

THE MODERN HOUSE



Isle of Skye, Scottish Highlands
£525,000 Freehold

Carbost

Occupying a majestic spot on the western side of Skye, this alluring home brings together the feel and warmth of traditional West Highland agricultural vernacular with Scandinavian modernist design. Durable sustainability lies at the heart of its contextually-led design, where Siberian larch-clad façades merge seamlessly with light, crisp interiors.

Conceived in 2017 by local designers Rural House, the house has been cleverly orientated to capture the compelling open views across the calming shores of Carbost and the spectacular surrounding mountains. Complete with a garage, workshop, sitooterie, polytunnel and a garden of around 0.7 acres, the house affords a terrific rural Hebridean lifestyle.

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The Designers

Based on the Isle of Skye, Rural House is a collaboration between award-winning architects Rural Design, founded in 2003 by Alan Dickson and Gill Smith, and designer/builder James Macqueen. Rural House works on remote and wild sites throughout the Highlands and Islands of the west coast of Scotland and are committed to creating work that is modern and progressive, tempered by a love of place, traditions and materials. Theirs is an architectural language that fuses simplicity with richness, clarity with depth, and elegance with robustness to create quiet, restrained and beautifully crafted spaces.

Environmental Performance

The intention was to create a low-impact 'long house' that ensured excellent sustainability and energy efficiency without compromising the architectural integrity of the design. The house was constructed using a heavily insulated timber framing system. Due to its whole-house MVHR system, the home benefits from refreshing ventilation all year round. Electricity is generated by a private wind turbine and solar photovoltaic panels, allowing it to run very efficiently and sell energy back to the grid.

The Tour

Overlooking peaceful rocky shores along Loch Harport on the Minginish peninsula, Carbost is surrounded by mesmerising backdrops and nestles under enveloping highlands. An approaching beach-side road on its eastern fringe sweeps around and upwards to the front garden and generous shingled parking area of this house.

Sitting modestly in its resplendent setting, the house has a minimal palette and barn-like profile, nodding to the raw and straightforward local building tradition. Aluminium-clad timber windows punctuate the boarded façades, while a matt grey aluminium corrugated roof is counterpointed by a shiny stainless steel flue and several roof lights.

The entrance opens into a lobby with ample space for hanging coats and storing boots before the central hall. Beyond lies the sociable open-plan kitchen, living and dining room. Rising to the roofline, creating an immediately striking vision, this is an impressive and welcoming space attuned to easy living with an exceptional quality of ever-changing light. Swathes of aptly placed glazing frame breathtaking views of the sloping topography towards the loch shores, heather-clad moorland and distant Cuillins.

Its open-plan nature also means the house is perfectly suited for entertaining on a small or large scale. Engineered oak flooring runs underfoot and dining and seating are centred around a cosy wood-burning stove. In the warmer months, sliding doors open onto an east-facing deck, the perfect spot for a morning coffee or barbecue lunch. The kitchen, with a generous provision of cabinetry, is simply detailed and thoughtfully considered, creating clever aesthetic cohesion.

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The hall further leads to two double bedrooms. Like the rest of the house, these rooms have far-reaching views and provide naturally quiet, peaceful retreats.

A handy utility room, adjacent to the entry lobby, and a shower room are also positioned at ground-floor level.

A central oak staircase leads to the serene upper level. The large main bedroom is here, with a pair of oversized skylights encasing more breathtaking vistas. At the other end of the plan sits a mezzanine reception space, open to the living area below. A convivial snug, used by the current owners for watching movies and playing games, it is an ideal place for study, work and hobbies. A family bathroom sits centrally.

There are plenty of cupboards throughout the plan for everyday paraphernalia.

The house was featured on BBC Scotland's 'Home of the Year 2019'.

Outdoor Space

The house sits lightly on its elevated level with a gently inclined grassy plot of almost three-quarters of an acre, falling towards the village. Visually anchored into its surrounding landscape, sea eagles, golden buzzards and red- and black-throated divers fly overhead, and sheep graze on the nearby heathery banks.

An array of productive raised beds, chock-full of potatoes and sweetcorn, are set within a sheltered spot along the northern boundary, while the polytunnel provides a further place to cultivate and grow. A useful workshop space adjoins the garage and also acts as a handy external store, a useful place for fishing rods and wet suits. Atop the garden, the sitooterie offers perhaps the best vistas and is a wonderful retreat for an evening's hot toddy.

Area Guide

Lining the beautiful banks of Loch Harport, Carbost is the largest settlement on the Minginish peninsula and features a hotel, bunkhouse, community shop, friendly café, doctor's surgery and post office.

With a stunning panorama of Basalt cliffs and a famed waterfall nearby, Talisker Bay is a celebrated spot with ever-changing beach scenes. Famous as the location of the Talisker distillery, built in 1831, this is a perennially popular visitor's destination.

The nearby shores, where afternoons can be spent walking or foraging, offer invigorating wild swimming and paddle boarding year-round. At night, the sky is ablaze with stars, and, on occasion, the compellingly beautiful aurora borealis, the Milky Way, and noctilucent clouds make spectacular appearances in winter months.

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Skye's bustling main town, Portree, provides a broader range of amenities and is around 17 miles away. Along with supermarkets, the town has an array of independent shops, including the Isle of Skye Candle Company, Misty Isle Gin shop, and the bookshop, Carmina Gadelica. The information centre doubles as the island's cinema.

Set amongst a traditional Highland crofting community, the area is 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 to the Jurassic period which established interesting rock formations, including the elaborate Quiraing. These ancient landscapes are an arresting backdrop for outdoor pursuits like walking, fishing, kayaking, whale watching, fossil hunting and sunset admiring.

For more of Skye's brilliance, look to our residents' guide.

There is a primary school in Carbost, and a senior school in Portree High School; a local minibuss service ferries to and fro.

Skye is connected to the mainland by a free road bridge. Inverness, a three-hour drive away, or 55-minutes by rail from the Kyle of Lochalsh, has regular rail services and flights to London and other UK and European destinations. There is also a bus service connecting Carbost to Glasgow and Inverness. Uig, around 45 minutes' drive north, has a ferry terminal serving the Western Isles; a gateway to the isles of Harris, Lewis and the Uists.

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”.