

BEST USE OF TIMBER 2015 SHORTLIST

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



Wood for Good
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RIAS



Forestry Commission Scotland
Coimisean na Coilltearachd Alba

Architecture & Design Scotland
Aithearachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba

MAGGIE'S LANARKSHIRE

Location: Airdrie, North Lanarkshire
Date Completed: September 2014
Building Type: Health
Architect: Reiach and Hall Architects
Client: Maggie's Cancer Caring Centre
Contract value: £1.8M
Main Contractor: John Dennis Ltd
Timber Supplier: John Dennis Ltd

THE PROJECT

Airdrie House was once defined and protected by a belt of lime trees. In 1919 its owners bequeathed Airdrie House and its lands to the people of Airdrie, and it subsequently became a maternity hospital.

In 1964 Airdrie House was demolished to make way for the Monklands Hospital and while the tree belt survived, over time car parking needs increased. The site for Maggie's Lanarkshire is located on one of these car park areas.

In a gesture that attempts to reinstate the idea of a boundary, the new Maggie's embraces two detached strands of trees with a finely articulated brick wall, bringing a sense of continuity and enclosure. The wall offers a subtle degree of separation from the hospital grounds, through its pierced nature.

The garden walls of the new Maggie's conceal a modest low building that gathers together a sequence of domestic-scaled spaces, both internal and external.

Visitors enter a quiet simple space, an arrival court, defined by low brick wall and two lime trees. A linear rill, a spring, animates the space with the sound of running water.

The building plan is perforated with four small sheltered courts, intimate external rooms embedded in the plan. Golden metal light catchers hover over these spaces and reflect sunlight onto the floor. A simple repetitive framed structure defines and creates an intimate scale while allowing spaces and rooms to either open up to the central sequence of public rooms or close down to create private moments. The journey through the building emerges out into a large walled garden; generous terraces give way to a richly planted garden.

USE OF TIMBER

At Maggie's the architects tried to explore the idea of building again – in these days of contractor designed portions, prefabrication and work-packages, they found a real joy to return to making, rather than assembling and Maggie's is wholly defined by something that can be measured by the human hand – having a level of skill and precision that would fill the building with wonderful haptic qualities, rather than that which can be easily replicated.

All the joinery at Maggie's is bespoke. A simple steel framed structure disciplines this plan by creating a forest of slender columns that define and create an infinite scale. The steel frame is in-filled in timber – creating a fine gridded timber canopy which spans between the steel columns, strengthening the idea of a forest canopy overhead.

The work of artist Steven Aalders greatly influenced the interpretation of this timber canopy. The soffit has this same rigour overhead, creating an undulating timber crown to the modest interior but much like Steven's work there is a variety of texture that helps bring colour, movement and light into the interior.

The overall timber material palette is muted and soft, blonde Finnish birch to walls, limed oak to floors and white stained pine to ceilings.

Photography: David Grandorge



