

# BEST USE OF TIMBER 2013 WINNER

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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RIAS



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## ABBOTSFORD CONSERVATION & VISITORS BUILDING

**Location:** Abbotsford, Melrose  
**Date Completed:** July 2012  
**Building Type:** Visitors Centre  
**Architect:** LDN Architects  
**Client:** Abbotsford Trust  
**Contract value:** £3.2 million  
**Main Contractor:** Border Construction Ltd  
**Timber Supplier:** Metsa Wood UK Ltd

### THE PROJECT

The Reception Building welcomes visitors to Abbotsford, the former home of Sir Walter Scott. Conceived as a modern gate lodge and sited at the eastern edge of Abbotsford's outstanding designed landscape, it is built partly into the hillside to reduce its scale. It has a calm contemporary appearance and open plan layout, which contrasts with the highly decorated and hierarchical Scottish Baronial architecture of Abbotsford.

The building incorporates a reception, café, shop, toilets and interpretation facilities. The flat roof is finished with a sedum blanket minimising the impact of the building's footprint and reducing rainwater run-off. Rainwater is stored in a reclamation tank and reused to flush the WCs. The building's main spaces are naturally ventilated and a heat recovery air-handling unit serves the exhibition space. Underfloor heating in every space is provided using a ground source heat pump connected to boreholes under the carpark. As much natural light as possible has been allowed in to the building.

### USE OF TIMBER

Timber construction is used in every aspect of the Abbotsford Reception Building: in structural elements; the cladding and linings; and fixtures and fittings. The use of this natural material acknowledges the fact that timber is, arguably, the only truly sustainable construction material.

The building's timber portal frame structure consists of laminated timber columns and beams. This frame supports cross-laminated timber panels that form the intermediate floor and roof structure. All structural timber is made of FSC-certified Finnish Spruce. The system allowed for off-site fabrication and was erected on site within approximately three weeks.

All timber in the building has been left with a natural finish. Open-jointed horizontal untreated European Oak boards clad all external solid walls. The wall construction, which features wood fibre insulation panels, is breathable both to help control the internal environment and to avoid pathologies often associated with water trapped in the fabric during construction. Oak is also used internally: as wall linings to finish ceilings and walls; in the feature staircase; and for internal fittings including the reception desk.



