

THE MODERN HOUSE



Knottingley, West Yorkshire
£530,000 Freehold

Hill Top

Tucked into a quiet pocket of Knottingley, West Yorkshire, this three-bedroom house with a one-bedroom annexe is a fine example of mid-century architecture. Designed in 1964 by local architect Fred Taylor, it is defined by a long geometric external profile and interiors with beautiful original features.

The inverted plan has far-reaching views from the principal living spaces. A well-stocked private garden of around 0.75 acres is home to a variety of trees, bushes and shrubs and a two-car garage. Beyond, Knottingley Station is a short walk away and runs services to Leeds in around 40 minutes.

The Architect

Heavily inspired by the works of Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier, Fred Taylor began his architectural journey aged 14 in Knottingley Urban District Council's surveying and engineering office. During the height of the post-war social housing building boom, he was responsible for the layout and building designs of many of the local housing estates. After this, he concentrated on designing one-off homes for individual clients and local developers.

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Fred's family recall his prolificness: "He designed and built so many houses in this area that it was impossible to drive him anywhere in a 20-mile radius without him pointing out several of them on the journey."

The Tour

The house makes a striking first impression, with its profile characterised by modernist motifs: clean, simple lines, sweeping roofs and the use of honest materials devoid of decorative embellishment. Nestling into its sloping site, the house unfolds over two stories, cutting a sleek shape against the surrounding foliage.

A driveway flanked by topiary bushes and broad-leaved trees has space to park several cars. The primary entrance is via a glazed screen leading to a central hall, where stone-clad walls and oversized pavers soften the transition from outside to in. A blackened metal spiral stair with open wood treads winds to the first floor.

Here, the interiors exude warmth, texture and authenticity. Light flows around the plan, with the original African hardwood flooring, exposed brickwork and flush plywood doors beautifully maintained. High ceilings in the primary living space add an unexpected loftiness.

The heart of the house is a set of sociable open-plan areas to relax, dine, cook, play and study, creatively delineated from one another while maintaining a sense of flow. Opening directly from the hall is the dual-aspect dining space.

Adjacent is the kitchen, brimming with colourful period character. Lines of yellow and white cabinetry tuck neatly below black Formica and stainless steel worktops and a ribbon of windows running the room's length overlook the leafy garden foliage.

A hefty chimney breast separates the lounge from the dining space. A high, sloping ceiling floats above exposed structural framing and there are many retained mid-century features. This convivial space affords a natural gathering hub to chat and relax. The library and play area is alongside, screened by decorative metal fretwork and set on a raised dais.

Two double bedrooms and one single bedroom also lie on this level. Each is distinctive and bathed in natural light from elongated windows. There is a good provision of built-in wardrobes throughout. Alongside is the family bathroom, where an overhead skylight adds extra illumination and the decor is in keeping with the house's period.

A handy WC and a utility room complete the first-floor plan; the latter opens to the upper level of the garden, where there is access to a large sheltered patio.



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Sitting on the western side of the ground floor is the studio/office. Two workshops – or hobby rooms – lie behind. The garage has secure parking for two cars and there is copious storage space beneath the house.

Accessed independently at the upper level is a one-bedroom annexe. Its generous plan includes a well-considered kitchen open to the roomy living and dining space, a double bedroom and a bathroom. As a condition of the planning approval, this wing may only accommodate family members.

The house is in good condition; however, the interior retains much of its original character and may require some updating internally.

Outdoor Space

The impressive mature garden wraps the house, creating a leafy and colourful backdrop. To the front, bushy hedging borders the driveway, with a host of mature broad-leaved trees, including chestnuts and limes, set behind.

Lovingly tended over many years, the garden abounds with a rich and diverse array of planting and biodiversity; goldfinches and chaffinches are among the most frequent of visitors. There are several sheltered nooks to enjoy a morning coffee or a summer lunch during the warmer months.

There are places to play and kick a football and, on snowy days, the sloping grassy banks are perfect for sledging.

The Area

Knottingley sits just outside Leeds, on the banks of the River Aire. A historic shipbuilding town with waterways providing lovely green canal-side walks, it is also the birthplace of modern bottle-making with three glassworks that specialise in whisky and gin bottles.

Local shops and supermarkets provide for all day-to-day needs while the neighbouring market town of Pontefract has a bustling high street and an excellent array of pubs including The Liquorice Bush, Beastfair Vaults, and The Maltshovel. There are plenty of independent cafés throughout the town and outdoor markets on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

Lively Leeds is half an hour by train or car. Street food stalls tempt at Kirkgate Market and Trinity Kitchen, with more traditional fare available at Whitelock's Ale House and Nash's Fish and Chips; The Man Behind the Curtain affords Michelin-starred dining. Coffee and cake can be enjoyed at Layne's Espresso and North Star. Belgrave, Headrow House, and The Domino Club are all excellent for an evening of music.

Xscape Yorkshire is around five miles away, with a snowdome, rock climbing, restaurants, cinema, outlet shopping and many other activities.

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The town has several Ofsted “Outstanding”-rated schools, including The Vale Primary Academy and De Lacy Academy. Independent school Ackworth and Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Wakefield are around 20 minutes by car.

Knottingley Station, a five-minute walk, from the house runs direct services into Leeds in around 40 minutes. It is also possible to cycle into Leeds via the bird reserves Fairburn Ings and St Aidan's. Regular trains also run to York and Manchester via Castleford and to London via Pontefract Monkhill station in under two and a half hours. The A1 and M62 are nearby.

Council Tax Band (House): D Council Tax Band
(Annexed Flat): A

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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”.