

LOCH, STOCK & BARREL

Terry and Shirley Rose were inspired to build a striking Modernist home and re-locate to the Highlands after finding their dream plot on the shores of a sea loch

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The Roses' house
occupies a stunning
site overlooking
Loch Broom





Stumbling across a broken For Sale sign while visiting friends in the northwest Highlands was the start of a shoreline self-build project for Terry and Shirley Rose. Though at the time nothing stood on the plot near Ullapool, on the edge of Loch Broom, the couple could definitely see the potential in this patch of rough grassland rolling down to the beach, overlooking several Munros and the Summer Isles. 'We loved the feeling of escape on our regular visits here,' says Shirley, 'and we found that there were affordable pockets of land, and so a decision was made.' It was a leap of faith for the couple – who were living 600 miles away at the time – which culminated, just 18 months later, with the delivery of a contemporary-style modular building to match the majestic sea loch setting.

The original plan, however, had been slightly different. After seeing an article in **coast** about a couple who had built a prefabricated house on a beach, Terry and Shirley were inspired to do the same, only somewhat closer to their home in Hertfordshire. 'I inherited a modest amount of money from my father and we wanted to spend it on something special,' recalls Terry, whose background is in property. 'So we decided to buy a small plot beside the sea.' But finding a parcel of land on the south coast that suited their budget was easier said than done. 'We got precisely nowhere,' recalls Shirley, adding that they were ready for a change after their children had grown up and left home.

It was through friends in Ullapool that they got to know this particular stretch of Scottish coastline, leading to that chance encounter with their dream site. Buying the plot, though, turned out to be a long and drawn-out process. The land itself had been the former site of a small community school, which had recently been

OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT The striking string-and-nail art triptych was made by Shirley with a kit from Dutch online company Momantai; windows are triple-glazed aluminium, perfect for salty, coastal weather conditions; the leather sofa and oversized armchair are by Barker & Stonehouse ABOVE, LEFT The house is clad in rough Siberian larch ABOVE, RIGHT Shirley and Terry and labradoodle Juno are enjoying their new surroundings in Scotland

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dismantled and relocated to the centre of Ullapool. Planning permission for a 'decrofted' area such as this lasts just five years – and the Roses were reaching the end of this time slot before they'd even started negotiating – resulting in a cliffhanger of a purchase. Once the deal was sealed, literally on day 'four years and 364', Terry and Shirley were motivated to create something that was worth the ride.

A HIGHLAND FLING

One advantage of the lengthy buying process was getting to know the local community, which the Roses found hugely friendly and welcoming. 'We soon realised that this was going to be more than a holiday home,' Terry says. 'We moved on to researching modular prefabricated buildings of

TERRY & SHIRLEY'S FOOD GUIDE TO ULLAPOOL

- **For fish and chips**, go to The Seaforth (01854 612122, theseaforth.com)
- **For a restaurant** with great food and plenty of atmosphere try The Arch Inn (01854 612454, thearchinn.co.uk) or The Ceilidh Place (01854 612103, theceilidhplace.com).
- **The Gallery Café** sells tasty lunches and you can also buy stunning landscape

photographs of the Highlands by Angus Bruce and others (01854 613769).

- **West Coast Delicatessen** sells superb local cheeses, handmade sandwiches and pastries. Stop here for a coffee (01854 613450, westcoastdeli.co.uk).
- **Food For Thought** sells sausages, local meats and fresh fish (01854 612416, foodforthoughthighland.co.uk).

- **Ullapool Smokehouse** has smoked salmon and trout from sustainable sources, plus tasty smoked cheese (01854 613881, ullapoolsmokehouse.com).
- **Gelato of Ullapool** sells homemade ice cream from Point Cottage on the harbour front (07790 338889).
- **Buy fresh seafood** straight from the boats in the harbour in the late afternoon.

Within minutes of walking down to the beach, Shirley has found an upturned boat where she can sit and sketch



the dramatic setting, Boutique Modern was able to add 300mm to the height of its standard model, a turf roof (planted with a mixture of grasses and wildflowers), solar panels and luxurious touches, in the way of the sleek, modern kitchen and bathroom fittings, a veranda and a wood-burning stove in the open-plan living area.

PREFAB AND FABULOUS

Gaining planning for the build was surprisingly straightforward: the site already had permission for a traditional 1.5-storey house. Terry and Shirley's adjustment of this spec to a Modernist prefabricated home with a turf roof went down well with the planners because it sat so well in the surroundings. Terry put across their plans in a PowerPoint presentation, supplemented by watercolours by Shirley, an art teacher. 'The planners were very open to our ideas,' Terry says.

The construction took place at the Boutique Modern factory premises in Newhaven, close to where Terry and Shirley's son, Mitch, is studying at Sussex University, so it was very easy for them to visit and deal quickly with every detail. 'Their early decision-making allowed us to nearly complete the interior of each module in our factory and to install an almost finished home in no time at all,' says company director Dick Shone.

The build process started in December 2013 and was sited in May 2014, after a long and inevitably protracted journey on five lorries. 'The seven modules were craned into position one day and we honestly could have moved in the next,' Terry marvels. 'It was amazing, the final stage of putting the pieces together was so quick.' Local tradesmen had already built the new access road and the foundations, then continued working on the cladding and the dry-stone walling that wraps around the base, while connecting the house to the new electricity and water supplies.

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architectural interest, knowing that the demands a long-distance build were out of the question.'

Terry and Shirley came across a company called Boutique Modern (boutiquemodern.co.uk) near Brighton, and felt its design-led, sustainable ethos was very much in line with what they wanted. The company was happy to create a bespoke building for them. The result is clean-lined, angular, and clad in rough Siberian larch for an organic feel that melds with the landscape. Windows are triple-glazed aluminium, perfect for the salty, coastal weather conditions.

Describing the views from the site as amazing is an understatement – you can see all the major mountain ranges in the region and look out across the water, or even catch sight of the Northern Lights, at the right time of year. In keeping with

OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP The kitchen adjoins the dining area and the sitting area; the bespoke building sits well in its surroundings; the dining table was made to order by Troddenwood from reclaimed scaffolding planks. ABOVE, LEFT Stag coat hooks were a must-have for a home set in this dramatic environment ABOVE, RIGHT The wood-burning stove in the living room is by Westfire. The split-face tiles behind it are from Marble Mosaics



As Terry and Shirley already knew they wanted to make Ullapool their home, Shirley decided to leave her teaching job in December that year, and they moved up at Christmas upon selling their home. Shirley has found a new outlet here for her creative talents – completing a number of interior upcycling projects, including resurfacing a set of wooden side tables with a graphic, monochrome ink pattern, and a series of stunning Pop Art interpretations of an Old Master portrait in nails and string. A console behind the Barker & Stonehouse sofa, made from reclaimed scaffolding planks, now displays an artistic and ever-changing collection of beach finds.

BRAND-NEW BEGINNINGS

As a business project, the couple have since bought Westlea House, in the centre of Ullapool, which they are converting into the town's first boutique B&B. It has living accommodation, so Sealoch House is currently available as a holiday let, while Terry and Shirley are fully involved with this new endeavour. 'We wanted a business where we could work together, and meet people, which we both enjoy, and where Shirley could use her design skills. I have so much experience in property that opening a B&B was the obvious solution,' says Terry.

Since re-locating, the pair have immersed themselves in the community, and Shirley has joined a coastal rowing group. 'There is an annual skiff-rowing championship, which locals take very seriously,' she enthuses. She is also keen to buy a couple of kayaks, for use on the loch. 'Kayaking is a great way of seeing the local wildlife. We have already spotted a sea otter, seals and porpoises here. A hundred dolphins swam past the other day.' Their Labradoodle, Juno, is a new addition to the menagerie, and clearly loving the open spaces and nature all around.



OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Enjoying the views from the bath in the master bedroom is a delight; the stag and forest details in the double room are a fun, graphic nod to the house's surroundings; the patchwork animal skin rug hanging above the bed, framed in reclaimed wood, is from Achica. ABOVE, LEFT A veranda wraps around the exterior of the building ABOVE, RIGHT There is even a view from the shower

'OUR CHILDREN LOVE COMING UP HERE. IT HAS GIVEN OUR FAMILY A NEW LEASE OF LIFE'

Shirley has also found the time to paint, which she loves, while Terry is enjoying the fantastic walking and motor-biking opportunities in the locality. The annual music festival Loopallu (Ullapool spelt backwards) is another lively occasion, bringing a party spirit to this usually peaceful part of the world. 'There is just so much to do here,' they both agree. 'We have not had time to be homesick and our children love coming up here. It has given our family a new lease of life.'

Sealoch House is available to let at sealochhouse.co.uk. To plan a trip to Ullapool, see visitscotland.com. Go to coastmagazine.co.uk for more coastal homes around the UK

