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Down to the woods

Andrew and Shirley Beveridge's self-build home, in Tweeddale in the Borders, lay at the end of a ten-year journey of buying and planning Words **Caroline Ednie** Photographs **Keith Hunter and Julie Bull**

THE self-build route to Andrew and Shirley Beveridge's new home Tighnacaille (House of the Forest) in Upper Tweeddale has been quite an odyssey. It has taken them from Brussels to the Borders, via the acquisition and management of a 34-acre wood and three-and-half years of planning process, to the end result of a western red cedar and limestone villa, in the midst of the 'forest', they now call home.

Andrew Beveridge, managing director of a medical devices company, takes up the story of the almost decade-long journey. "The woodland was part of a larger holding owned by a local shooting syndicate who had obtained planning permission to reinstate a former mansion house on another part of the land they owned. The

remainder of the woodland was also being offered for sale to the prospective purchasers of the former mansion house site and although we were unsuccessful in bidding for the mansion house site, we were given the opportunity to buy the remaining woodland.

"We had a gut feeling that the site may have planning potential in the future but it was such a lovely piece of woodland that we decided to buy it and in the worst case scenario we would own a lovely piece of the policy woodlands," continues Andrew. "After many discussions with the planners, and after undertaking to implement an extensive woodland management plan, which we are now three quarters of the way through - we were granted permission to build our house. The planners were keen to

support the innovative modern house design in the secluded woodland setting and to see the woodlands returned to their former glory as policy woodlands."

Prior to building Tighnacaille, the couple and their four children lived in Broughton in the Borders, having returned to the area after three years in Brussels. "In Belgium there is a heritage of individual house design and self-build (they say the Belgians are born with a brick in their stomach) and that inspired us to self-build when we returned to Scotland in 1997," explains Andrew. "Having built one house in Broughton, the woodland site allowed us the chance to be bold and incorporate ideas we had formulated, having been through the process before."

Tighnacaille, which emerged just before

Christmas 2009 following a year-long construction, is the result of a collaboration between the Beveridges and architect Andrew Black, of Dundee-based Andrew Black Design.

"We presented Andrew with a mood board of house designs and features that we liked, to give him a feel for the house we wanted," explains Shirley. "When we first discussed the project with Andrew, the main thing we identified was wanting a very contemporary house with lots of light and windows. We've got four kids so we also wanted a reasonable number of bedrooms and we always wanted a courtyard, but we weren't sure how we wanted the house to look. Due to the fact that we're in the middle of a wood, no one overlooks us, so it was like a blank canvas in many ways."



Above: two sloping roofed wings are linked by a double height entrance
Left: Andrew and Shirley on the staircase in their light-filled home

Andrew Black admits the final design of Tighnacaille came quite quickly. "We did a lot of 3D modelling of the building. The trees blocked quite a lot of sunlight so we worked out different times of the day and year when the light would come into the building. The idea was to bring light into the kitchen in the morning and into the living areas later in the day. The view out to the pond and the approach to the building was also carefully thought out. Because we didn't have a driveway up to the site, we decided to put in a curved entrance road, which gradually worked its way up between the trees - the idea being you get gradual glimpses of the house as you go up the driveway until the house finally reveals itself as you get up close to it."

What now reveals itself at the end of the ➤



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'In Belgium there is a heritage of individual house design and self-build and that inspired us'



woodland driveway is a five-bedroom house featuring two angled sloped roofed wings, centred on a courtyard, with a double-height entrance tower creating a connecting hub between the wings. The south wing features mainly living spaces on ground level with a master and additional bedroom and a study located above. The north wing includes three bedrooms on the upper level and ancillary accommodation as well as a games room on the ground floor extending out to the carport and garage. The south west-facing courtyard is the centre of the formal garden and overlooks the fish pond and surrounding forest.

"The house is arranged with the living areas and ours and my daughter's bedroom on one side, and the boys' rooms and games area in the other. We wanted two separate areas so that the kids don't have to be with their mum and dad," explains Andrew.

Tighnacaille was also designed with energy efficiency at its heart. "We knew we wanted to install a ground source heat pump simply because of the price of oil. And the house is all underfloor heating as we didn't want any hassle with radiators," explains Andrew. "During cold spells we have two woodburning stoves – one of them in the feature fireplace in the lounge. There are two benefits to this fireplace – it breaks up the area between the kitchen and the dining space, and the effect is wonderful as you can see it from either side. We also wanted a big fireplace as we have a lot of wood. We have no shortage of wood here!

"One of the things we were concerned about was, being in a woodland, it might get dark and gloomy, but that's not the case. Even on a dull day the house never seems dark," explains Andrew. The interior palette of light oak floors and white walls also helps, allowing light to penetrate to all areas of the house.

A series of commissioned large-scale abstract paintings by London-based artist Swartz bring colour to the space, and key pieces such as the grand piano, which is played by Shirley and the couple's daughter, also bring the living spaces to life. "The tower extension was built specifically to house the piano, the idea being that you could look out of the window when playing," explains Andrew, whose mother was a concert pianist.

Shirley is also particularly fond of the space created in the upstairs hallway.

"I couldn't visualise that space from the plans and it really exceeded my expectations. It's a lovely space. There's a sofa and I have a little



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Andy and Shirley's home
at scotlandonsunday.com/extra



Cover Story



desk with my computer." For Andrew it's the courtyard that holds a particular charm.

"Personally, when the weather's good I like the courtyard space the best. It looks over the fish-pond and the hills beyond so you don't see anything other than nature. It's a great house in such a lovely spot."

Andrew Black Design (www.andrewblackdesign.com)

Clockwise from above: a bathroom with artwork; the tower extension was built to house the grand piano; windows frame views; the kitchen dining area with feature woodburning stove; an airy bedroom; light oak floors and white walls run from the kitchen through the house

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