

Taigh Coille, Aberfoyle



Client: Forestry Commission Scotland
Year: 2011
Value: £300K

‘Taigh Coille’ meaning wood house, is a purpose built ticket and office building built for the Forestry Commission Scotland at the David Marshall Lodge Visitor Centre near Aberfoyle. The building provides facilities for the high rope adventure company ‘Go-Ape’ and houses a wood-fuel storage bunker and boiler at its lower level. The new boiler provides a sustainable heating solution to feed the upgraded heating system in the existing David Marshall Lodge building.

The new building has been designed to have minimal environmental impact in its material specification. The timber structure is clad in untreated homegrown larch cladding and oak shingles which will weather naturally reducing the maintenance required in re-applying preservative treatments. A complex fire strategy was devised in conjunction with Building Control to allow the timber to remain untreated, without compromising safety for visitors and occupants. Slate sourced from the neighbouring redundant Aberfoyle quarry is used to form plinths and a feature wall. The building is highly insulated, is naturally ventilated and maximises daylight with high and low level windows. The form and positioning of the building has been designed to fit with the steep slope of the ground, with the wood-fuel installations at the lower level and the office on top, accessed from the existing ground floor car park. This has minimised ground excavations, and retains as much material on site as possible.

The design utilises untreated larch boarding, oak shingles, slate walling and a sedum roof as visual connections to the surrounding landscape. A visual connection with the existing visitor centre is made by replicating elements such as the slate wall and double post columns.

The wood-fuel installation has been produced as an exemplar project for the Forestry Commission and the building has been designed to allow public viewing into both the wood-fuel bunker and boiler room.