

# BEST USE OF TIMBER 2015 SHORTLIST

AS PART OF THE ANNUAL RIAS AWARDS SCHEME, FORESTRY COMMISSION SCOTLAND AND WOOD FOR GOOD HAVE COMBINED TO SPONSOR A NEW AWARD AIMED AT ENCOURAGING INNOVATIVE AND CREATIVE USE OF TIMBER IN NEW BUILDINGS IN SCOTLAND



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Coimisean na Coilltearachd Alba

**Architecture & Design Scotland**  
Ailtèarachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba

## BEACH HOUSE

**Location:** Morar  
**Date Completed:** July 2014  
**Building Type:** Holiday home  
**Architect:** Dualchas Architects  
**Main Contractor:** AN Fraser Joinery  
**Timber Supplier:** Russwood

### THE PROJECT

The site is located three miles South of Mallaig, overlooking the White Sands of Morar, with the Small Isles of Rum, Eigg, Muck, and Canna as a scenic backdrop. Two traffic arteries in the middle distance, the West Highland Railway and the Road to the Isles, follow the contours of the coast, leaving the sloped site confined between the two.

To address the site conditions, the holiday house consists of two stacked volumes with perpendicular focal points. The cantilevered first floor establishes a distinct connection to the distant scenery, while the ground floor below creates a focused view of the fabric of the immediate site.

In order to found the dwelling on the site's natural soil, the ground floor has been sunk at entrance level. This gives the dwelling the appearance of a single storey volume when approached from the site's narrow access track. Two long external retaining walls, at either side of the fully glazed eaves, mould the surrounding ground to slope gently towards the building, making the sites vegetation the focus for the bedrooms.

On the first floor, comprising all public spaces, the eaves are fully closed, pushing the visitors view towards the scenery.

The exterior of the building is treated with the same principle. A dual pitched roof is a universally understood rural typology. This building is stripped of its stereotypical attributes and the first floor is displayed on the recessed ground floor plinth, allowing the vernacular form to become the only focus.

### USE OF TIMBER

The building is finished with a timber rain screen. A feature of its use in this building is the scale. Familiar materials come with a standard profile, here the scale is broken, the boards are sawn in half and repeated along the whole of the facade without any interruptions.

Rainwater run-off is controlled on the protective layer, a single ply membrane, set back from the bedroom windows.

All walls, both inside and outside, are white washed and continue past the insulated envelope. This absence of materiality provides a blank canvas to the interior, giving dominance to natural light as it is projected across all walls and mirrored on the lacquered concrete floor. On the exterior retaining walls, the form of the building is cast as an ever changing shadow throughout the course of the day.

Photography: Andrew Lee



