banham house, have been recognised by the 20th Century Society as amongst the best 100 buildings in the UK. Since establishing Ellis-Miller + Partners in 1991, his practice has gained a reputation for large-scale projects and pioneering new ideas in education architecture. He continues to work on high-profile urban developments while designing uncomplicated, sophisticated and importantly, liveable modern houses that stand the test of time.

The Tour

The house occupies a secluded position at the edge of the sought-after village of West Wrating and is barely visible from the approach on Padlock Road. Two entrance points lead onto the wide shingle driveway, and a car shelter is set beneath the eastward projecting roof. Raised beds are packed full of wavering grasses and perennials, providing a welcoming introduction.

The home has been constructed from glass and a white galvanised steel frame that cantilevers three metres above ground. Drawing similarities to the influential American designs of Mies Van Der Rohe, Charles & Ray Eames and Craig Ellwood, it appears as a floating cube in the surrounding agricultural and woodland landscape.

Entrance is from the easterly wing, leading through to an arterial corridor that provides circulation to all areas. The beautifully light, open-plan living spaces are located on the southern and western sides of the house, where expansive glass walls and doors draw in an abundance of natural light and open entire sections of the house onto the terrace and gardens in warmer months.

A large log-burning stove forms a natural focal point in the living room, and Forbo marmoleum runs underfoot, adding to the sense of refined materiality consistent throughout the interior. A sliding pocket door provides a division to the adjacent snug.

The dining room is filled with simple, linear forms and is orientated towards the south-facing garden, with full-height glass walls framing a colourful, verdant backdrop. In alignment with the rest of the house, the kitchen has been cleverly conceived for the practicalities of daily living, a bright and clean space with appliances neatly housed in bespoke cabinetry.

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The four bedrooms are beautifully proportioned. The two larger bedrooms open directly onto the garden, and both have en suite bathrooms. Two additional rooms on the opposite side of the plan offer great flexibility and could be used as extra bedrooms or home workspace. Each has a good provision of storage and views onto the front gardens. A laundry/utility room is also positioned on this side of the house.

Capitalising on recent advances in eco-technologies, the house is fitted with air source heat pumps and passive solar design techniques. The house is also wheelchair accessible.

Outside Space

Exceptionally well-designed, the gardens and terraces are an integral part of the overall experience of the house. The floor and roof frames continue into an open bay to the west, sheltered by retractable awnings to provide several decked seating areas for eating and entertaining throughout the year.

Designed by the owner Marie-Gabrielle Rotie, the gardens are rich in biodiversity and teeming with flora and fauna. Lovingly tended over several years, the land is an immersive celebration of local wildlife; red kites, barn owls, little owls, and hares regularly visit the garden. Beds of natural, prairie-style grasses are interspersed with abundant perennial borders bursting with seasonal colour.

The Area

West Wrating is a picturesque south Cambridgeshire village with a church and the restaurant The Chestnut Tree at its centre. The larger neighbouring village of Balsham is around two miles away and provides a more substantial range of local amenities. The local area is well-renowned for the wide-open countryside and easy access to extensive walking paths and cycling routes.

Cambridge lies around ten miles north. Despite being of a relatively intimate scale, it has a superb selection of shops, dining opportunities and cultural events, with Kettles Yard and The Fitzwilliam Museum notable highlights.

The city centre has plenty of green spaces and delightful walking routes towards the River Cam, with Granchester Meadows offering opportunities for wild swimming. Cambridge is world-renowned for its university and the quality of its historic architecture. Thanks to its growing technology and science industries, it is also increasingly recognised as an international business hub.

Connections from the house are very good, with mainline stations at nearby Audley End and Whittlesford. Access onto the M11 motorway is situated at Stump Cross (junction 9) and at Duxford (junction 10). A direct train service runs from Cambridge to London St Pancras 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”.