

Go with the flow



Waterfell is a contemporary holiday home cantilevered over a burn in a stunning location

Words: **Nichola Hunter**

It had to be a property that excited the senses and where guests would be happy to stay for a week," says the owner of the newly

built, Waterfell.

Former chartered building surveyor, Terry Rose and his wife, Shirley who was an art teacher moved from Hertfordshire in 2014 after building Sealoch House near Ullapool. This bold, modular building launched their self-catering business and along with Westlea House, their B&B, the couple were soon welcoming visitors all year.

"Both businesses have proved to be very popular and we really enjoy them," Terry recalls, "but we wanted to give ourselves options given that we are in our early 60s. If at some point in the future, we've had enough of the hard work that running the B&B entails, we might decide to move into Sealoch House. Building another small building to complement Sealoch House it could become an art studio for Shirley, or we could continue to rent it and supplement any pension we might have."

However, land in this scenic and rugged area isn't easy to come by and of course would be an additional expense but the solution was on Terry and Shirley's doorstep. "We have about two thirds of an acre at Sealoch House which was plenty of space but we had to deliver a solution that wouldn't interfere with the experience that Sealoch offers.

Guests love the privacy and that was really important to us; we didn't want that to change."

After careful consideration a secluded spot near the entrance of the plot was chosen. It wouldn't be an easy place in which to build but it had the wow factor that the couple were looking for. "For Sealoch we used a builder in Sussex because that was near to where we were living but for this build, we were keen to use a Scottish builder. We'd come across the award-winning Echo Living and loved the exciting and different modular solutions they produced. They're known for doing small, interesting, one-off timber buildings, built in their workshops and then delivered to site, and that's what we were looking for."

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Visually the burn location ticked all the boxes but it also caused a few headaches. "It was a plus and minus using the burn as a focal point. During the planning application process SEPA insisted that the building floor level be 3m above the burn level. This meant ground levels around the building had to be raised and the floor levels became significantly higher than originally envisaged. The bonus is that out of every window at Waterfell you get fantastic views."

The other stipulations came from Terry and Shirley. "We knew we wanted a separate bedroom. That might sound ridiculous but so many holiday homes today have combined spaces—a bed in the middle of the room with a sofa or there's minimal cooking facilities.



It's fine for three nights but we like the flexibility of separate, fully equipped spaces."

Next on the must-have list was a handmade super-king size bed, a separate en suite with bath and powerful shower and a full-size working kitchen complete with an induction hob, oven and a large retro fridge freezer.

"These were the parameters we gave to Echo. The building had to be clad in timber to complement Sealoch House but not to mimic that building's style so that it had its own distinct identity. They suggested a jewel-shaped, dual level building sitting inside a drystone wall enclave cantilevering over the burn. The design didn't need a lot of refining."

Planning permission was granted on 30 March 2020 just as lockdown hit. The couple pushed on with any parts of the construction such as groundworks, foundations and drainage that they could using great local contractors and their persistence eventually paid off with them welcoming their first guests on 24 July this year. "The most frustrating thing for us is normally we would stay in the property for a while to get a feel for how the space works but we ran out of time."

Whilst they have incorporated art from local artists such as Rowena Dugdale's one-off cushions, a piece of art that really stands out is Shirley's mural which covers the sliding doors and cupboards in the entrance hall. "We wanted to break up the wall of timber and I think it really works."

Due to lockdown, Waterfell's journey has been longer than anticipated but fortunately the wait has been worth it. "It's surpassed our expectations." Shouldn't be a problem finding guests who want to stay for a week then...

Waterfell.co.uk



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