

THE MODERN HOUSE



Westcliffe, Kent
£1,750,000 Freehold

The Meadow

Positioned in the rolling countryside of St Margaret's at Cliffe in Kent is this exceptional three-bedroom house designed by RIBA award-winning architectural practice Hollaway Studio. Set within the grounds of Grade II*-listed Waller's Court, the building was designed to be concealed behind a striking flint wall, ingeniously dissecting the site into two distinct halves. An established grassy meadow and newly-planted orchard sit at the front, with a sunken garden at the rear, carefully planted to enhance the biodiversity on site. The house unfolds over 2,000 sq ft of lateral living space and employs a simple palette of materials, including oak and concrete, to emphasise the building's distinct form and surrounding environment.

The Architect

Working predominantly in London and Kent, Hollaway Studio's ambitious designs have produced award-winning architecture for prestigious clients such as Sir Roger DeHaan, Stanhope Plc, Benenden Independent School and Chapel Down Winery.

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Hollaway has become a figurehead for architecture in the south-east of England, giving lectures at the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) as well as for public and government bodies. His work has been globally published in Dezeen, Wired, NY Times and the Telegraph, among others, and in 2020 the Practice published its first book with Artifice Publishing. The practice has received many awards for its work, including seven RIBA Awards.

The Building

Designed to reflect the local vernacular, the house has a flint façade punctuated by a cantilevered study set on concrete columns, intended to represent a modern interpretation of a staddle hut. The roof, more noticeable from the rear, takes the form of a zinc-covered hyperbolic paraboloid, which gives the illusion of a pitch that seamlessly curves upwards; underneath sits a sheltered outdoor kitchen and patio. Slatted screens are positioned in the external walkway on the building's southerly aspect to ensure privacy, while the extended overhanging roof provides plenty of shade for the interior spaces. There is also an enclosed carport with space for several vehicles.

Environmental Performance

Built with energy efficiency in mind, the house's unique design embraces sustainable technologies, including high insulation levels, air tightness to reduce energy waste and extensive levels of glazing to maximise solar gain. There is also an air source heat pump, underfloor heating and south-facing solar panels.

The Tour

A double-height pivot door opens onto a central lobby area with a tall picture window framing views across an enclosed garden. The layout of the house divides the living areas and bedrooms into two distinct wings, connected via a long spine wall hallway with clean lines of sight. Polished concrete with underfloor heating flows throughout, as does the bespoke oak joinery, adding a sense of continuity and flow. Extensive glazing means the house is bathed in natural light throughout the day, encouraging constant dialogue between the interior spaces and the natural landscape.

The living and kitchen areas sit on the easterly aspect. A vast open-plan room, it has a palpable sense of volume care of the double-height pitched roof. The contemporary bespoke kitchen has neutral white cabinetry and Silestone worksurfaces; a large island with an integrated bench forms the dining area, cleverly demarcating the cooking space from the rest of the living room. Floor-to-ceiling cabinetry lines the length of the area concealing storage. At the opposite end lies a Stovax wood burner, which warms the room. A textured wall acts as a focal point for the main living area while also providing acoustic insulation.

A cantilevered glass hallway links the living area to a spacious office with plenty of shelving and built-in desks. A strip of ribbon windows offers glimpses of green across the orchard and surrounding countryside.

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Three spacious en suite bedrooms and a library with floor-to-ceiling glazing lead from the hallway. The main bedroom sits at the furthest end, with a contemporary bath perfectly positioned to enjoy the views across the garden and beyond. There is also a separate walk-in wardrobe, a large en suite with double sinks and a rose shower, and a utility room/plant room.

Outdoor Space

The house is set in beautifully landscaped gardens with established trees and bushes, surrounded by a grassed meadow and a small newly planted fruit orchard. A glazed pivot door from the living area leads onto a sheltered concrete patio with an outdoor kitchen. Excellently positioned, this area offers uninterrupted far-reaching views across the adjacent fields. Steps lead directly onto an undulating lawn with a gravel pathway that snakes towards a firepit seating area surrounded by hawthorn hedging.

A concrete walkway traverses the house's southerly aspect with sensitively planted gardens and slatted screens for shade. The main bedroom also has access to a hidden outdoor bath and shower, surrounded by further black timber screens and leafy bamboo.

The Area

The Meadow is wonderfully located, bounded by the coast and countryside. The house is a three-minute car ride, or a seven-minute cycle, to St Margaret's Bay, where long coastal and cliff-top walks are readily accessible, as is The Coastguard pub, which sits along the waterfront. Turning inland, miles of rural exploring await; an excellent pub lunch can be had at The Smugglers Inn, only a 13-minute walk from the house. For those feeling more adventurous, the popular Zetland Arms is just over an hour's walk or 10 mins in the car.

The quaint coastal town of Deal is only a 15-minute car journey. Hut 55 coffee shop is passed en route, offering hot drinks and tasty treats, and has morning yoga and delicious takeaway picnics in the summer. The high street has many independent antique, clothes, and homewares stores.

The Rose Hotel is known for its excellent bar and restaurant, as is the Frog & Scot. Arno & Co is a renowned grocer and Merchant of Relish, a much-loved deli. The Black Pig butchers and Jenkins & Sons fishmongers are also both noteworthy. There is a fantastic Saturday farmers' market selling local produce.

Sandwich, Dover and Canterbury are all easily accessed by car via the A2 and A258. High-speed direct trains run from King's Cross St Pancras to Dover in 80 minutes. Access to the continent is also excellent via the Port of Dover and via the Channel Tunnel at Folkestone.

Council Tax Band: not yet known

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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”.