

THE MODERN HOUSE



Clifford, Herefordshire
£665,000 Freehold

Castle Lane

Lying low in a quiet plot of private gardens stretching just shy of an acre, this stone barn has been extensively renovated with great care and sensitivity by the architect Nicholas Keeble. The interior draws together characterful 19th-century period details with a modern material palette and mindful approach to energy efficiency. Set in the quiet slope of Herefordshire countryside, the location is ideal for easy access to the Brecon Beacons and the popular town of Hay-on-Wye, a 10-minute cycle ride away.

The Architect

A specialist in restoring historic homes and barn conversions, Nicholas Keeble trained at The Brixton School of Building, founded in 1904 by W R Lethaby, and at London South Bank University. He was employed initially by the Directorate of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings, where he worked on the restoration of the Peers' Dining Room at the Palace of Westminster.

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Later he produced measured drawings of listed buildings for Donald Insall Associates, including Apsley House, London, and Woburn Abbey, Bedfordshire. He spent several years working on new social housing, specialising in homes for the elderly and the disabled, before returning to building conservation, setting up Nicholas Keeble Associates as a planning consultancy in 1992.

The Tour

Tucked out of sight on a quiet country lane, the house quietly reveals itself. There's private parking for several vehicles here plus an EV charger, with the main entrance is set on the front façade, accessed via a path that meanders through the pretty front gardens.

The interior has been designed with rural living in mind, with intuitive interventions peppered throughout. In the entrance hall, there is plenty of cloakroom space for coats, shoes and wellies.

A warm and welcoming kitchen is positioned centrally on the ground floor, with a creamy distemper on the walls and lines of bespoke cabinetry. Slate flooring runs underfoot and a separate utility space to one side houses the appliances and laundry area.

The dining and living spaces are arranged in an open plan, producing a naturally sociable flow and dispersing an excellent quality of natural light. Full-height timber-framed windows rise from ground level to the upper storey, bringing good solar gain and a modern, less cottage-like feel.

Underfloor heating downstairs and the radiators upstairs are supplied by a ground source heat pump (which also heats the water); there is also a log-burning stove positioned centrally. French doors open directly from the living room onto a sunny stone terrace, which makes for a wonderful spot for summer lunches or a glass of wine in the evening, with a canopy providing shelter from sun and rain.

Two bespoke staircases built of sustainable English oak rise on either side of the plan, leading up to the two quiet double bedrooms upstairs. The main bedroom is a bright space with an en suite bathroom complete with a double-ended bathtub and underfloor heating.

A glass walkway linking the two bedrooms retains a visual connection to the ground floor and allows light to penetrate the desk area below. The second bedroom is another wonderfully quiet and restful sleeping area, decorated in calm neutral colours. This bedroom has its own shower room and pleasant views across the gardens.

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Outside Space

The gardens form an integral part of the overall experience of the house, attracting a mesmerising array of local wildlife and birdlife. Terraces to the front of the house provide a welcoming position for morning coffee, while at the back of the house, there is a secluded terrace and a log store, with undercover shelter for chopping wood.

Glorious beds of natural grasses, herbaceous perennials and bouquets of herbs border the lawns, with garden paths weaving through avenues of trees, some of which are fruiting, defining the border. In the summer months, the garden gives way to a wave of wildflowers which ebbs and flows with the change of the seasons.

The Area

In the medieval period, Clifford was a thriving town with almost 200 houses stretching along the river Wye. Today, it is a quiet hamlet with approximately 30 houses.

The location is brilliant for enjoying the highlights of rural living. The river Wye, a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest and one of the longest near-natural rivers in England and Wales, can be reached on foot in around five minutes through a local nature reserve. The river has an ever-increasing population of wild salmon and plenty of otters and kingfishers and there are opportunities for canoeing and swimming within a five-minute walk of the house.

The Brecon Beacons National Park and the Black Mountains can also be easily reached: two of the wildest, untouched mountain regions in the UK, with brilliant walks and hikes, biking trails and canoeing.

The house is a mile and a half from the historic town of Hay-on-Wye, just three minutes in the car or a steady 10-minute cycle ride. Hay-on-Wye is a lively town famed for its many bookshops and revered literary event, the Hay Festival or, as it's been coined, 'the Woodstock of the mind'. Richard Booth's Bookshop and Cinema is a local institution. The Old Electric Shop is a well-curated emporium, stocking the work of local artisans alongside vintage clothes and books. It also serves delicious tea, coffee and cake. Chapters is a celebrated local restaurant with serious foodie credentials. The beloved borders sheep's milk ice cream maker, Shepherds, can also be found in Hay. Hay Castle is a centre for arts, literature and learning with a full range of events, exhibitions and workshops throughout the year.

Enjoying close ties with Hay, equally lively Presteigne is a short drive away and has an excellent fishmonger and greengrocer, as well as a popular pizzeria, Daphne's. Ludlow and Ledbury are both within reach, as is the city of Hereford, the Forest of Dean, and the Brecon Beacons.

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The closest train station to Hay-on-Wye is Hereford, which lies approximately 20 miles to the east and provides direct services to London Paddington in around three hours. It also runs direct services north to Manchester and south to Cardiff and Newport, with further connections to London and the Southwest. Cheltenham, Cardiff, and Bristol are all reachable in around an hour and 40 minutes by car.

Council Tax Band: Currently exempt as used as a holiday let.

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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”.