

BEST USE OF TIMBER 2016 SHORTLIST

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



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RIAS



Forestry Commission Scotland
Coimisean na Coilltearachd Alba

Architecture & Design Scotland
Ailtearachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba

LAGGAN LOCKS

Location: North Laggan
Date Completed: February 2016
Building Type: Tourism / Leisure
Architect: Sean Douglas and Gavin Murray
Client: Scottish Canals

Main Contractor: A.N. Joinery
Timber Supplier: Rembrand Timber Ltd

THE PROJECT

The project at Laggan Locks is a collaborative work by Sean Douglas and Gavin Murray (D&M) and Oliver Chapman Architects (OCA). It forms the second phase of Scotland's Scenic Routes initiative, which aims to enhance visitor experiences of Scotland's landscape, improve rural economies and in particular to showcase young design talent.

Scottish Canals were seeking to create a unique 'stopping off' opportunity at Laggan Locks on the Caledonian Canal for visitors travelling along the A82 and for the 30,000 visitors travelling the Great Glen Way by boat, on foot or by bike. The two spits of land protruding into Loch Lochy allow visitors to engage with the Loch and its surroundings.

The proposal creates a simple sheltered space that can be used all year round. The key elements of the programme, café/kiosk and toilet/shower facilities are separated but unified by one roof to create a covered platform within the structure. This space forms a passage through which visitors can catch a glimpse of the Great Glen as they approach and pass through into the covered viewpoint. In high season the café will open up to the sheltered space while in the winter can be shut down securely while still providing a sheltered viewpoint down the Great Glen.

The design of the camping pods share silhouette-like forms with the café, eroded and sculpted from cubic volumes and clad in the same manner to create an architectural family on the canal side.

USE OF TIMBER

A key aim of the competition brief was to focus on the use of sustainable materials. Timber was used extensively on this project, both to create the superstructure and in the cladding and roof coverings.

Given the remote location, the decision was made to create prefabricated timber cassette wall panels at the contractors yard in Glasgow and transport these for assembly on site. This allowed for speedy erection on site and reflected the character of the project and its woodland/canalside setting.

A concrete slab was constructed as a solid foundation for the entirely timber construction above. The dramatic roof cantilever is achieved through subdivision into five prefabricated trusses, which are anchored back to the structure in strategic locations, allowing for the open corner to the viewpoint. Similarly the camping pods are entirely timber buildings constructed on minimal concrete pad footings.

Canalside architecture has a monochromatic vernacular that is immediately recognisable and apparent whether in neighbouring buildings or canal locks themselves. The charred larch exterior cladding is carried over to the roof to create a unified form and in doing so provides a protective envelope for the building. The charring process provides the building envelope with a sustainable and durable exterior cladding using traditional methods.

White stained timber cladding to the interior provides the stark contrast that is reminiscent of typical canal architecture, while providing an easily maintainable finish.

Images: David McKenna



