

MATERIAL
CONSIDERATIONS
A NATURAL FACTORY

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CASE STUDY
SCOTLAND'S HOUSING EXPO







With thanks to Cadell2 and Sust. for imagery

Stone features

The layout of the site demanded high quality and hardwearing street surfaces. Natural stone was used extensively, as it is a prestigious and timeless material – traditional yet modern – which would work well on a site where there are many different architectural styles. The paving on the Expo site is a mixture of Caithness flagstone paving slabs, recycled granite setts and gravel. The shared space design philosophy had a profound influence on the design of the streets and on the architecture. The concept aims for a reconciliation of life on residential streets with cars and other vehicles, establishing safe walking and cycling routes and balancing the experience of all users, from pedestrians to children playing, thus encouraging a more active and lively use of streets. It also leads to a street character with joined-up buildings and joined-up routes. The experience changes drivers' perceptions of space by using narrow streets, sharp corners, street trees, on-street parking and a strong pattern of paving highlighting pedestrian use. The urban realm is further enhanced by an interesting selection of materials incorporated into the streetscape and accesses to the various houses.

Special techniques

The materials used on the site combine new paving slabs with reclaimed setts and kerb stones to create a look that is fresh and exciting. Once part of Union Street and Church Street in Inverness, the granite setts and kerb stones formed street surfaces until they were overlaid with tarmac, between the First and Second World Wars. These had been gradually excavated over the past 10 years, during a city-wide streetscape project and had remained in storage under the protection of The Highland Council. In environmental sustainability terms, while this in itself is clearly beneficial, demonstrating the longevity of the material, the new paving slabs were quarried locally, from approx 100 miles north of Inverness from the Caithness area, generating social and economic sustainability benefits for the area. The incorporation of recycled setts and kerb stones support the Expo's sustainability credentials as well as giving a new peripheral development a connection with the historic core of the city and encouraging the continuation of traditional skills and use of local materials.

CASE STUDY

SCOTLAND'S HOUSING EXPO

Name of building

Streetscape, at Scotland's Housing Expo

Date completed

2010

Building type

Civil engineering works / landscaping

Location

Scotland's Housing Expo, Milton of Leys, Inverness

Architect / Interior designer

Cadell2

Client

Highland Housing Alliance

Stone type

Caithness flagstone and granite

Main contractor / stone supplier

GF Job

Caithness Stone Industries and The Highland Council

Anticipated lifespan

> 50 years

Background to building

Backed by The Scottish Government and The Highland Council, Scotland's first Housing Expo was an opportunity to showcase new ideas for the design of homes in Scotland. The event provided an opportunity for some of the best practices in domestic architecture and urban design to look at the issue of what makes a good place and what this means to fellow Scots. The layout and design of the site and associated landscape and streetscape were regarded as being of equal importance to the design of the houses on the site. The arrangement of terraces, avenues and streets around a central 'green', all had a different urban character allowing opportunities for different types of architectural responses and materials – from accessing a house over a bridge, to turning a street corner or designing-in home offices with a public face to a street. The masterplan also set down a vision for designing to shared space principles, prioritising pedestrians over cars, and addressed the various components of infrastructure that were seen as being vital to a successful new community.

Material Considerations

A Natural Factory

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