

BEST USE OF TIMBER 2016 WINNER

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



Wood for Good
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Forestry Commission Scotland
Coimisean na Coilltearachd Alba

Architecture & Design Scotland
Ailtearachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba

BLAKEBURN

Location: Roxburghshire
Date Completed: September 2015
Building Type: Private House
Architect: A449
Client: Anna Karczewska
Main Contractor: Ainslie Contracting Ltd

Timber Supplier: Rembrand Timber Ltd

THE PROJECT

The project at Blakeburn cottage involved the complete overhaul of a nondescript mid-20th Century dwelling in order to create a unique and elegant home in a rural location. The footprint was extended to the east and west of the existing building, with the entire building then over clad in scorched larch.

Given the prominent position of the building any new works had to be articulated to minimise the visual impact of creating a larger building on the site. This was achieved by referencing the simple gable form of the existing building, and utilising a restrained material palette sympathetic to the site. The result is a refined form with an external appearance that allows the building to blend into the woods to the east of the site.

A full internal strip out allowed for the creation of flexible accommodation on one level featuring double height space in all rooms engaging the roof pitch void. The building is highly insulated with underfloor heating and hot water provided by an air source heat pump, ensuring long-term running costs are kept to a minimum.

The client works from home so the brief prioritised the quality and relationships between internal spaces. The internal arrangement was conceived as a series of cellular spaces particular to the client's activities during the day. All rooms are linked by a corridor, that runs the length of the north elevation.

To the east end is the writer's studio space, where multiple picture windows frame views to the morning light filtering through the woods. At the west end of the building, capturing late afternoon and evening sun is the kitchen and dining space. As in all principal rooms this also features large windows to allow key views to the surrounding countryside together with direct access to the south facing terrace and orchard beyond.

USE OF TIMBER

Irrespective of the choice of cladding material, the majority of A449 Ltd projects utilise timber frame construction due to the inherent sustainable, thermal, economic and ease of construction properties of timber. In this instance the extension to the building was formed from a 200x50mm softwood with rigid insulation between and across the studs. The existing part of the building was completely stripped out and relined to form a completely insulated timber frame.

The external cladding is formed from 45x38mm open jointed vertical larch battens, reverse fixed through a horizontal cross larch batten. This forms a panel roughly 1200mm wide that is then lifted into place and fixed through gaps to a sub frame fixed to the timber kit structure. This ensures that no fixings are visible to the elevation and contributes to the restrained aesthetic.

Scorching larch emphasises the grain in the timber, accentuating the individuality of each piece, but importantly this process seals in the extracts in the wood that encourage a high resistance to decay. This allows control of the process of the silvering of the timber, but the client here was keen to maintain the scorched appearance. The natural preservatives in the wood were supplemented with a clear UV lacquer to further increase durability and longevity of appearance.

The choice of timber cladding was sympathetic to the woodland context, and using this material minimised the visual impact of creating a larger building on the site. The sun casts shadows of trees onto the west gable of the property, allowing it to truly blend in with its environment.

Images: David Barbour and A449 LTD



