

THE MODERN HOUSE



Isle of Skye, Scottish Highlands
Sold

Flodigarry

This beautiful house occupies a truly outstanding position overlooking superlative coastal and mountain views, high on a hillside on Skye's north-eastern Trotternish peninsula. Set within the the scattered settlement of Flodigarry, this contemporary home was conceived by the acclaimed architects Dualchas, who combined raw West Highland agricultural vernacular with Scandinavian modernism in a contextually-driven design. Composed of three distinct buildings – the two-bedroom house, one-bedroom bothy and a studio/workshop – their simple architectural profiles, in striking larch cladding and zinc roofing, reveal a beautifully light and sophisticated set of interior spaces. The house has been cleverly orientated within its third-of-an-acre garden to capture the surrounding panoramas.

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The Architect

Dualchas Building Design was founded on Skye in 1996 by brothers Alasdair and Neil Stephen. The practice established a second office in Glasgow in 2006, and six years later, the firm was renamed Dualchas Architects. From considered beginnings, Dualchas has sought inspiration from the authentic local vernacular, often the blackhouse, spearheading cultural confidence and a contemporary renaissance in the architecture of the Scottish Highlands.

They work on remote and wild sites throughout the Highlands and Islands of the west coast of Scotland, creating quiet, restrained and beautifully crafted spaces. Theirs is an architecture based on the rigorous study of site, context, and landscape, inspired by a specific location, working in harmony with the surrounding environment and landscape. Theirs is an architecture not only fit for purpose but also uplifting of spirits.

The Tour

Tucked into its craggy environment, this bucolic house shares an access road leading to Flodigarry, a small hamlet of modest dwellings and agricultural buildings. The house has been astutely orientated within its lumpy, majestic surroundings to absorb far-reaching open views across the coastal waters and dramatic inland panoramas, with the magnificent Quiraing rising on the distant horizon. Mesmerising panoramic views entice from every vantage.

This house is radically different from its neighbours whilst managing to blend into its surroundings by referencing the local vernacular in an entirely contemporary way. It sits harmoniously in terms of scale and proportion through its division into three independent elements – the big house, the bothy and the studio – thus creating a radical and responsive modern way of living. Each part is linear in form, simple in silhouette and is guided by an understanding of local vernacular forms and materials. The result is a handsome home in a beautiful rural setting, with a plan layout configured to maximise the sweeping surrounding views.

A carefully-curated minimal material palette and barn-like profiles nod to the raw and straightforward local building vernacular. Aluminium-clad windows and doors punctuate the Scottish larch-boarded façades, counterpointed by a shiny stainless steel flue and several roof lights. An exacting approach to the key principles of light, space and direct visual contextuality has been adopted.

Internally, thoughtfully considered design and material decisions have resulted in a series of welcoming, warm and flowing spaces. The main entrance is on the upper floor and gives way to a welcoming hall with ample space for hanging coats and storing boots.

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Beyond, the sociable open-plan kitchen, living and dining space, creates an immediately striking vision. Rising high to the roofline, this is an impressive and embracing space. There is an exceptional quality of ever-changing light, care of floor-to-ceiling glazing and thoughtfully positioned windows, and rooflights which give way to breathtaking views.

The seating area centres around a cosy wood-burning stove. In warmer months, glazed sliding doors allow a seamless connection to the outside where an enticing balcony, perfect for alfresco evening drinks, stretches beyond. The kitchen area reflects the minimalist aesthetic found throughout the house, with white worktops positioned above generous runs of simply-detailed grey cabinetry.

A utility space and shower room complete the upper-level plan. The architect's trademark use of nooks and crannies is exploited with cleverly slotted built-in storage and shelving.

A neatly positioned staircase descends to the lower floor, with a family room or snug lying directly off the hallway, providing a lovely retreat space.

Two bedrooms, one with en suite shower room, and a family bathroom occupy the flanking rooms, where cleverly positioned doors and windows illuminate the spaces and frame fantastic landscape scenes.

Sitting separately is the bothy. Of similar character and detailing to its larger neighbour, it retains a distinctive presence. The generous living and sleeping spaces overlook stunning peninsula views. Sliding screens open to a large deck and there is an abundance of storage.

The studio/workshop is also wrapped externally in horizontal larch boards, while internally its OSB sheathing ensures an aptly raw quality. This handy building sits at the plot's edge and provides excellent space to create and potter and for everyday gardening equipment, bicycles and wet suits.

Outdoor Space

Bounded by drystone dykes and simple post and wire fencing the house sits on an elevated level, with around a third-of-an-acre of gently inclined grassy slopes falling towards the quiet approach road. A gravelled drive way gives generous parking for several cars.

Visually anchored into its surrounding landscape, the garden reflects the rugged Scottish terrain while providing several lovely spots to gather outdoors. In warmer months, sliding glass doors open onto a projecting cantilevered balcony and a decked terrace, both perfect places for a morning coffee. On chillier days many terrific vantages beckon for huddling around a fire pit.

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The Area

Flodigarry is at the northern tip of the Isle of Skye on the breathtaking Trotternish Peninsula. Outstanding far-reaching views across the sea are bound by the small island of Eilean Fhlòdaigearraidh just a kilometre offshore.

Set amongst a traditional Highland crofting community, the area is surrounded by national landmarks like The Old Man of Storr, Kilt Rock waterfall and the mountains of Wester Ross. Rich in wildlife, such as otters and pine martens, the tip of the island is a haven for birds of prey including golden and white-tailed eagles.

The island's geology dates back to the Jurassic period which established interesting rock formations, including the elaborate Quiraing. These ancient landscapes are an arresting backdrop for many outdoor pursuits like walking, fishing, kayaking, whale watching and sunset watching. Fossil hunting is a regular pastime as well. The area is also renowned for a Bortle Grade-2 night sky: Auroa Borealis, The Milky Way, and noctilucent clouds make regular and spectacular appearances.

The bustling main town on Skye, Portree, is around 20 miles south and offers handy amenities and distractions throughout the year. Along with supermarkets and day-to-day shopping there is a cinema in the town's information centre, also home to the Isle of Skye Candle Company, and an array of independent shops including the bookshop Carmina Gadelica and several restaurants, such as Lower Deck Seafood and Sea Breezes, serving up delicious locally-caught seafood. Staffin Dinosaur Museum is dedicated to the many species identified on the island. Staffin also has a café and restaurant and is ten-minutes away by car. Half an hour by car is Uig where there is a supermarket, fuel pump and the friendly Ferry Inn. Uig also has a ferry terminal serving the Western Isles, and is a gateway to the isles of Harris, Lewis and the Uists.

For more on the varied delights of Skye see our Resident's Guide.

Inverness, with regular rail services and flights to London and other UK and European destinations, lies 135 miles to the east. Fort William, a gateway to the islands sits around 110 miles southeast.

Council Tax Band: E

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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”.