

THE MODERN HOUSE



Darlington, Durham
Sold

Tees View

This carefully preserved four-bedroom family home in Darlington, Durham, was designed in 1966 by architects Robert Shaw Mortimer and his wife, Elizabeth Mortimer. Retaining the hallmarks of mid-century modernism, including beautiful pine wall panelling, the interior spaces have a seamless sense of flow. The house epitomises the focus on indoor-outdoor living for which the architects are so renowned. It is surrounded by 0.65 acres of garden, home to an incredible variety of mature trees such as chestnut, willow and cedars, while the banks of the River Tees are just a short walk away.

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The Architect

Cumana was designed by architects Robert Shaw Mortimer and Elizabeth Mortimer, a husband and wife duo known for their modernist designs, which are defined by a feeling of space created by connecting the outside with the inside. Each detail has been carefully thought through to create a fantastic quality of life. The current owners are only the second owners of the house – the previous owners commissioned the house directly from the Mortimers – and have ensured the impeccable preservation of both interior and exterior spaces. Other notable projects by the Mortimers include a number of local churches, including St Hilda's and St Anges' in Middlesbrough. For more information, please see the History section below.

The Tour

The house unfolds across a single storey, ensuring its silhouette seamlessly blends with the surrounding garden. Clad in black-stained larch, with the main section of the house slightly raised on a stone platform, it cuts a sleek shape against the trees and sky behind. A long driveway meanders through the garden, winding towards the house to create a welcoming approach.

A bright yellow front door opens to a porch area, where there is ample space for coats and shoes. The wall panelling is the original pine, ensuring the interiors have an immediate feeling of warmth and texture. Two full-height sheets of glass sit aside the front door, welcoming light to flow around the plan. The hallway beyond retains its original terracotta floor tiles, impeccably maintained; a skylight above adds to the bright atmosphere.

The main living and dining area is a wonderfully serene space, with original pine wall panelling and soft carpet underfoot. The room is characterised by large sections of Danish-made glass, which frame picturesque views of the terrace and garden beyond. There is a seamless sense of flow between indoors and out, epitomising the connection to nature for which the architects became known. White-painted beams extend overhead, adding a sense of structure to the space. In the corner, a slightly lowered section of the room is currently home to an office area, although it would suit a variety of uses.

An original hatch in the internal wall slides open, looking towards the kitchen on the other side of the hall. The kitchen beyond retains its original soft pink worktops, adding a dash of colour to the plan, while open shelves and cabinetry above and below provide storage. All lighting is hidden in the pelmets. White square tiled form the splashback, working in conversation with larger porcelain floor tiles underfoot. Windows on two walls look out to the garden, welcoming light into the room.



*North England
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Four bedrooms lie at the far end of the plan, all with beautiful views of the garden from differing angles. The main bedroom has the original built-in wardrobes, painted a dusty pink that works in harmony with the pink found in the kitchen. Another bedroom is currently also used as a study and has a door directly onto the raised terrace. The third bedroom, currently arranged as a twin, is a generous space with a built-in desk and wardrobe unit surrounding it. There are two good-sized bathrooms and a utility room accessed from the hallway.

There is a double garage and ample space for several cars at the top of the driveway. Below the house is a large basement, easily accessed from the garden level.

Outdoor Space

A beautiful garden wraps around the house. To the front, lawns sprawl out on either side of the driveway, dotted with seasonal grasses and mature trees, including a handsome chestnut that takes centre stage. A weeping willow tree is positioned behind, its leaves gently draping over the grass, while a magnolia tree brings pink blossom in the spring. Wild rushes occupy the centre of the space; a red brick wall forms the boundary, behind which are the banks of the River Tees.

A raised, paved area, accessed immediately off the main living room, makes the perfect spot for alfresco dining. With views over the large front lawn, it is a wonderful space to enjoy the summer sunshine. Cantilevered steps seem to almost float down to the lawn, creating an architectural view of the house from the bottom.

The section of garden behind the house is similarly verdant and peaceful. It has been laid to lawn, with several larch trees dotted along the boundary edge. The current owners have a seating area positioned on the raised section here, which looks down onto the sleek form of Cumana itself.

The Area

The banks of the River Tees are a short distance across the garden, with the river path meandering along to create a wonderful spot for walks throughout the year. The hills of the Yorkshire Dales are within a few minutes' drive, providing a variety of beautiful walks for all abilities.

The town centre of Darlington is within easy reach, as is the market town of Northallerton. Michelin-guide favourite The Bay Horse is around a 15-minute walk away, and there is a good selection of pubs. Nearby Hurworth-on-Tees is home to Rockcliffe Hall Hotel and Golf Course.

There are two excellent primary schools nearby, Hurworth Primary School and Croft CofE; both are within walking distance of the house. There is also an Ofsted-rated 'Outstanding' secondary school in Hurworth.

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Darlington train station is around a 10-minute drive from the house, where mainline LNER services run south to London and north to Edinburgh Waverly. The A1 is also accessible within 10 minutes, providing road links across the country.

Council Tax Band: F

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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”.