



At Corroul Lodge (opposite), at the centre of a Victorian shooting estate, international architect Moshe Safdie took the ground plan of a traditional Scottish tower house and fractured the towers and granite walls with pointed, glass structures. Landscape designer, Jinny Blom researched Victorian planting plans for the circular pond (this page); her replanting of its perimeter includes *Armeria maritima* and *Alchemilla alpina*.

LAND LEAGUE

THE ARCHITECT, LANDSCAPE GARDENER AND INTERIOR DESIGNER TEAM COMMISSIONED TO DESIGN A HOLIDAY HOUSE AND GARDEN ON A HIGHLAND ESTATE WERE ALL INSPIRED AND DIRECTED BY THE FORMS AND COLOURS OF THE LAND IN WHICH IT LIES





When audacious architecture takes form on a rocky outcrop near Ben Nevis, it attracts a lot of attention – even if it is off the beaten track, only accessible via an 11-mile private drive through a wild landscape. Overlooking a Highland loch, Corroul Lodge – on the site of a Victorian shooting lodge which burnt down in 1947 – was completed only last summer, yet already the Royal Fine Arts Commission in Scotland believes it is ‘one of the few examples of world-class twenty-first-century architecture in Scotland’.

The team responsible number Canadian architect Moshe Safdie, landscape designer Jinny Blom, and interior designer Suzy Hoodless. Moshe Safdie’s first building in Britain, it has the floor plan of a traditional Scottish tower house built around the great hall, but there the tradition ends. The solid stone tower and wings appear to have been rent apart by pointed, glass structures towering six storeys high. ‘It makes those sturdy granite walls appear to rise, unsupported, out of the ground. Structurally it’s challenging, the way the cylindrical sitting room is pierced by a pyramid and the rectangular granite dining room by a glass cone curving in the manner of a traditional Victorian bay window,’ observes Philip Flockhart of Edinburgh-based Morris Steadman Associates, the British company which, alongside project manager Bob Jeffrey of Thomson Bethune, worked with Moshe Safdie.

There are seven bedrooms with adjoining bathrooms, the great hall, a sitting room, dining room, two semicircular libraries, a vaulted conservatory and a boot room. There is also an outdoor sauna. Everything is on a grand scale. The sitting room is 11 metres in diameter; above it, the main bedroom rises to a height of 10 metres from the floor to the apex of the glass pyramid – making the house a challenge for interior designer Suzy Hoodless to turn into a comfortable, welcoming family

THIS PAGE The rectangular wing (above, left of picture) houses the kitchen and the dining room; the tower contains the sitting room (below), for which Suzy Hoodless designed bespoke sofas made by George Smith





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP In the Great Hall, Josef Frank Fifties sofas covered in 'Hawaii' by Sevenkst Tenn stand on a shaq-pile Mongolian sheepskin rug, alongside a table by Erik Johansson and an 'Egg' chair by Arne Jacobsen. In the entrance hall, an elk skull and antlers hang above a neoclassical marble and jasper table. Meadow flowers and grasses grow right up to the glass, sitting-room walls





THIS PAGE In the dining room (top and below right), a sixteenth-century tapestry, depicting the Battle of Zama, overlooks an eighteenth-century Irish dining table and 'Oxford' chairs by Arne Jacobsen; a sofa designed by Suzy Hoodless and made by George Smith is flanked by Charles Eames stools (below right). In the walled garden (below left), Jinny placed Not Vital's bronze Tongue





home. Suzy says she was chosen because her years as interiors editor at *Wallpaper* taught her to mix modern (particularly Scandinavian) design classics with antiques, a fusion the house needed.

Suzy's first impression of the lodge was that it looked as if it had emerged from the ground. Like Moshe Safdie, she looked to the land for inspiration. Suzy picked handfuls of grass and let the shades of intense green – shot through with dusty pink, red, slate grey – become her palette for furnishing fabrics in cashmere and woollen tweed from the Scottish mills of Holland & Sherry. Most of the windows are left bare because the house faces the loch and is not overlooked. In some rooms, however, simple sheets of muslin filter the light. Throughout the house, the walls are painted silvery white by Danish specialist painters Helge Strim; hardwood floors are covered in bespoke rugs woven in Tibet from New Zealand wool that were hand-sewn together on site by The Rug Company, leaving a granite band round the edge of each room, as the architect had planned.

Landscape designer Jinny Blom was chosen on account of her attitude to conservation: 'Water Machu Picchu and it'll bloom,' Jinny says by way of explanation of her belief that minimum but skilful intervention in sites of architectural interest is all that is needed.

Jinny Blom is an unusual landscape designer – she loves plants but, in the end, it's the spatial relationship with the sky and the land that counts.

ABOVE In one of the two semicircular libraries, a chair by Danish designer Fritz Henningsen (1902-71) faces a sofa by B&B Italia. **RIGHT** In the Victorian garden, a statue is flanked by *Primula sikkimensis*, cow parsley and *Campanula alliariifolia*





THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE In the kitchen, the 'Home' table by Barber Osgerby for Isokon Plus is surrounded by chairs by Kaare Klint for Fritz Hansen. The boot room is lined with cedar. In the conservatory, Suzy Hoodless commissioned wallpaper inspired by a Joseph Farington view of the Lake District as a backdrop for an aluminium sculpture by Anish Kapoor



Her intention was to create a natural-looking landscape round the lodge, repair the scarring to the estate caused by tree felling, replace trees damaged by deer, establish a programme of management for the woodland, and restore the garden – a long-overgrown high-Victorian creation of the original owner.

The new house faces the loch, so Jinny sought to create vistas with this in mind, removing the fountain from the pond as it was no longer dead centre in relation to the house. Having ascertained the flow of water in burns and drainage ditches, she replanted trees round the lodge with landscaper Eddie McPhilips. For 60 years, there had been no forestry programme, and sitka spruce had self-seeded so thickly that the loch waters could not be seen from the track that encircles the loch. Jinny chose a very simple tree-planting scheme of indigenous species including birch, alder, Scots pine, sub-Arctic willow and rowan – she planted 3,000 trees, including several *Sorbus hupehensis*, pink-berried rowan, close to the house. An 11-mile perimeter fence protects the new trees from deer. Helping her build mile upon mile of stone walls and dykes, some in the Arts and Crafts style of existing estate cottages, was dry-stone waller David Wilson.

In the original Victorian alpine garden, Jinny planted pinks, aconites, gentians, poppies and several thousand *Anemone blanda*. She determined not to add to the rhododendron garden: 'It was already an eloquent statement.' Behind the lodge, the blue Himalayan poppy, *Meconopsis betonicifolia*, was sown from seed. In the marshy ground beneath the birches, she set the tall vermilion panther lily, alongside yellow flag irises and meadowsweet.

'Disturb peaty ground and you must cover it with topsoil, because it won't heal and will leave a black scar over the landscape,' Jinny says. She sowed the topsoil with her own indigenous wild-flower seed mix of 25 species, including native Scots grasses, trefoils, foxgloves, oxeye daisies and *Prunella vulgaris*. The charm of her wild meadows, sown right up to the house, is that they are true to the landscape. In spring, a sward of trefoil clover blooms.

'Initially I felt intimidated by the house,' Jinny admits. 'How to seat the building was the issue. I tried to give it a terrace to draw it into its surroundings, but in Scotland there are midges in summer and it rains the rest of the year, so why make a terrace? My job was to make the landscape look the best it can, as fast as possible – but so that no one would know I've been there.'

Now she is retreating beyond the 11 miles of fencing to let the land heal itself after her work of contouring and stabilizing. When the trees are settled, she will remove the barriers, having helped nature on her way □

Moshe Safdie (tel: 00-1-617 629 2100), Jinny Blom (tel: 020-7253 2100), Suzy Hoodless (tel: 020-7221 8844)

● Corrour Lodge is available to rent through Loyd & Townsend-Rose (tel: 01573-229797)



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP The house overlooks a loch in the shadow of Ben Nevis. On the shores of the loch is a turf-roofed outdoor sauna, surrounded by a timber jetty. Jinny Blom positioned Antony Gormley's *Here and Here* among trees overlooking the loch

