

MATERIAL
CONSIDERATIONS
A NATURAL FACTORY

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CASE STUDY
THE STONE HOUSE







With thanks to Ewen Wetherspoon, NORD and Sust. for imagery

Stone features

Although in larger buildings stone signifies wealth, power, and permanence, when used at a domestic scale and based on local craft traditions, it appears modest and natural. The objective here was to re-interpret stone at a domestic scale, going beyond craft to a more modern approach for the 21st century. The heaviness and linear quality of the stone (the Caithness stone wall to the street and gable elevations of the house weighs 68 tonnes), is contrasted in this house with larch cladding to the rear, to soften the garden elevation. The fabric and geometry of the building combine to make this structure a permanent marker and gateway to the site.

Special techniques

The house takes on an overt physical expression through the use of the Caithness stone, which roots the building to the site and locates the building in the wider landscape. The application of materiality also seeks to express a positive and meaningful relationship between architecture and landscape, beyond the use of materials simply as decorative aspects of the building and site. As if excavated from the surrounding landscape, the stone, now reassembled on the buildings façades, will appear like the dry stone walls found throughout Scotland.

CASE STUDY

THE STONE HOUSE

Name of building

The Stone House

Date completed

2010

Building type

Residential

Location

Scotland's Housing Expo, Milton of Leys, Inverness

Architect

NORD

Client

Highland Housing Alliance / Robertson Highland

Stone type

Caithness stone

Main contractor / stone supplier

Robertson Highland

Caithness Stone Industries, Wick

Anticipated lifespan

> 100 years

Background to building

The 'Stone House' is a terrace of four family sized houses, each orientated around a private garden with the upper levels having access to a private terrace. As the name suggests, the building is externally constructed from Caithness stone. The designers drew on vernacular forms, to create a long, low, one and a half storey terrace with an inhabited roof space, using indigenous materials and the specific landscape setting as inspiration with its seasonal changes in colour, texture and light.

Environmental impact was an important issue for the Expo event, and in this case, this was explored in detail to ensure a sustainable approach to the construction and end use of the building. The super insulated main structural elements were manufactured off-site locally and delivered to site for a quick assembly. This timber frame structure was then clad in indigenous stone and timber. The house is insulated to 'passive house' standard, using locally sourced materials where possible.

Material Considerations

A Natural Factory

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