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Master Builder

THE MAGAZINE OF THE FEDERATION OF MASTER BUILDERS



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Stonewood Builders Ltd is the overall winner of the 2021 Master Builder Awards



Coldwells Building Company Ltd won the award for a sensitive refurbishment in Aberdeenshire.

Medium Renovation Project – Coldwells Building Company Ltd, Scotland

Project overview

The site was a neglected shambles of croft buildings, but had huge potential. Located between a pine forest and open fields, the granite cottage and neighbouring byre were built in 1869 and clumsily connected by a slate-clad extension in the 1970s. The task was to strip and refurbish the cottage and byre for the new homeowners and add a modern extension of timber and glass.

Key features and/or highlights

To add lightness to the cottage, which is over 150 years old, the team carved



openings into the granite walls and introduced expansive glazing to illuminate the home and showcase the views. The team's joiners customised birch cabinetry to run the length of the entrance hallway, providing storage and a bench to sit on when removing boots after a forest walk.

A windowless bathroom along the hallway needed light, so the team positioned a 250kg frameless skylight above the walk-in shower and bath. Charred larch, prepared through a traditional Japanese technique, 'Shou Sugi Ban', makes a unique bathroom feature wall.

The floors of the original cottage were stripped out to create a single practical and spacious, open-plan kitchen and living area.

The byre was converted into two large bedrooms, and the extension, clad in black Siberian larch, now houses a large living room and master suite.

Major challenges to overcome

- The 150-year-old byre needed to be converted into bedrooms but the wall heads were off level, the wall plates were rotten, and some of the rafters had woodworm.

- To cost-effectively repair the byre roof, the team salvaged some of the healthy rafters, treated them for woodworm and re-purposed them to build a new roof.
- Drainage was an issue too. Water pooled in the courtyard, threatening damage so the team installed a new land drain in front of the drystone dyke near the property.
- The team used a self-levelling compound and a liquid damp-proof membrane to level the cottage's kitchen floor, which was 45mm out, before laying new timber flooring.

"A combination of excellent technical skill and determination to deliver... a commendable commitment"

From the national judges