



Appearance
and Colour

Case study

Carton Levert House

Donegal, Ireland

Client: Libby Carton and Rick LeVert

Architect: Antoin MacGabhann
Architects

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

System manufacturer: Tegral

Profile reference: Tegral Fireline 19
(sinusoidal)

Colorcoat® product: HPS200® (roof of
house and walls of studio)



Goosewing Grey



The Brief

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. The clients run their own graphic design company, therefore wanted a building with the flexibility to function as a single home, a pair of holiday apartments, or a home with attached studio.

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

The architects responded to a tough brief by designing a building of two distinct elements - a timber box and a concrete block. To allow for maximum flexibility, the “static elements” of the building (including bathroom, kitchen and stairs) are contained within the concrete component; the “living” areas, comprising spaces for sleeping and sitting etc, are located in the box of cedar.

This cedar box has been roofed using Colorcoat HPS200® pre-finished steel from Corus as part of a strategy to use materials which have an affinity with the buildings of rural Ireland. “The profile of the pre-finished steel sheets matches that commonly found on buildings in the rural Irish landscape,” said architect Tarla MacGabhann. “This is the first time we used it, and we would use it again.”

Forming the outer layer of a 100m² pitched roof, the Colorcoat HPS200® is part of a built-up cladding system designed by Tegral and installed by the main contractor Con Sheridan.

“Cubism meets de-constructivism in this playful and inventive interpretation of traditional form and materials in the Donegal landscape. In a county destroyed by the worst excesses of banal house design this scheme is a welcome break with the past and demonstrates what is possible when a broad minded client engages with a creative architect to re-interpret tradition in a modern idiom,” said a statement from the RIAI, to which the client added the following:

“From what was essentially an open brief, the architects created a house which suits our lifestyle, takes best advantage of the natural characteristics of the site, and shows the exciting potential of modern architecture in a rural setting. A job well done.” Libby Carton, building co-owner.

More recently the architects have added a studio and guest accommodation to the complex, borrowing even further from the rural idiom and employing Colorcoat HPS200® as part of the wall cladding.

“This new studio belongs to the genre of the lean-to agricultural shed and the utilitarian necessity of rural Irish building. It is from this precedent of local farmyards, in both materiality and form, that this building derives its inspiration,” said MacGabhann.

In the case of the newer studio building, the vertical nature of the pre-finished steel cladding deliberately contrasts with the horizontal banding of the nearby concrete structure, which clearly records the presence of the timber formwork. The architects have made a conscious effort to create a coherent ensemble of form and materials, and MacGabhann talks of the “mass and permanence” of the concrete and the “transience and delicacy” of the sinusoidal profiled steel.

