

THE MODERN HOUSE



Isle of Skye, Scottish Highlands
Sold

Heaste

Designed by the acclaimed architect Mary Arnold Forster in partnership with the current owners, this award-winning modern house and studio stand high on a hillside on the south-westerly coast of the Isle of Skye. Set in roughly one-third of an acre of landscaped gardens with over 1,400 sq ft of internal living space, the superlative views reach as far east as Beinn Sgrialth, south to Loch Eishort and west to the hills over a wooded burn. The architectural design is characterised by a striking black profile of corrugated aluminium, artfully set in contrast to the beautifully light interiors lined almost entirely in Douglas fir, emulating the feel and warmth of a traditional Scottish blackhouse.

Following completion in 2017, the design won a RIAS award in 2018 and was nominated for the Andrew Doolan Award in 2019. The house has featured in numerous architectural publications, including the RIBA and RIAS Journals and was included in Dezeen's list of 10 best houses of 2019. The house is for sale for the first time and in its original condition.

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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, she has focused on creating quiet, restrained and beautifully crafted structures based on a rigorous study of site, context, 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

Accessed via a five-mile single track, the linear crofting township of Heaste is a quiet and peaceful working village comprising various croft houses, corrugated agricultural buildings, and a tin church.

Set back from the road by a gated driveway, the old stone walls of the ruin that formerly occupied the site create the boundary walls of the garden, the wild meadow, and the studio, which sits perpendicular to the house.

Combining the materiality of the local vernacular with sensitive interventions, the design takes an exacting approach to the key principles of light, space, and a direct visual relationship to the landscape. A secluded glazed doorway provides the primary entrance, leading into a cloakroom with space for coats and boots. Bookshelves line the arterial hallway, and from here, the breath-taking double-height living space unfolds.

Soaring ceiling heights follow the dramatic pitch of the roofline, and an excellent quality of sunlight streams in from all sides. Grey resin runs underfoot, and Dinesen Douglas fir wraps the interior from the walls to the roof, forming cupboards and windows and filling the room with a welcoming, earthy scent.

The layout follows a predominantly open plan, with each component seamlessly interlinked to create a natural flow between spaces for working, resting and eating. A beautifully designed modern kitchen is positioned on the northern wall, with appliances housed discreetly within bespoke joinery, creating aesthetic continuity. Large picture windows frame the verdant backdrop, and a log-burning stove forms a natural centrepiece in winter months.

External openings have been cleverly conceived to trace the passage of the sun and capitalise on the uninterrupted views throughout the house. Sliding glass walls open the entire living space onto the south-facing terrace in warmer weather, whilst the external tin cladding protects from prevailing winds. Glazing to the north looks out to raised beds and gives the home the feeling of being dug into the landscape, while to the south, the house overlooks a sloping topography down towards the Loch.

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One of the two bedrooms and a bathroom are also positioned at ground floor level, delineating the space for family living or providing privacy for guests.

A central solid-timber stair leads to a serene retreat on the upper level. The main bedroom is a naturally quiet and peaceful space, with an ensuite bathroom and its inviting Scandinavian timber bathtub adjoined. A study is built into the mezzanine, providing a working or reading area looking down onto the central plan.

The self-contained studio extends to over 200 sqft across a single storey. This space offers great flexibility of use and scope for further development as an office, yoga, painting or music studio, or as overflow accommodation.

Outside Space

The gardens have been sensitively designed to reflect the rugged Scottish terrain. Partially sunken into the ground, the steading cuts into the land behind as it rises, and as a result, the house feels visually anchored in the surrounding landscape. Expanses of lawn are interspersed with wild meadowland, beds of herbaceous perennials, wavering grasses and plenty of raised beds for growing vegetables, flowers and fruit bushes.

The Area

Heaste is an unassuming settlement of 14 crofts that sit on either side of the track as it runs down to Loch Eishort, located five miles to the west of Broadford, the second largest town on the Isle of Skye. Broadford has a good provision of daily amenities, supermarkets, a petrol station, a post office, a bank, and Skye's main hospital.

A selection of craft shops and artists' studios line the bay in neighbouring Scalpay, Paabay and Torridon and boat trips operating out of Kyle and Kyleakin offer pick-ups at either of Broadford's two piers. Further afield, Glenshiel, Coran, and Arnisdale villages are all within around 50 miles.

The location offers excellent scope for mountain walking and hiking through the surrounding landscape, awash with extraordinary wildlife. The area is also renowned for a Bortle Grade-2 night sky: Aurora Borealis, The Milky Way, and noctilucent clouds make regular and spectacular appearances.

Inverness, with regular rail services and flights to London and other UK and European destinations, lies just over 90 miles to the northeast. Fort William is a gateway to the islands and sits around 68 miles southeast.

Council Tax Band: D

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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”.