

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



Wood for Good
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RIAS



Forestry Commission Scotland
Coimisean na Coilltearachd Alba

Architecture & Design Scotland
Ailtearachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba

THE PYRAMID VIEWPOINT

Location: Inveruglas
Date Completed: May 2015
Building Type: Viewpoint
Architect: BTE Architecture
Main Contractor: Land Engineering

Timber Supplier: Russwood

THE PROJECT

The site is located on a peninsula overlooking Loch Lomond, the U.K.'s largest stretch of inland water. An existing café marks the entrance for visitors arriving either by car from the A82, or by boat. From the car park, a system of pathways lead onto the peninsula and continue along its exposed edges formed by large rocks, or through the site sheltered by trees and bushes. The rocks locate the site high above the water's edge and a series of steps and easily accessible ramps lead the visitor through the sloped site. The pathways interlink, with rendezvous points adding emphasis to these junctions. The topography of the site allows the surrounding landscape to be experienced as a panorama, with the site itself visible from afar, as a rock amongst water.

The viewpoint takes the shape of a triangular platform and is positioned at the end of a long curved path stretching from the car park to the highest point of the peninsula. It is first seen as a narrow vertical stack amongst the trees surrounding the path. Only a glimpse towards the loch is visible through a long tunnel, marking the entrance of the viewpoint. The single storey tunnel is as narrow as the path and leads from one vertex of the triangle to its base, with views over the loch disguising the scale of the project. Only after having passed through this entrance and then looking back into the triangle does the viewpoint manifests itself as a steep rising platform, accessed by steps going up and around the perimeter of the form. Benches, interspersed between the steps, create the central core. As the structure rises the benches become more exposed, mimicking the seating arrangements of an arena.

Externally the viewpoint creates a distinctive point of attraction. With a strong visual impact it embraces the drama of the landscape. The inviting gesture of the beacon attracts visitors from a distance, to explore an alternative view, a pause in their journey on this scenic seat.

USE OF TIMBER

The sculptural character of the project is strengthened through the use of one singular material. Both walls and the horizontal steps and benches are finished with a vertical timber rain screen. Its bold appearance contrasts and compliments the various greens of its natural surroundings and the usable enclosure of the structure invites the visitor to have a seat on a warm material, that wants to be touched.

The pyramid viewpoint was realised as part of the Scottish Scenic Routes competition, an initiative by the Scottish Government with the aim of showcasing young design practices based in Scotland. The original proposal was developed and detailed by BTE according to the specific requirements as defined by the Loch Lomond and The National Park authority, who were responsible for the management and execution of the project on site.

Images: Andrew Lee



