DETAILS

What A five-bedroom new-build house
Where South Lanarkshire
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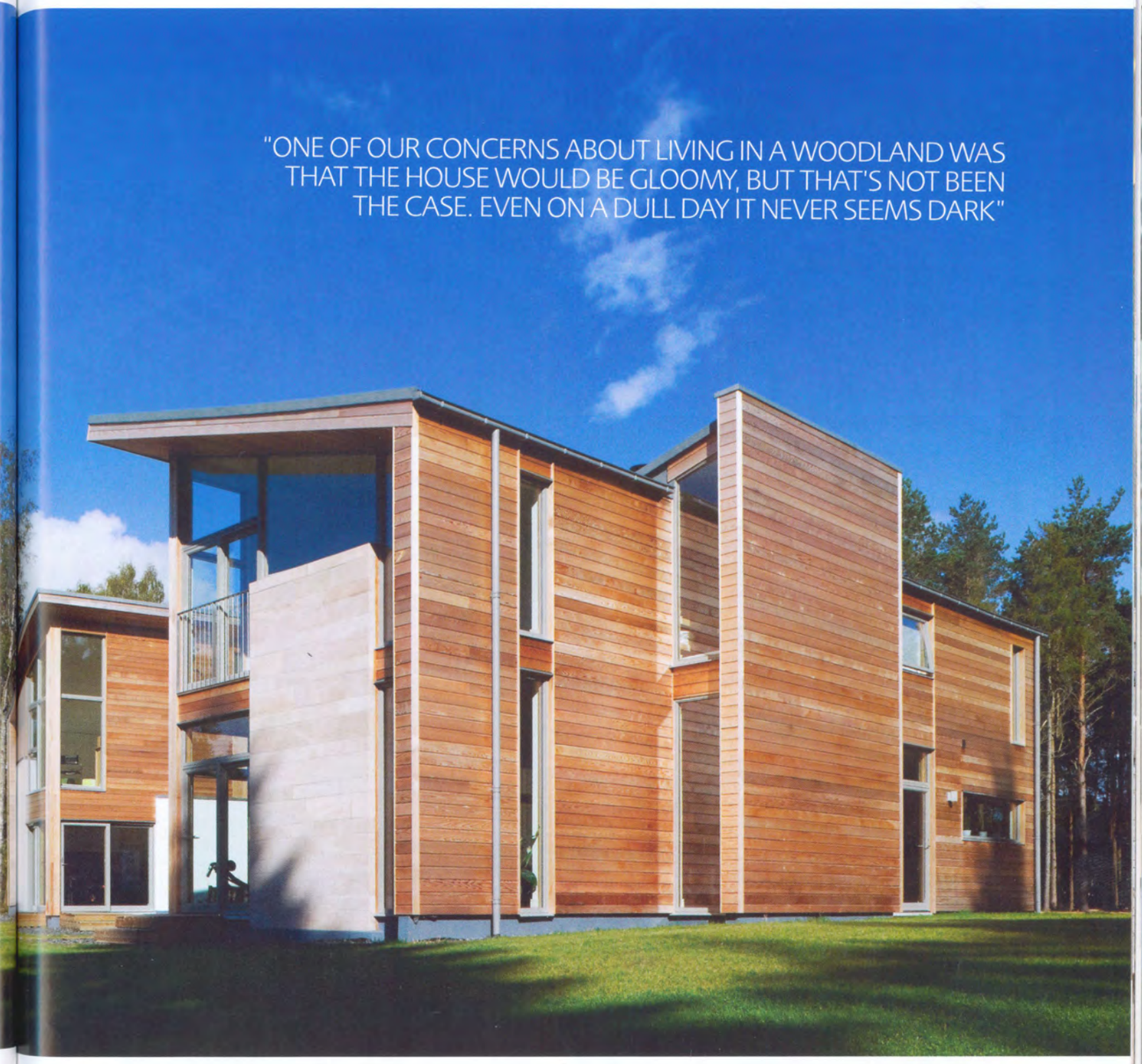
Contractor David J. Lee Ltd, Edinburgh, 07976 359405

Wooden HEART

Deep in a forest in South Lanarkshire is a spectacular new-build home made largely from natural materials – the perfect place, one family has found, to put down roots

Words **Caroline Ednie** Photography **Keith Hunter**

[**Above** and **right**] The two wings of the house are clad in red cedar and polished sandstone, with high-tech windows by glazing specialist NorDan. [**Below**] The light-filled bathroom



"ONE OF OUR CONCERNS ABOUT LIVING IN A WOODLAND WAS THAT THE HOUSE WOULD BE GLOOMY, BUT THAT'S NOT BEEN THE CASE. EVEN ON A DULL DAY IT NEVER SEEMS DARK"

BEST BIT

Andrew: "In the evening the uplighters illuminate the sandstone of the gable ends. It makes the house look incredible"

When it came to deciding where to build their new family home, Andrew and Shirley Beveridge had rather more choice than the rest of us – a full 34 acres, in fact. Having purchased a former Forestry Commission plantation of mainly Scots pine in the early 2000s and undertaken a long-term management plan for the South Lanarkshire woodland, it made sense to the couple that when it came to putting down roots, it should be in the middle of this, their very own nature reserve.

"One of the main reasons we were given planning permission to build the house is that we also undertook a woodland management plan," explains Andrew, the managing director of a medical devices company. "This was to ensure that the woods would be properly looked after, with a legacy for years to come. Back when we bought the woodland, it hadn't been touched for 30 years, and our plan – which we're about two-thirds of the way through – involves gradually replacing the conifers with a mixed broadleaf type of native woodland. It's a very natural regeneration."

In tandem with this process of regeneration, Andrew and Shirley undertook a project to build a home, Tigh na Coille (which translates as 'house of the forest'). "Since we're in the middle of a woodland, no one overlooks us, so it was like a blank canvas in many ways, which is great," explains Shirley. "When we first discussed the project with the architect, our main focus was on having a very contemporary house with lots of windows and natural daylight. We've got four children, so we needed a reasonable number of bedrooms too. And we'd always been keen on ▸

"THE FIREPLACE BREAKS UP THE AREA BETWEEN THE KITCHEN AND THE DINING SPACE. WE WANTED A BIG FIREPLACE AS WE HAVE A LOT OF WOOD – THERE'S NO SHORTAGE OF FUEL HERE!"

The sleek Hacker kitchen is from Vidaco, while the solid oak flooring was supplied by Junckers. The Spatherm woodburning stove [**below, right**] is only used occasionally as the house has super-efficient underfloor heating

having a courtyard. Having said all that, though, we weren't at all sure what we wanted the house to look like."

Architect Andrew Black, of Dundee-based Andrew Black Design, admits that the final design of Tigh na Coille, with its two angled wings in western red cedar and sandstone cladding, "came quite quickly… We did a lot of 3D modelling of the building," he explains. "Being surrounded by trees blocks quite a lot of sunlight, so using the model we worked out the different times of the day and different times of the 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 was also worked out carefully."

The approach to the building was also carefully thought out, as the architect explains: "Because we didn't have a driveway up to the site, we decided to put in a curved entrance road which worked its way between the trees – the idea being that you get gradual glimpses of the building as you go up the driveway, until the house finally reveals itself when you get there."

Essentially, the five-bedroom house features two distinct wings centred on a courtyard, with a double-height entrance tower creating a connecting hub between them. The south wing features mainly living spaces, with the master bedroom, a guest bedroom and a study on the upper level. The north wing has three bedrooms on the upper level along with ancillary accommodation, as well as a games room on the ground floor. The courtyard, which faces south-west, is the centre of the formal garden and overlooks the fish pond. The surrounding landscaping blends into the forest beyond, which minimises the impact the house makes on its setting.

EXTRA SPECIAL

Andrew: "I love being in the courtyard. It looks over the fish pond and the hills beyond, so you don't see anything other than nature"

"One of our principal concerns about living in a woodland was that the house would be dark and gloomy, but that has certainly not turned out to be the case. Even on a dull day the house never seems dark," says Andrew Beveridge. "We've kept the interior decoration simple, with light oak floors and white walls, so it's a very bright house."

Colour, he explains, was introduced via a series of large abstract paintings. "We came upon a London-based artist called Swarez whose work we really liked – it really suits our big spaces. He actually came up here with some of his paintings for us to have a look at – it was a very personal service – so we could try various canvases in different places in the house. We felt that if we weren't going to paint or paper the walls, artworks were an ideal way to add colour."

Other key pieces in the house include a grand piano (Andrew's mother is a concert pianist). "The tower extension was built specifically to accommodate the piano, the idea being that you ▸

[**Right**] The staircase was made to order by Dundee-based Metaltech UK. [**Below**] No curtains are necessary when you live in the middle of 34 acres of forest

could look out of the window while playing." The main woodburning stove is also a key feature. "Only in very cold spells do we need to supplement the underfloor heating, which is powered by a ground-source heat pump," continues Andrew. "There are two benefits to the main 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. There's no shortage of fuel here!"

The Beveridges moved into Tigh na Coille in December 2009 following a year-long period of construction. "Shirley and I were on site every couple of days. We kept a close eye on things. You have only one chance to get something like this right!" smiles Andrew.

And get it right they did, as the family are clearly not a little enamoured by their big sociable house. "We recently had a party with over a hundred people in the house," concludes Andrew. "And although the weather was drizzly, the overhanging roof meant that we were all able to enjoy the outdoor as well as the indoor space. It's a great house in such a lovely spot." ■

FAVOURITE BIT

Shirley: "The upstairs hallway. I couldn't visualise that space from the plans, and it really exceeded my expectations. It's a lovely part of the house"