

BEST USE OF TIMBER 2017 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



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CULARDOCH SHIELING

Location: The Cairngorms
Date Completed: October 2016
Building Type: Bothy
Architect: Moxon Architects
Client: Iwan and Manuela Wirth
Main Contractor: AJC Aboyne

Timber Supplier: Glenalmond Timber Company (Perth)

THE PROJECT

This small hut sits alone in the vast, rugged and windswept landscape of the Cairngorms, invisible from many directions thanks to the undulating topography.

The building features a distinctively informal plan form, derived from the features that surround the site, such that the line of roof eaves has been established on site to run parallel to the slope of the ground or deliberately mirror the landform according to the position of the viewer. Similarly, the playful appearance of the windows is a carefully composed response to desired views from the building that were determined while the timber frame was being erected.

The hut was commissioned as an escape, for small gatherings or parties, lunches or dinners, fitting a very long and narrow table. Sitting at the end of the table the view through each window frames a specific aspect of the landscape; a bend in the River Gairn, the grassy flood plain, the water of Allt Bad a'Mhonaich tumbling down the side of Ben Avon, the massive granite tors on the summit plateau. Its exteriors and interiors both clad in wood, with the overhanging eaves of its cruck frame roof dipping low, and the roof itself covered in moss and stone.

USE OF TIMBER

In developing the proposal, the architects looked to historic examples such as blackhouses, howffs and bothies - typologies that each owe much of their character to the use of locally sourced timber.

The ad-hoc nature of climber's howffs has directly influenced the proposal in terms of a minimal approach to the processing of the timber used and the portability of the building elements. Untreated timber has been used throughout, with air dried, un-planed and un-profiled Scottish larch being used for the external envelope - benefiting from its durability and weathering characteristics. Window openings are compact, such that the glazing is portable while the roof covering of heather has been sourced from the surrounding hillside.

The use of timber was crucial for this level of onsite control 'by sight' during the construction process through the adaptation of roof members and stud framing - no other material would have allowed for this level of adaptability during construction in such a remote location.

The interior is lined entirely with locally grown Spruce: untreated because it will be kept dry and unfinished in order that the wearing of the boards through use will become visibly apparent over time.

Images: Ben Addy



