

THE MODERN HOUSE



West Loch Tarbert, Argyll
Sold

Dunmore

The information we have been provided estimates build costs for this home to be in the region of £475,000 – £570,000 (excluding the outbuilding/boathouse). More information is available on request.

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Occupying a truly magical position in the western Scottish Highlands, in the Dunmore Estate, and with views overlooking West Loch toward the beautiful island of Gigha, this superb plot of land has planning permission to build a wonderful contemporary house set in around 2.36 acres. With far-reaching vistas of the surrounding rugged countryside, the proposed scheme spans over 2000 sq ft, with a contextually conceived design by the award-winning architect Mary Arnold-Forster. The house will hark to the local rural vernacular, emulating the feel and warmth of a traditional West Highland blackhouse; striking larch cladding will merge seamlessly with wonderfully light Scandinavian-inspired modernist interiors. The house has been cleverly orientated to capture open views across calming water and will share a short access track to the beach shore at Ruhba Mhein, where a slipway will allow small boat access to the loch. Full details of the planning documents can be found [here](#).

The Architect

Having qualified as an architect in 1992, Mary Arnold-Forster has spent the last two decades working on projects on remote and wild sites across the highlands and islands of the west coast of Scotland.

Working independently and in conjunction with Dualchas Architects, hers is an architecture based on the rigorous study of site, context, and landscape, where the focus is on creating quiet, restrained and beautifully crafted structures. She seeks inspiration from authentic local vernacular, often the blackhouse, and has spearheaded cultural confidence and a contemporary renaissance in the architecture of the Highlands.

Inspired by a specific location and working in harmony with the surrounding environment and landscape, Arnold-Forster's practice is grounded in a belief that architecture should not only be fit for purpose but should also lift the spirits.

The Tour

Occupying a secluded location, just eight miles south of the shores of Tarbert and Loch Fyne, gateways to the beautiful Kintyre Peninsula, this bucolic plot shares a private road leading to 'Nether Auchans', a scattering of four new homes. Nestled on the north side of West Loch Tarbert, the site has a mesmerising position with panoramic views from every vantage.

The house will be set back from the road, accessed via a short track leading to a generous parking area to the rear. The house will perch centrally within the plot, where a levelled plateau gradiates gently south-west towards the loch shore and is enclosed to the west by woodland.

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The proposed house will be guided by an understanding of local vernacular forms and materials. A simple piece of design, it will blend into the surrounding area, sympathetically echoing the traditional local architecture. The result will be a handsome, contemporary home in a beautiful rural setting, with a plan layout maximising sweeping surrounding views. The minimal material palette and barn-like profiles will nod to the raw and straightforward West Highland building tradition. Aluminium-clad timber windows will punctuate the Scottish larch-clad 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, the planning allows for thoughtfully considered design and material decisions to be made throughout. Ceilings will soar with the dramatic pitch of the roofline, and an abundance of large glazed screens and carefully positioned windows and roof lights will bathe the house with natural light and frame enticing near and distant views.

The main entrance will be via a recessed porch carved out of the rear north-facing elevation. This will give way to a welcoming hall with ample space for hanging coats and storing boots. Beyond, the sociable open-plan kitchen, living and dining space, perfectly tuned for the practicalities of family life and relaxed entertaining, will unfold. Attuned to easy living, this expansive room will have exceptional quality of ever-changing light. Swathes of floor-to-ceiling glazing and aptly positioned windows will give way to breathtaking views of the sloping topography towards the loch shores, rough grassland and distant hills. There will be a fireplace at one end, with lofty ceilings above. These spaces will have wide sliding doors, capitalising on the compelling surrounding vistas and allowing a seamless connection to the outside. Just beyond, a large terrace will beckon for entertaining alfresco.

A family room or snug will lie directly off the hall, providing a lovely retreat for watching movies or reading.

Three bedrooms and two bathrooms will occupy the flanking wings of the house, where cleverly positioned windows will illuminate the spaces and frame fantastic landscape scenes. A utility space and cloakroom will complete the ground-floor plan, where throughout the architect's trademark, considered use of nooks and crannies will be exploited with built-in storage and shelving. A neatly tucked staircase will ascend to a small study and work area set in the eaves above the snug and the hall. This will connect to the lofty living spaces care of an internal opening and have compelling external views care of its roof lights.

The planning permission allows for a large outbuilding/boathouse. Wrapped in corrugated metal cladding, this handy building will sit at the plot's northern edge and provide excellent storage for everyday gardening equipment, boats, canoes and wet suits.

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Outdoor Space

The plot extends across 2.36 acres of rough grass and is bound by existing woodland on its western fringe. The ecological value and range of inherent biodiversity of the site will be enhanced through a gentle approach, without too much intervention, to support the area's rich wildlife and encourage local species of birds and insects. A further native tree and hedge planting to establish an eastern boundary has also been proposed.

In warmer months, sliding glass doors open the entire living area onto a projecting deck, which will wrap the southern façade of the house, giving the perfect spot for a morning coffee or barbeque lunch. Beyond will lie an enclosed garden space, conceived to draw parallels with traditional walled gardens. With vernacular links to the area, it will sensitively reflect the rugged Scottish terrain.

The house will sit on a slightly elevated level, with gently inclined grassy slopes falling towards the loch shores, where it has rights of access to launch small boats. Overhead sea eagles and red-and-black-throated divers are frequent visitors. The adjacent shores, where afternoons can be spent walking or foraging, offer invigorating wild swimming and paddle boarding year-round. Gather around a fire pit on chillier evenings.

The Area

Surrounded by miles of beautiful coastline, The Dunmore Estate is set in 900 acres of magnificent woods and hills on the north side of West Loch Tarbert. The moody backdrop of the loch is perfect for wild swimming, kayaking and fishing. The extraordinary landscape is protected by Scottish Natural Heritage. Home to remarkable sea life, such as humpback whales, killer whales, sea otters and seals. The untamed area is also a habitat for wild deer plus 138 species of bird. Rare sightings include the Barolo-type-shearwater and the Marsh Warbler. Superb views from the top of Cnoc a Bharra Hill span across to the Isle of Gigha and Jura. The gateway to the breathtaking Kintyre Peninsula has many walking and cycling routes for watching wildlife.

Tarbert, a pretty fishing village, is seven miles away. It has a range of shops, cafes and restaurants and hosts an annual seafood festival, music festival and a sailing regatta. Tarbert Academy provides schooling for 3–18-year-olds. Lochgilphead, 20 miles away, has a greater selection of amenities, including a community hospital.

For island hopping, regular ferries run from Kennacraig, a 20-minute drive away, with routes to the Isles of Islay, Jura and Colonsay. A ferry from Tarbert to Portavadie on the Cowal peninsula also offers an alternative route to Glasgow via Dunoon.

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Campbeltown Airport, with daily flights to Glasgow, can be reached in 50 minutes by car. Glasgow city centre is under a three-hour drive. The city's history is deeply rooted in creativity, with the world-renowned architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh shaping its landscape, a vibrant music scene and many museums and galleries. The city also has an exciting and ambitious food scene, with Gloriosa, Julie's Kopitiam, two.eight.seven and The Gannett among the highlights.

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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”.