

THE BORDERS DISTILLERY HAWICK

RIAS AWARDS CONSERVATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE 2019



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD
EACHDRAIDHEIL
ALBA

The Borders Distillery

Adapting a former electricity company building to form the first distillery in the Scottish Borders since the start of the Victorian period.

The Borders Distillery opened in 2018 in a building originally designed for the Hawick Urban Electric Company in the early 20th century. At the front of the site, the administrative building has pretensions of grandeur. It is an example of an architectural style that uses features like stone gables fronting the street, and window detailing to look like a traditional Tudor building.

This building was meant to be seen and stand out from its neighbours. The sheds at the back, understandably, have a more functional appearance.

When electricity stopped being generated here in the 1960s, the buildings were taken over by the engineering firm of Turnbull & Scott Engineers.

In 2011, Turnbull & Scott moved out, and the building became empty. There was no plan for reuse in place. Any building is vulnerable when it stands empty, and they can be damaged by vandalism and general decay through a lack of maintenance. As the building wasn't kept watertight, it suffered water damage – part of the first floor and much of the internal lath and plaster in the administrative building was lost.



View of the entrance courtyard to the Borders Distillery
© Keith Hunter

In November 2015, the Three Stills Company appointed Gray Macpherson Architects to adapt and reuse the building as a distillery. The Borders Distillery would be the first distillery in the Scottish Borders since 1837.

Rather than design a new building in the Borders countryside, the Three Stills Company decided to invest in Hawick town centre, conserve a historic building and use the skilled local workforce and artisans. A key part of the project was a strong commitment to reusing building materials and preserving as many of the historic features of the building as possible.



View of the Still House
© Keith Hunter



Above: View of the side elevation (North) of the former Hawick Urban Electric Company

Below: View of the same elevation, now the Borders Distillery © Keith Hunter



The equipment within the mash and still halls has been designed to fit into the existing spaces in the rear sheds. This has made it possible to keep and restore the original trusses and surviving historic machinery. The sheds were originally designed with roof lights running their full length and they again provide the main source of natural light, which reduces the need for artificial lighting. The project featured an aspiration towards zero waste.

The process of making whisky requires continual ventilation, which is provided by a number of new aluminium louvers in the masonry walls re-using louvers at high level.

Although the building now makes whisky instead of electricity, in a sense, it still works in many of the same ways it used to. Water is even extracted from the River Teviot to use for cooling processes, and water from an existing borehole is used for the whisky making process.

The Borders Distillery project is an imaginative and sensitive conversion of an industrial listed building. It represents a bold vision and a significant investment. This project has brought these buildings back to life, and it continues to make a real contribution to the regeneration of Hawick Town centre.

OGL

© Historic Environment Scotland 2019.

You may re use this information (excluding logos and images) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

Historic Environment Scotland – SC045925
Registered Address: Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh EH9 1SH
0131 668 8600
historicenvironment.scot

View from across
the river Teviot
© Keith Hunter

