

THE MODERN HOUSE



*London SE26
Sold*

Rock Hill

Positioned on Rock Hill, this impeccable four-bedroom townhouse is one of the largest homes on Austin Vernon & Partners' renowned Dulwich Estate. This imposing modernist terrace was among the first to be built and was initially conceived as show homes. As such, Rock Hill epitomises the architect's vision, being the only one with distinctive glazed tiling on the façade, and set among the mature greenery that leads to Sydenham Hill.

The interior spaces have been lovingly renovated to create a home that is at once perfectly suited to modern life and in complete harmony with its mid-century origins. Original features abound, such as the solid wood flooring, balustrades and sections of reeded glass within. The wonderfully secluded, south-west facing rear garden backs onto three acres of private woodland, creating a verdant outlook and a palpable connection with the natural environment.

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The Estate

An area well-known for its exceptional modernist architecture, the Dulwich Estate occupies approximately 1,500 acres and includes numerous private roads managed by the estate. It is noted for its concentration of outstanding 1950s and '60s design, much of it by Austin Vernon & Partners. The mix of houses and thoughtful landscaping make for an appealing and unique place to live.

Rock Hill itself is positioned within the Sydenham Hill portion of the Dulwich Estate. The Sydenham Hill Estate occupies the sites of eleven of the original grand houses first built during the 1860s (Nos 19-37 Sydenham Hill). There are 138 homes built in four distinct phases – Rock Hill, Woodsyre, Crouchman's Close, and Great Brownings. For more information, please see the History section below.

The Tour

Rock Hill is a private no-through road, which is wonderfully peaceful. Entrance is on the ground floor via a generous landscaped driveway that extends past the home's private garage. Glazed blue tiles clad the exterior of this house, while neighbouring tiles in a deep lilac add to the mid-century atmosphere in harmonious contrast.

The kitchen and dining room are situated on the ground floor, and exemplify a wonderful sense of flow between interior and exterior spaces care of a wall of glazing that opens directly to the garden. Original solid wood flooring extends underfoot; the dining area is carefully delineated by a kitchen island – which also functions as a breakfast bar – creating a space that is at once part of the room as a whole, yet stands alone architecturally.

The kitchen is by Bulthaup and has been executed to the highest standard, with an Imperial oven and Viking range hob. Stainless steel worktops and splashback extend above the cherry wood cabinetry, creating a sleek material contrast thoroughly in keeping with the estate's mid-century design. Panes of reeded glass conceal storage in the cabinetry below, working in careful harmony with the expanse of glazing that opens directly to the garden beyond. A utility room lies adjacent, directly connected to the garage with an additional oven by Neff and plenty of storage space.

The first floor is home to a generous living space, characterised by an entire wall of glazing that welcomes light in from the south while offering immense, far reaching views across London. Bookshelves have been built along one wall, with walls painted a simple white that allows the architectural features of the home to truly shine. A smart working fireplace provides a handsome focal point for the room, which is oriented towards the terrace beyond. A single step gently ascends to a corner wall of glazing, where access to the terrace can be gained; glazing also looks onto the stairwell behind to allow light to flow around the plan.

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Carpeted stairs with the original balustrade lead to the second floor and the three bedrooms therein; the fourth bedroom is on the first floor and is currently used as a study. The bedrooms on the upper levels are bright, voluminous spaces with views over the greenery of the Dulwich Estate beyond through beautiful ribbon windows. Executed in a simple, pared-back palette, walls are painted white, and a neutral carpet extends underfoot.

The main bedroom has a large walk-in wardrobe and en suite bathroom, the latter of which retains its handsome frosted glass surrounding the built-in bath; underfloor heating flows beneath, and fixtures and fittings are of the highest quality, including taps by Vola.

Outdoor Space

Directly behind the house is a large decked area, perfect for alfresco dining or evening entertaining. With views onto the vibrant greenery of approximately three acres of woodland on Sydenham Hill, the space feels wonderfully secluded and in harmony with the natural world. In the less leafy months, the far-reaching views extend all the way across London to create a spectacular vista that is both natural and urban at once – from the Millenium Wheel to the Oxo Tower and Wembley Arch and beyond.

The established, well-planted garden beyond descends in carefully stepped levels, bordered by mature plants bursting with life. South-facing, it is a veritable suntrap throughout the day and is home to a small pond that makes a haven for local wildlife. The space is connected to three acres of private woodland of the Dulwich Estate, creating a sense of undulating, unending greenery. The trees here are over 300 years old and date back to the time of the Great North Wood, with the woodland managed by the Dulwich Estate for private use of residents. There are magnificent oaks, beech, silver birch, sweet chestnut and monkey puzzle trees that create a beautiful outlook and are home to resident owls, among other birds.

A south-facing terrace is positioned on the first floor, accessed via a large glazed door from the living room. This makes an excellent spot for a quieter evening drink or morning coffee and subtly blurs the boundaries between indoor and outdoor spaces in typical modernist style.

The Area

The house is surrounded by both Dulwich and Sydenham Woods, which is a wildlife nature reserve carefully managed by the London Wildlife Trust. It is the Trust's oldest nature reserve and takes the form of beautiful ancient woodland with the remnants of Victorian gardens within. Other local attractions include Dulwich and Sydenham Golf Club, The Dulwich Picture Gallery, The Horniman Museum and the local town centres of Crystal Palace and Dulwich Village. The Grade II-listed Crystal Palace Park is a five-minute walk away, home to a farm and boating lake.

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Crystal Palace, which was named by The Sunday Times as the best place to live in London (2022), is a 15-minute walk away and is a vibrant area with award-winning restaurants and bars as well as having a thriving art and music scene. There is a Farmers Market every Thursday, Saturday and Sunday, as well as art and film festivals throughout the year. Local favourite establishments include Joanna's restaurant, Walters Bar & Kitchen, Woodhouse pub and the Everyman Cinema.

Dulwich Village is a 15-minute walk from the house, and the street is well placed for OFSTED-rated "outstanding" primary and secondary state schools as well as some of the best private schools in London.

Rock Hill is located a short walk from Sydenham Hill station via a pretty walk along London's only working toll road; it is also accessible from the back garden through the woods. The station runs services to London Victoria (13 minutes), Blackfriars (20 minutes) and City Thameslink/Farringdon (22 minutes). Connecting trains (via Sydenham) will take you to Canada Water in 20 minutes and Shoreditch High Street in 30 minutes.

Council Tax Band: D

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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”.