



CREATING ADVENTUROUS PLACES

Loch Katrine



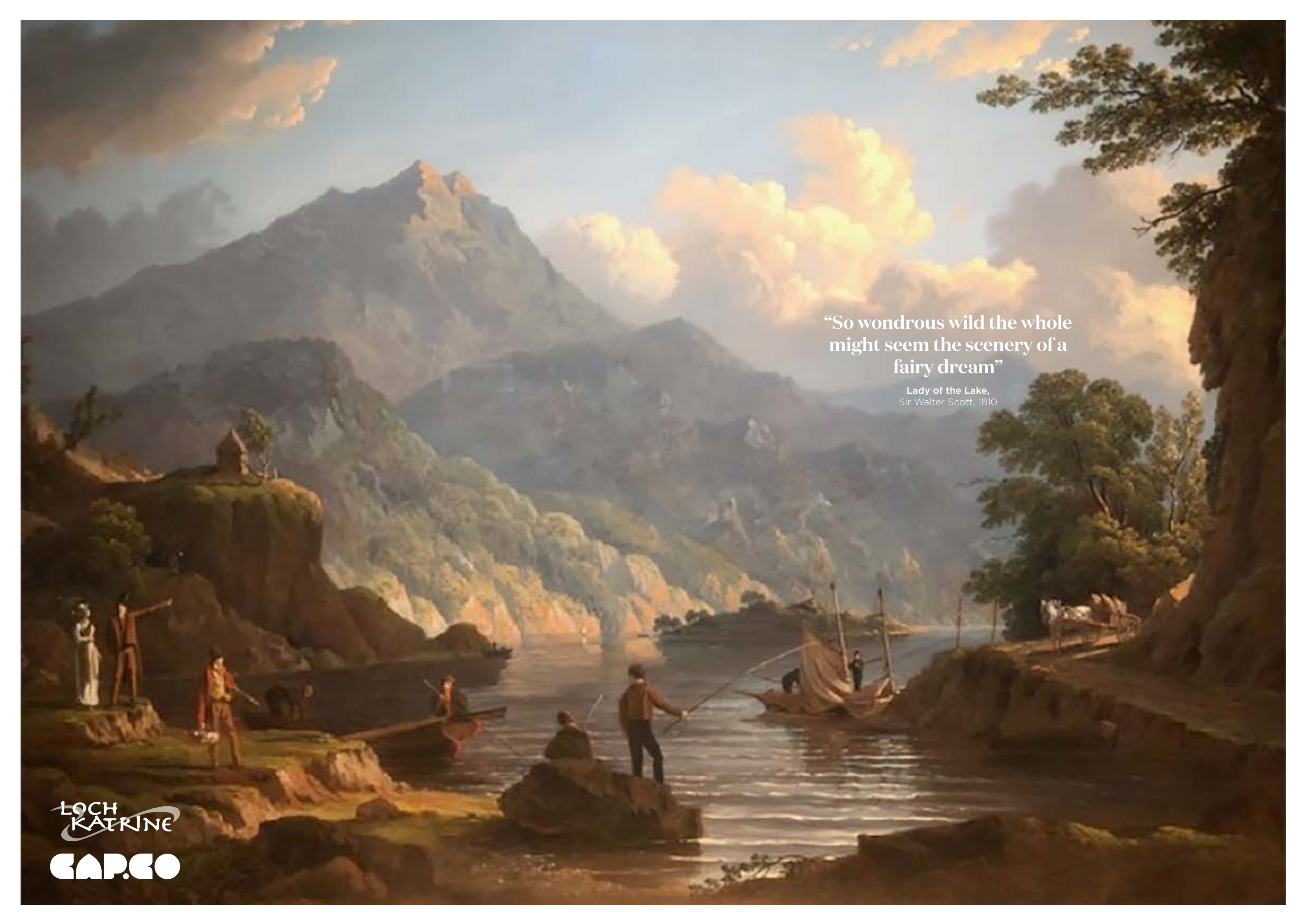
CAPCo_Loch Katrine_RDW_Detail Design
WATCHTOWER & LOOKOUT DECKS
Oct '20

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A Romantic-style landscape painting depicting a serene lake scene. In the foreground, several figures are engaged in various activities: a woman in a white dress stands on a rocky outcrop, a man in a red tunic stands nearby, and another figure is seated on a rock. A small boat with a single person is on the water, and a larger boat with two people is further out. The middle ground shows a calm lake reflecting the sky. The background features majestic, rugged mountains under a sky filled with large, billowing clouds illuminated by warm, golden light, suggesting sunrise or sunset. The overall mood is one of natural grandeur and tranquility.

“So wondrous wild the whole
might seem the scenery of a
fairy dream”

Lady of the Lake,
Sir Walter Scott, 1810



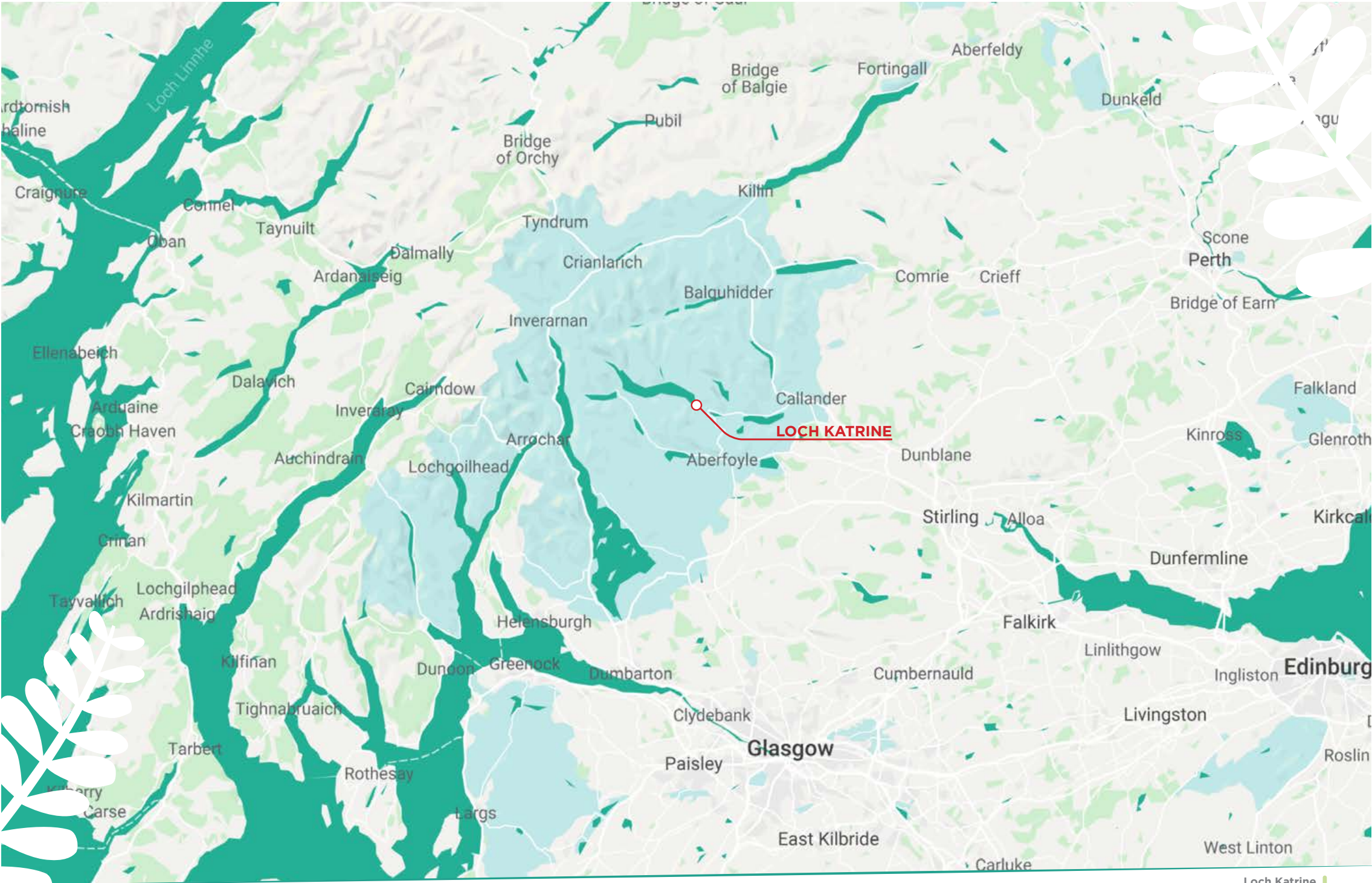
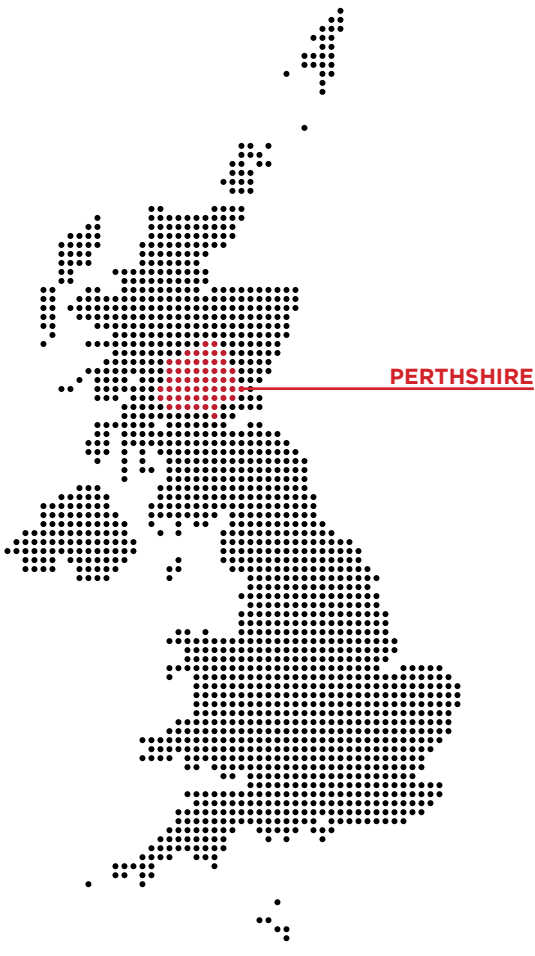
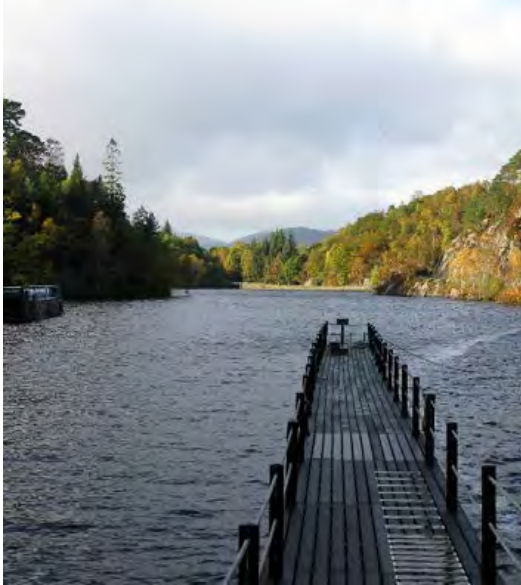
SITE CONTEXT

LOCH KATRINE

TROSSACHS

Loch Katrine and surrounding areas are steeped in history and is recognised as the favoured and much loved setting of some of Sir Walter Scott’s most famous poetic works, as well as boasting links to Scottish legend Rob Roy MacGregor.

13 kilometres long and 1 kilometre wide at the widest point Loch Katrine is a popular destination for tourists and day visitors from Glasgow and nearby towns. Day ferries including the famous SS Sir Walter Scott launch from the southern tip of the loch, where there is also a cafe and visitor centre serving customers all year round.



LOCATION PLAN

RHODERICK DHU WATCHTOWER

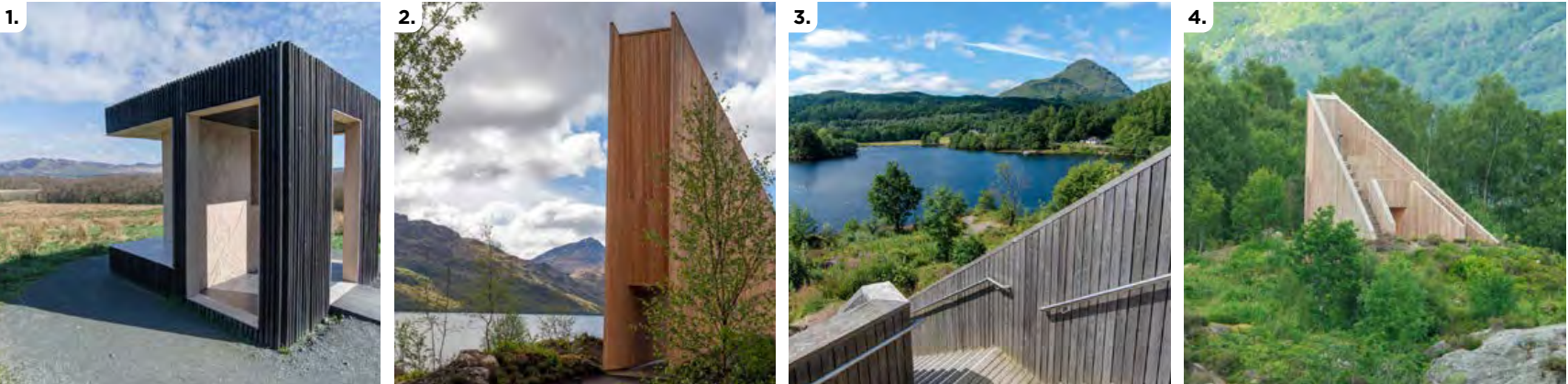
PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The original Roderick Dhu Path and Watch Tower was developed to provide a short walk and views over Loch Katrine following the success of the publication of Sir Walter Scott’s famous poem Lady of the Lake in 1810. The poem vividly describes the spectacular Loch Katrine scenery and some of the historical characters such as Roderick Dhu, a close associate of Rob Roy MacGregor who lived at Glengyle on the lochside from 1671. This led to sightseers flocking to Loch Katrine to see for themselves the scenes inspired by Scott’s colourful descriptions. He followed this with his adventure novel Rob Roy in 1817 which romanticised the rogue-hero and reinforced the appeal of the loch which rightly is known as ‘the birthplace of Scottish tourism.’

The path and lookout were popular in the Victorian era and featured in many paintings and historical postcards. Sadly, in more recent times the path has fallen into disrepair and latterly was only used by orienteering groups and occasional walkers. The site is close to the busy Trossachs Pier car and coach park and the reinstatement of the historically important Roderick Dhu path along with special lookout features provide an opportunity to relieve some of the visitor pressure nearby and introduce visitors to stunning panoramic views of Loch Katrine and the surrounding mountains in an easily accessible way.

The proposed tower and lookouts described in this design statement and supporting drawings and visuals have been developed in the spirit of the imaginative National Scenic Routes initiative which was piloted a number of years ago by the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority with Scottish Government funding support. Following an architectural competition this led to architectural structures being installed in the landscape at several sites throughout the National Park which have proved to be popular with visitors.

The design proposals take full account of the sensitive landscape setting and the special nature conservation designations of the site and support the delivery of the National Park Partnership Plan by increasing the opportunities to enjoy and understand the special landscape and heritage qualities of the National Park in responsible and sustainable ways. The proposals also are in accordance with many of the policies in the National Park Local Development Plan including those relating to tourism, recreation and conservation.



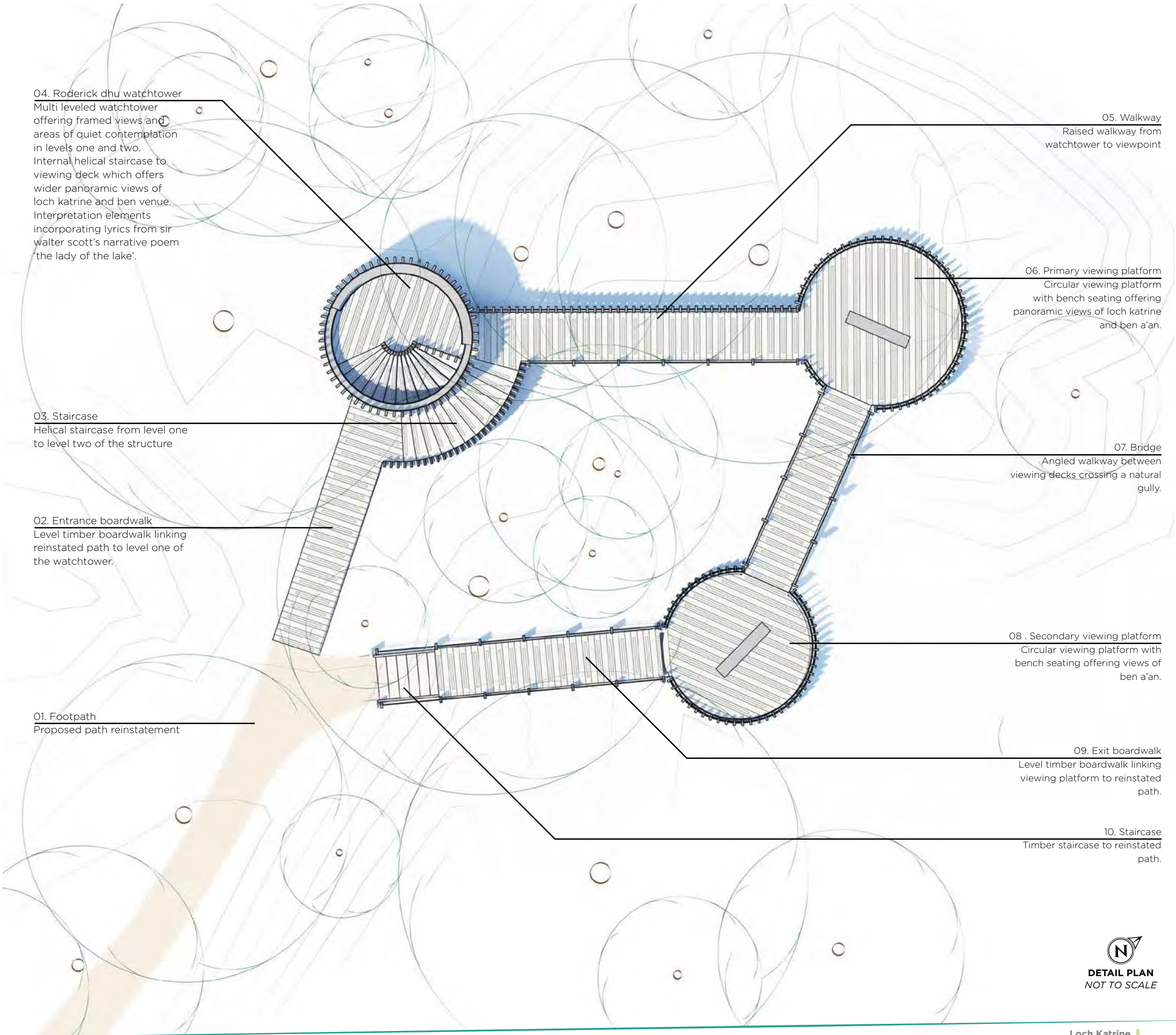
◀ PRECEDENT IMAGERY
1. Ben Lomond Viewing Shelter - Gartocharn
2, 3, 4. An Ceann Mòr - Inveruglas Pyramid

DETAIL PLAN
RHODERICK DHU WATCHTOWER

CONCEPT PRINCIPLES

As a design team we took inspiration from Sir Walter Scott's epic narrative 'The Lady of The Lake' and its historic link to Loch Katrine itself. Roderick Dhu, the main antagonist of the poem, who reportedly had a watch tower overlooking the loch to keep watch for enemy troops coming up the pass as part of an early warning system so that Rob Roy and his clans folk could scatter and take safety in the surrounding hills. Taking the Gaelic translation of his name, 'Dhu' meaning 'black' focussed our design on using scorched timber to clad the tower, thus toning the structure into both the history of the site and the wild hilltop landscape.

Following the example of precedent projects in the wider National Park and beyond, we used a clean, contemporary form to make the proposal blend into the natural environment, to enhance rather than detract from the landscape. The simple cylindrical form echoes the Victorian paintings of the original Watchtower and elegantly responds to the undulations of the hilltop with the main body of the tower nestled in a low hollow allowing users to journey up through the structure to access higher, more exposed areas of the site. It is both a visual and experiential reward for those that have ventured up the reinstated Victorian pathway, providing not only a stunning vista over Loch Katrine and the Trossachs but also a magical place for some quiet contemplation.



ELEVATION

RHODERICK DHU WATCHTOWER

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

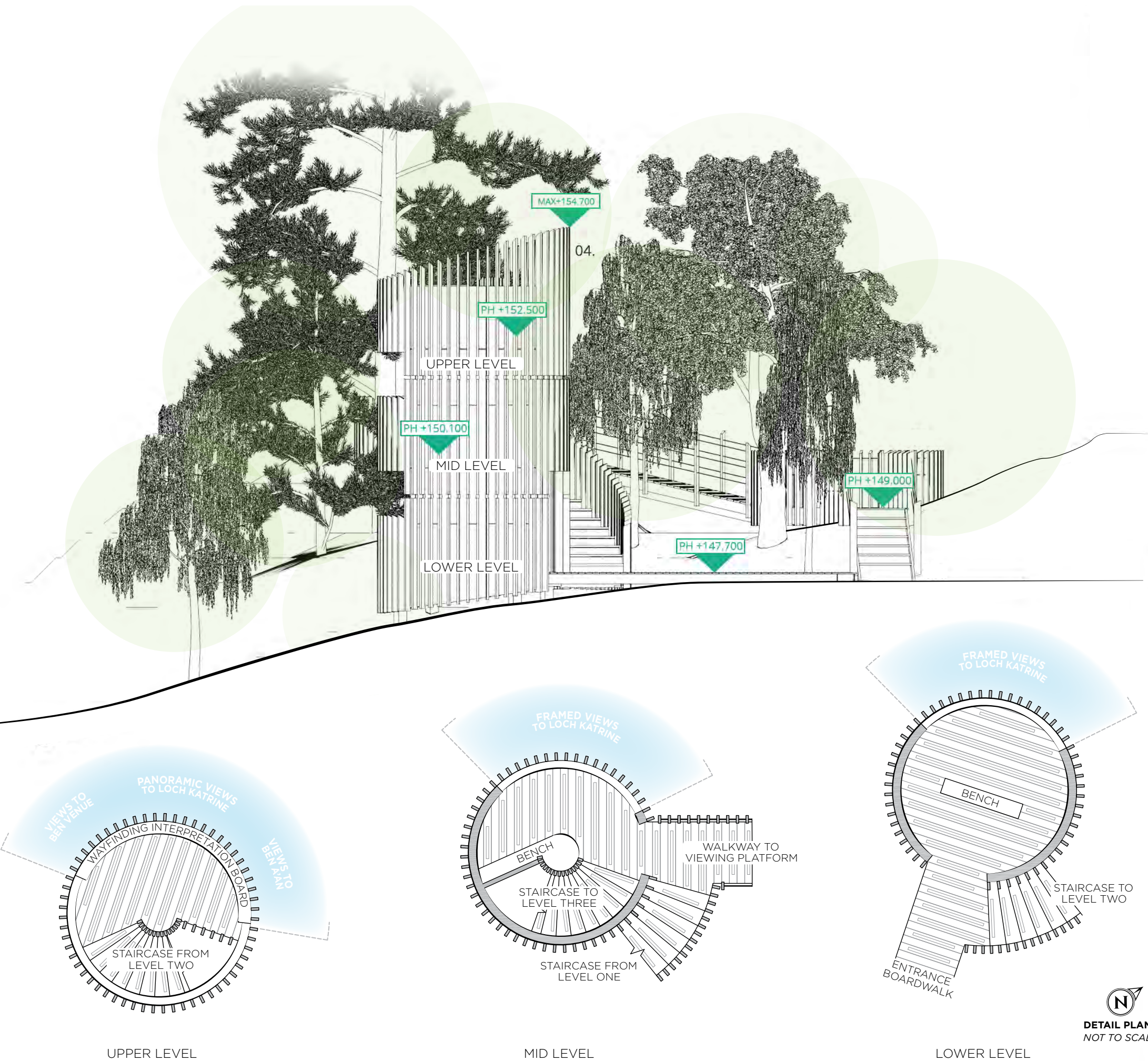
The aforementioned initial thoughts were presented back to the Steamship Sir Waler Scott Trust team with discussions focussing on the number of floors required within the tower, the number of satellite decks required and also their location within the site in the interests of visitor safety and to ensure visitor flow was natural, thus avoiding the creation of potential pinch points. This heavily influenced the final design and layout and helped to ensure the experience was a pleasant and memorable one to match that of the views which it captures.

Designed specifically as a viewing tower, the framing of these key views was integral to the success of the project. Through various iterations, we believe we have captured those required by clever positioning of the architectural elements with those key views being:

- Osprey Nest (from upper floor of tower)
- Ellen's Isle (from viewing deck 1)
- Ben A'an (from viewing deck 2)

ELEVATION ▶

DETAIL PLANS ▶
OF TOWER



VISUALISATIONS

RHODERICK DHU WATCHTOWER

FINAL PROPOSAL

The final proposal echoes the current architectural vernacular for simple linear structures, allowing the scenery and surrounding landscape to remain the focus of the visitors who attend. The new Roderick Dhu Watchtower blends well within it, keeping all sides open to the elements while utilising vertical timber fins as the main cladding to allow light to penetrate but also to allow immersive 360 degree views of the environment from both internal and external areas of the tower.

Moving up through the layers of the tower - via an external then internal spiral staircase - a bridge connects out to the circular viewing deck and then a further bridge again across to a secondary viewing deck. This format encourages visitors to meander across three areas effectively, in a loop designed to keep visitors moving. Bench seating in both the tower and decks provide a welcome moment to 'catch a breath' while enjoying the scenery.



Each area - bridges and decks included - have balustrade that help restrict movement of users within the designed footprint of the structure only, to ensure public safety and help protect the natural asset of the surrounding environment which the structure sits in so gracefully.

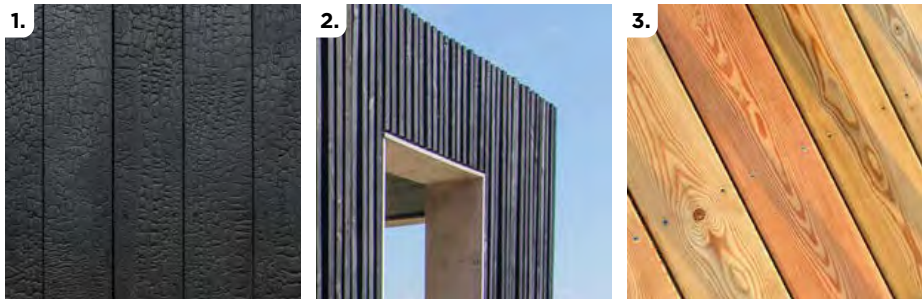


VISUALISATIONS

RHODERICK DHU WATCHTOWER

MATERIALITY

The materiality of the watchtower is twofold, a flat board cladding which is recessed between radial fins. The material selected for use on the project is a Larch, considered to be one of the world’s most outstanding softwood materials, it lasts the test of time and is great for exterior joinery applications. For these reasons the Larch will be used to complete all aspects of the proposal. When utilized in boardwalks, interior lining, flooring the timber will be allowed to silver naturally over time. The cladding, radial fins and balustrade uprights however will be blackened using the traditional wood preserving method of Shou Sugi Ban. Under this process the timber is charred or burnt, cauterising the timber cell, which stops it reacting to atmospheric change and thereby stabilises its mobility. The process results in a waterproof, insect proof product which will not fade and is maintenance free.



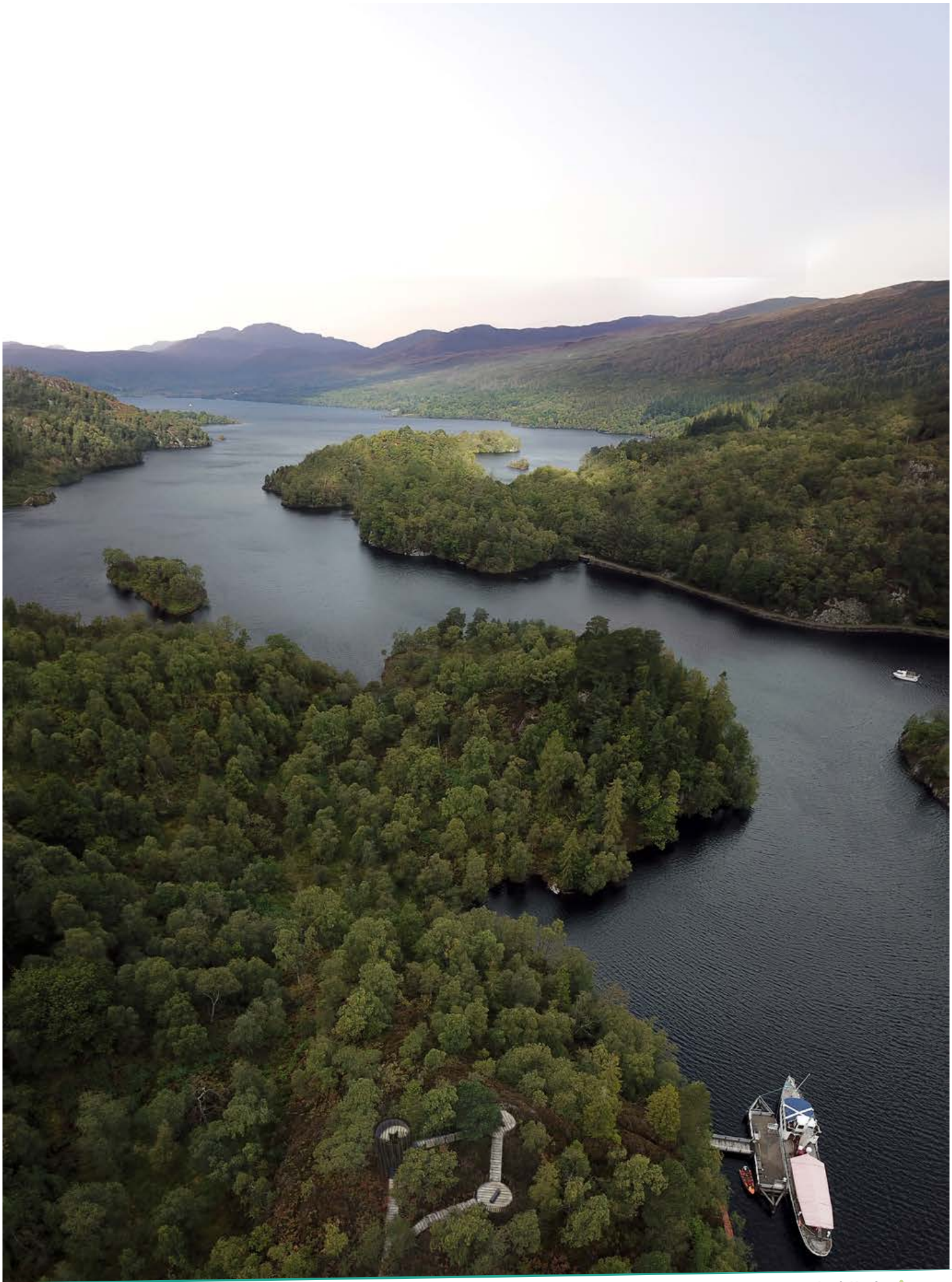
◀ SELECTED MATERIALS

- 1. Shou Sugi Ban
- 2. Radial Fins
- 3. Larch

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT VIEWS

RHODERICK DHU WATCHTOWER

The site is a difficult location to construct anything of any size or scale so with that in mind, the decision was taken early on to pre-fabricate the substructure for the tower, adjoining decks and bridges in galvanised and black powder coated mild steel. This reduces site time in an exposed site but more importantly, it ensures stability for the structure and means less structural posts are required to construct, which helps keep the massing light aesthetically, being mindful of the National Park setting and potential visual impact from nearby areas. It is also anticipated the materials will be airlifted to the site by helicopter.







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