

FINDHORN

The latest house is the most ambitious yet at the ecological community

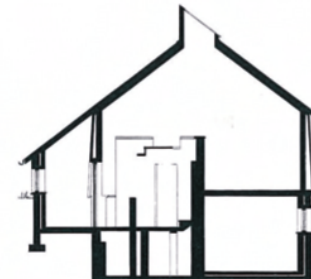
The Findhorn Foundation is a community of 150 people, with a similar number of associated individuals and businesses, who form the nucleus of a new ecologically sound, sustainable village. The community was set up in

1962 in a residential caravan park near the village of Findhorn on the southern shore of the Moray Firth. To start with, various communal buildings were erected but in the past six years a concerted effort has been made to replace the caravans with houses.

The first residential project was a cluster of single-person dwellings which re-used the Douglas fir staves of whisky vats, six metres in diameter. The first three houses were single-storey but for the most recent house architect Nicole Edmunds wanted a multi-storey building using

stone. The clients' brief was for two bedrooms, bathroom, living-room, kitchen and entrance porch, with a budget of £50,000. Given the complexities of building in a circular form (including custom-made windows and doors) this meant a floor area of about 70-75 square metres.

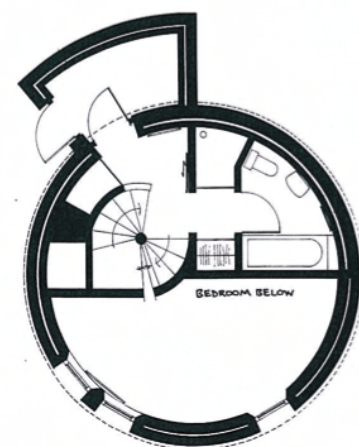
The initial concept was for two-and-a-half storeys on a stone base with a conical roof and a small extension. It was felt that the full circular space should be retained on at least one floor, preferably upstairs. To avoid sewage pumping the levels were split, with the



bathroom above ground level at the front of the house and the living-room/kitchen 1.2 metres higher.

Unlike the earlier barrel houses, the staves here are structural, strapped top and bottom with 100mm galvanised steel bands with three tensioning points. Wherever possible materials are non- or low-toxic (eg low formaldehyde orientated strand board), locally sourced (eg local sandstone) or recycled (eg the vat timbers). The 'breathing' wall incorporates blown cellulose insulation and the circular form provides an excellent surface-to-volume ratio for heat efficiency.

The original client withdrew from the project and a replacement client was found who took on the design as it was, albeit



omitting one of the bedrooms and reducing the budget. Savings came from self-building (£5000 on the concrete, £1,500 on the spiral stair and a similar amount on doors and windows) and from replacing copper by zinc for the roof covering. The construction team included an American builder, a New Zealand craftsman and a mason, all of whom had been living and working in the community for some years, plus a local apprentice boatbuilder. The architect also worked on the site at various stages, from concrete work to tiling and caulking.

Project team

Architect: Nicole Edmunds; building consultant: Philip Stewart; structure: Deeside Structural Design (Bryan Wright); contractor: Philip Stewart with Peter McKay and Marc Took-Zozoya; photos: Ulf Kristensen.

Selected subcontractors and suppliers

Electrical: Northern Lights; plumbing: Kenny Paterson; mason: Stuart Voder; zinc gutter: Dunedin Builders Merchants; plaster: Keith Allen; zincwork: Philip Stewart, Roger Poupna; kitchen joinery: Peter McKay, Richard Leigh; spiral stair: Andy Williams, Philip Stewart; doors: Mike Cartnell, Peter McKay; steel: Joseph Brown; concrete: Morrison Construction; waterproofing: System Platon; building paper: Klobber Tyvek, Bi Moll; insulation: Warmcell, Rockwool; bitumen board: Frenitt, Norbord Sterling; zinc: Rheinzink, Sogem; sandstone: Moray Stone Cutters; drainage: Hepworth; wall tiles: Pilkington's Tiles, Fired Earth; floor tiles: Daniel Platt; timber finish: Auro Organic Paints; wall paint: Ecos, Steyport; flooring: Crucial Trading; external timber treatment: Jotun Decorative Coatings.

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