

10 Spectacular coastal homes

Rich rewards await those with the courage to take on seaside sites

WORDS ANNA WINSTON

Building by the sea offers some of the best views and a quality of life that can't be replicated anywhere else, so it's no surprise that many are drawn to the coast when planning their dream homes – it isn't always easy though. The salty air takes its toll on materials, the land often poses construction challenges, old infrastructure can be costly to update and there may be flooding concerns. But these stunning houses show the end result can be worth every ounce of effort.



1 CANTILEVERED DESIGN The rocky landscape of Karpathos, an island off the south-west coast of Greece, provides the spectacular setting for this four-bedroom home perched above the Aegean Sea with views of the windsurfers on Afiarti beach.

The owners, a couple with grown-up children, have travelled to Greece many times over the years to pursue their hobby of windsurfing. They asked Ooak Architects to create a contemporary house

while leaving its surroundings as untouched as possible. The 4,041sqm site has two plateaus, with the 200sqm home cantilevering out from the higher one so that it looks as though it's hovering above the sea.

Made from concrete cast on site, the structure is left exposed on the outside. Much of the interior is arranged around an internal courtyard, protected from the wind. The build cost was around £1,727 per sqm, including furniture. (oakarchitects.com) »

2 ABOVE THE PLAIN Designed by Rich Naish of RTA Studio as a holiday home for his family, Buckleton's Bach is built on a difficult site on the Tawharanui Peninsula 50 miles north of Auckland, New Zealand. Just 20m from the sea's high tide mark, it is in an overland flow path that floods whenever it rains.

Rich created a three-bedroom, two-bathroom 170sqm house – complete with a boatshed – on a relatively modest

budget of around £458,000. The building is supported on slender columns, protecting it from the water and extending 12m into the ground to withstand coastal erosion. On the lower floor, a bedroom and bathroom sit between the boathouse and the living, kitchen and dining room at the front, where a spiral staircase leads down to the beach. There are two more bedrooms, one with an en-suite bathroom, and a snug on the upper level. (rtastudio.co.nz)



3 SLOPING SOLUTION Built for a young family on the coast of County Sligo, Ireland, Oisri is a five-bedroom 320sqm home that sits on the side of a mountain between two bays in an area known for its archaeological importance and arresting views.

Designed by MacGabhann Architects to replace a two-storey house, the building has an angled roof that dips and rises to reflect the shape of the landscape. The living spaces are arranged on three staggered levels, helping the house cling to the steep site.

On the first floor, the entrance opens into a hallway with high, angled ceilings. The roof then slopes down to the open-plan living area and up again into the den, which is at the same height as the nearby trees. The bedrooms are on the lower level and a stepped, terraced garden provides each storey with access to the outdoor space. (macgabhannarchitects.ie)



Naturally weathering cladding materials such as local cedar wood were used alongside structural steel and concrete to extend the life of the house



+ **WATERSIDE DECK** Wittman Estes overhauled and extended a 1940s beach house on the eastern shore of the Hood Canal in Washington, USA. The practice's brief was to create a multigenerational home for a retired couple who wanted to have their children and grandchildren over to stay. The two-bedroom house was extended with two projecting wings, supported by slim pier foundations to tread as lightly on the fragile shore as possible. This doubled the number

of bedrooms to four and increased the total living space to 188sqm, with construction costs of around £530,000.

The architects also created an outdoor kitchen and deck so that the couple can host meals with their neighbours and family. Naturally weathering cladding materials such as local cedar wood were used alongside structural steel and concrete to extend the life of the house and ensure it is easy to maintain. To limit the impact on the site, native and drought-tolerant plants were added to the landscaping. (wittman-estes.com) >>



LISTED RENOVATION Originally a fisherman's cottage with small rooms and windows, this listed four-bedroom stone house in Elie, Scotland, was bought by a couple with family ties to the area.

They were looking for a holiday home and potential permanent home. As they have two school-age children who love the beach, the seafront location was ideal – unlike the layout, lack of storage and plastic conservatory at the rear.

WT Architecture was commissioned to rethink the property. One of the reception rooms has become a large entrance porch with space to store coats and shoes. Two new extensions include the dining room, as well as the kitchen and living spaces with glazed walls facing the water.

The additions form a new courtyard that has access to the shore through the sea wall, and are clad in copper, which embraces the weathering effect of the sea. (wtarchitecture.com)



6 RUGGED RETREAT Casa en El Torón is the first house in a masterplan by Mexico City-based Ignacio Urquiza Arquitectos for the 10,000sqm El Torón nature reserve. It will be a holiday retreat for the reserve's owners, a couple with a young family who live in the city. To break down its scale, reduce its impact on the reserve and navigate the incredibly steep slope, the 850sqm house is split across three pavilions.

The main one has two levels, with a bedroom and studio below the living, dining and kitchen areas. Close by is a single-storey structure with two double bedrooms and a sheltered patio. At the top of the site the third pavilion has a big kitchen and living space flanked by a long terrace. There is no glazing – the bedrooms are protected by adjustable screens of wooden louvres. No cars are allowed on the site, so golf carts and motorbikes had to be used to transport all of the materials. (ignaciourquiza.mx) »



7 WALL OF GLASS Located in the dunes next to Thy National Park in North Jutland, Denmark, Light House is a four-bedroom new-build made by updating and extending a traditional A-frame house. Designed by Søren Sarup of Puras Architecture as a holiday home for his family, the project involved adding a single-storey rectangular structure at the front, creating a floor area of 153sqm, with exposed and covered terraces surrounding the living spaces.

Tall, wide windows capture the views – even the bath looks out towards the water. The rectangular half of the house includes the living, kitchen and dining room and the main bedroom suite. In the A-frame is a spacious bedroom, a smaller bedroom/ playroom and, on the top floor, a bedroom that doubles as a small living room with panoramic views. The exterior walls are clad in untreated Douglas fir planks, while the sloping roof of the A-frame is covered with natural slate. (puras.dk)



8 RUSTIC CHARM After buying an old timber-framed miner's cottage in Chapel Porth on the north Cornish coast, a couple of keen surfers and their young son set about transforming it into a family home. Having asked local architecture firm Märraum to help them reimagine the house, they tackled the project management and much of the construction and decoration themselves.

The three-bedroom cottage had long, thin rooms that didn't capitalise on the views out towards the beautiful sandy beach. Internal walls were removed to create a living, kitchen and dining space on the ground floor, and a new black-framed steel staircase with open treads and bannisters leads upstairs while letting the light move through the house.

The bedrooms and living space look down to the sea through large windows, a picture window above the stairs captures the sunsets, and new portholes at each end of the house add plenty of nautical character. (marraum.co.uk) »



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9 ECO BENEFITS Replacing a 1930s bungalow that was on the verge of collapse, this two-storey, four-bedroom home overlooks Cornwall's Mawgan Porth headland. Its owner wanted a house with good eco credentials, so Kast Architects created a highly insulated timber frame, forming an air-tight structure with low heating costs, and included photovoltaic (PV) panels on the roof to generate electricity.

The 211sqm house cost £530,000 to build and is clad in various thicknesses of Cornish larch to create a striking textured effect. Inside, the ground-floor spaces are orientated towards the sea views, with an open-plan kitchen and dining room that can be separated from the living area using hidden sliding doors, and an accessible bedroom and bathroom. Upstairs, all three bedrooms have views of the sea, and the upper level is set back to create a west-facing roof terrace leading from the main bedroom. (kastarchitects.com)



10 REMOTE LIVING

10 Until it closed in 2008, the Clasmol Primary School on the Isle of Harris in the Hebrides was known as Scotland's smallest school, with just four pupils. It's been turned into a two-bedroom holiday home by a couple from Edinburgh with family connections to the island. They asked local practice Porteous Architecture to extend the 72sqm structure on a budget of around £250,000.

A curved, 50sqm timber-frame addition allowed them to retain as much of the original building as possible. The two-bedroom house includes an open-plan kitchen, dining and living space with views over Loch a Siar to West Harris. As the remote site had no mains water supply, a new filtration and storage system was added, but the playground was retained, complete with its painted hopscotch pattern. (porteousarchitecture.co.uk) **GD**

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