

THE MODERN HOUSE



*London BR3
Sold*

West Oak II

Set amongst the gardens and orchards of the excellent Span estate at West Oak is this end of terrace house, built in 1960 to a design by Eric Lyons. The house is unusually large, with four bedrooms and two bathrooms upstairs, and great open-plan living spaces downstairs.

A rare original, the house retains many lovely features while also having been recently upgraded. Sliding doors with neat finger-pulls, inbuilt wardrobes, black and white check porch flooring and a geometric wood staircase lit from a skylight above, are all indicative of the intentions and character of Span housing.

The house has been in the same family since it was bought off-plan in 1960, when the estate was founded. It was lovingly extended by the owner-architect in the 1970s, to be completely in keeping with the existing design. The original London stock external walls have been left bare, and there are huge glass doors to the gardens at the front and back to allow light in and blur the boundary between inside and outside, as Lyons intended.

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Entry is to a porch, which retains its original wood-framed glazing. This opens into the large living space, with a study and utility room (where the kitchen once was) to the right, while the addition of the kitchen-dining room is to the left. Up the light-filled wooden staircase are four bedrooms, one of which is en suite, and the family bathroom. There are plenty of personal touches, such as brickwork in the master bedroom to support the owner's textile artwork. There are huge storage cupboards in the hallway, and the rooms have built-in wardrobes. All of the rooms have views to the surrounding trees and communal gardens. Outside is a large private garden with further storage.

Span are perhaps the most celebrated of all 20th-century residential developers and many of their buildings throughout the south of England are now listed. The company built 30 housing estates in total between 1948 and 1984. Schooled in the Modern Movement, having worked for Walter Gropius while the Bauhaus designer was in the UK from 1936 to 1937, Eric Lyons founded Span with architect-turned-developer Geoff Townsend. Their designs sought to bring the tenants of Modernism – light, openness, a sense of order – to suburban areas with generous landscaping and on a domestic scale.

West Oak is one of the smaller and lesser-known estates, consisting of 21 houses (of type T8 and T7) and 12 flats. It is approached by a private road that leads to the garages, one of which this house has leasehold of. From here footpaths lead to the houses. Eric Lyons paid great attention to landscaping, designing houses to work within their setting. West Oak's gently sloping landscape is planted with flowering shrubs and shaded by mature trees. The communal facilities are fantastic, with a lovely meadow and grassy orchard which the active community use for summer events, fireworks parties and barbecues.

The house can be found in Beckenham, a popular district of the London Borough of Bromley that lies south east of the capital's centre. Ravensbourne Station is seven minutes walk from West Oak, and runs services Elephant and Castle in around 25 minutes and London Blackfriars in approximately 31 minutes. Nearby Beckenham Junction station runs services to London Blackfriars in around 19 minutes, London Victoria in just 22 minutes, and London Bridge in 36 minutes. Both stations are in Zone 4. Beckenham Junction is also connected to the tram network that runs towards Wimbledon. The area is well served for schools, green spaces and leisure facilities including Beckenham Lawn Tennis Club.

Tenure: Freehold Service Charge: approx. £96 per month (includes maintenance of communal gardens and grounds)

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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”.