

The logo for TATA STEEL, featuring the words 'TATA STEEL' in a bold, white, sans-serif font against a dark background.

Colorcoat HPS200®

Colours for Life

Carton LeVert house and studio County Donegal, Republic of Ireland

Clients: Rick LeVert and Libby Carton

Architect: MacGabhann Architects

Main Contractor: Con Sheridan (house),
Glenwood Systems (studio)

System Manufacturer: Tegral

Colorcoat® product:
Colorcoat HPS200® (Roof) superseded by
Colorcoat HPS200 Ultra®

Colour: Goosewing Grey

The project

When design practice Antoin MacGabhann Architects was approached to design a new house and studio in rural Donegal, the clients were uncertain whether they would live in the house permanently or use it occasionally as a holiday retreat. Moreover, the building was to be sited in a rural setting which made the

most of its views without having a negative impact on the environment itself. The completed building has proved such a success that it has won the 'best building in the landscape' award from the Royal Institute of Architects in Ireland (RIAI)



The building

A house and office in County Donegal, in the west of Ireland, make a refreshing change from much of the depressing housing that has gone up in the country in the last few decades. Responding to very specific requirements from the clients for notions of retreat and also flexibility, the buildings are uncompromisingly modern, while making deliberate references to the material palettes of local agricultural buildings.

The clients, Rick LeVert and Libby Carton, wanted a building that could work either as a single family house, or as two holiday apartments, or as a house with an attached studio. In addition, they were eager for a quiet and private room into which they could retreat. The response, by MacGabhann Architects, was a building in two parts. A small north-facing concrete box contains the fixed elements of bathroom, kitchen, entrance, stairs and services and utilities. All other elements – the living and relaxation spaces, are contained in a more sprawling timber-framed and timber-clad building, gathered round the core and perched on a south facing slope. The relationship between the two parts of the building is made more explicit by the use of timber boardmarking on the concrete, in the same proportions as the cedar cladding that is used on the other part of the building. The concrete element, which protrudes above the rest of the building, has a slate roof to accentuate its grounded solidity; the lighter nature of the timber part of the building is emphasised by the selection of a metal roof. Tarla MacGabhann, architect for the project, explained: 'We looked at the context. Corrugated profiled metal is used on many agricultural buildings. At first we considered using the same corrugated sheeting that farmers use.' His clients however were concerned that the metal might need frequent repainting.

Instead they went for a modern pre-finished metal solution, which will be far more durable (some of these products are guaranteed for 40 years). The silvery colour still provides the required rustic impression, while having an evident durability. It sits quite comfortable with the new cedar cladding, but will harmonise with it even better as the cedar ages to a similar silvery colour.

Having established their house, the owners discovered, as happens so often, that they wanted to spend more time there, and needed more space. They therefore commissioned the same architect to design a second building, this time to contain a workshop (the two run a design studio, also called Carton LeVert) and also guest accommodation. They called this building 'Green Box', a translation into English of their French names. While the new building uses the same timber-framed glazing system as the original house, it is clearly designed as a subservient building, albeit one that, like its parent, has an interesting geometry. It is a kind of distorted cube, leaning both down the slope of the ground and towards its neighbour.

To further point up the relationship of the two, but to stress the greater simplicity of the second building, the architect carried over just two of its palette of four materials to the smaller building. So this secondary building has large timber-framed glazed openings but otherwise is entirely clad in Colorcoat HPS200®. The profiling of the steel runs vertically on the walls, contrasting deliberately with the horizontal patterning of the board-marked concrete on the main house. But while this cladding is a marker of difference it also, by reflecting the roofing material on the original house, points up the relationship between the two, so that they sit comfortably as neighbours, each enhancing the other.

Colorcoat HPS200® which was used for this building project has now been superceded by the latest generation of the product Colorcoat HPS200 Ultra® which also has the unique Scintilla® emboss and Galvalloy® metallic coating.



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