

THE MODERN HOUSE



Sprowston Mews, London E7
Sold

Sideways House

Designed by renowned architect Marcus Lee, this innovative three-bedroom house is positioned on Sprowston Mews in Forest Gate. Composed using a beautiful palette of pale grey 'marble stone' brick, steel, and honey-hued Douglas fir-faced plywood, the open-plan spaces extend over three floors. An incredibly bright, striking metal staircase with huge skylights above draws light into every room, illuminating the 1,850 sq ft of internal space. The ground floor currently functions as a separate annexe, and there is a south-facing walled garden. The house is five minutes' walk from Forest Gate station, with a direct service to London Paddington via the Elizabeth Line.

Sprowston Mews has become sought-after by self-builders and architects alike, inspired by the tradition of experimental building on London's mews in the 1960s and drawn to the wonderfully quiet location, as well as the opportunity to create a new creative community in the East End. This house won a RIBA London Award 2022.

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East London
Sold

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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 partner of Leep Architects.

The Tour

This house was completed in 2019 and is one of a pair by the architect. Lee's architectural language tends towards the confident use of exposed materials, combining structural timbers or beams with glazed sections to create warm living spaces that are thoughtfully conceived for family life. The whole house is composed with the same restrained palette of materials, creating a sense of flow and ease at each level.

The house sits behind weathered steel gates and wooden screening that create a front courtyard. From here, doors lead left to the ground floor, which is currently used as a self-contained annexe, and straight ahead to the main staircase. The house is arranged in an upside-down layout, with living spaces arranged on the top floor to maximise light and views. The second-floor living room and kitchen have dramatic ceilings with exposed RSJs, which have been paired with smooth concrete floors underfoot. The bespoke kitchen has Douglas fir-faced ply joinery and lacquered tops. Internal doors allow the room to open to the stairwell, giving the effect of a winter garden.

On the first floor below are a pair of bedrooms with a lovely Jack and Jill bathroom that sits between them. Both have large, concealed wardrobes in the same natural wood that runs throughout. The main bedroom has a large bathtub and corner window, mirrored on the level below, that allows views down the mews.

The layout of the ground floor plan mirrors that of the level above but has been arranged to allow it to be used flexibly as a separate guest unit or home office; there is also a kitchenette here. The Jack and Jill bathroom on this level allows some separation from the sleeping and living areas. The internal scheme is deceptively simple, created with clever architectural slights of hand to maximise the building's footprint in an efficient and beautiful way.

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The Area

This part of London has seen significant investment recently, with London's eastwards growth following the rapid development of Stratford and the Olympic Park (a 30-minute walk from the apartment). Wanstead Flats are within 15 minutes walk and constitute the southern portion of Epping Forest – one of the largest expanses of common land in London. The Flats have a number of established walks with wonderful views of the city. Nearby West Ham Park is great for families and has sports pitches. Also close at hand is Old Manor Park Library Studios, a project supported by Newham that conserves the historical richness of an important building and provides a new type of space for creative industries in London.

Forest Gate station lies on the newly opened Elizabeth line, and has services to Liverpool Street, Farringdon, Tottenham Court Road and Paddington stations (and soon Bond Street) before the line forks at Hayes and Harlington, one branch heading to Reading and the other to Heathrow Airport. Nearby Wanstead Park Station is within 10 minutes walk and has Overground services to north and east London.

Council tax band: E

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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”.