

THE MODERN HOUSE



*London NW5
Sold*

Torriano Cottages

Like some long-held secret, Torriano Cottages is a bucolic oasis close to the heart of Kentish Town. At the end of this quiet 19th-century cul-de-sac lies an exceptional example of modern movement design. The house was designed and built in 1966-67 by the architect Philip Pank for himself, his wife and four children, and is Grade II-listed in recognition of its ingenious use of space, light and materials. Pank's seminal London home is being offered for sale for the first time in its history, along with his adjoining studio, an annexe, a garage and an adjoining garden plot. The current arrangement totals six bedrooms with two vast living spaces arranged around a beautiful courtyard and gardens.

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The Architect

Philip Pank was an artist and architect. Born in 1933, he was raised in India, returning to England for his education, eventually studying at the Architectural Association under Leonard Manasseh and Jim Stirling, qualifying in 1956. His contemporaries included Peter Ahrends, Richard Burton, Paul Koralek and Ted Cullinan. Pank went on to establish his own outfit in 1965 with Rob Howard, designing a number of small social buildings and several notable private houses, largely around Hampstead Heath.

The Tour

Pank's home nestles among mature trees at the end of the charmingly rustic Torriano Cottages, established on the garden plots of two early Victorian villas from 1860. Despite its comparatively recent arrival to the mews, its enveloped position grants it every bit as much authenticity and belonging as its handsome period neighbours.

Externally, walls are a fair-faced Crowborough brick with a timber frame in Jarrah, an Australian hardwood. Both materials are then equally celebrated inside. Its entrance pathway sidles along a well-established front garden where the house opens beneath a mature willow to a sweeping dining room and original kitchen.

This first phase of the house has a C-shaped plan with rooms arranged around a tranquil, glazed courtyard garden, which plays host to a towering sweet chestnut tree. Four bedrooms, a rooflit WC, a bathroom and a shower, are set along the western aspect. The main bedroom is in the north-west corner and opens to the living room via a hardwood concertina wall. The living room occupies a large space to the north and contains a conical copper chimney over a custom open fireplace.

From the living room, open-tread steps ascend to a bedroom with a glazed aluminium, inverted-pitched roof. This, in turn, opens onto the substantial roof garden with a pond, lawns and a south-facing terrace.

Beyond the living room, to the east, is Pank's adjoining studio. This breathtaking space has a dramatic mono-pitch ceiling of exposed beams, roof lights and full-height glazing onto the courtyard. The studio also looks out onto an extensive private garden to the east, with access provided through an enormous glazed archway with sliding windows.

South of the studio lies an independent space with a WC and its own street entrance from Torriano Cottages. The lot offers the opportunity to complete the architect's vision, with original plans for a first-floor master bedroom, swimming pool and sauna complex previously granted planning permission.

The house remains a showcase for an excellent array of high-quality 1960s built-in furniture, and the original warm air heating system by Max Fordham was renovated in 2022.

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Outdoor Space

The house and studio space are supremely successful exercises in the blurring of inside and outside, making use of the external, either visually or spatially, wherever possible. There are four gardens connected to the house, the largest being the roof garden, where almost 1,200 sq ft is given to lawn and terrace. From the former conservatory, a pergola protrudes, supporting a mass of mature vines, and to the south lies a pond, once filled with fish and beloved by the Pank children and their neighbouring friends for summer paddling.

The courtyard garden, around which much of the house is arranged, offers an elegant and sophisticated alternative in a Japanese style after its influence. This formal garden acts as a spillover to the dining and living spaces and a cooler option for lunching and dining in warmer months.

The garden to the east of the studio and annexe is a delightful space with a pretty lawn section at the rear. Its front portion is currently occupied by a temporary garage, however, Pank once achieved planning permission to establish a swimming pool and connected complex on the plot, and other extensions to the main house could be possible here with the relevant permissions.

The Area

Situated just off of Leighton Road, Torriano Cottages is a quiet, private residential mews within a leafy section of Kentish Town. The home is a short walk from the various offerings of Kentish Town Road and Fortress Road, with its independent butchers, grocers and restaurants. Neighbourhood favourites include Phoenicia Food Hall, Gail's, Salvino, Anima e Cuore, Bread by Bike, and the fantastic Japanese restaurant, Kami. There are several excellent pubs in the area, including The Bull & Last, The Pineapple, The Southampton Arms, and The Lord Stanley.

A little further to the south is Camden, well known for its world-famous market and wealth of independent restaurants, cafes, and venues, including an outpost of plant-based restaurant Mildreds, The Jazz Café, The Roundhouse, and "new-school fish and chips" at Hook.

The glorious green expanses of Hampstead Heath, with its beautiful swimming ponds and Parliament Hill Lido, are a short walk away.

Kentish Town Underground station is within ten minutes' walk away and runs Northern Line and Thameslink services for quick access to the centre of London, Farringdon, and the City. Kentish Town West Overground is also in close proximity with direct lines to Highbury & Islington, Hackney Central, and Richmond. There are excellent bus routes within the area to central London.

Council Tax Band: G

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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”.