



N A T U R A L *abode*

The founder of North West-based
Charlotte Findlater Design
on the inspiration
behind this stunning cottage

By **CHARLOTTE FINDLATER**



Our mission is to revolutionize the world of regenerative design and build through architecture and luxury interior design by pioneering a unique approach that respects time, nature, and people. We are committed to creating transformative spaces that harmonize with the environment and enhance human well-being. Through our dedication to regenerative practices, artisan craftsmanship, and thoughtful design, we strive to inspire a deeper connection between our clients and the natural world, while leaving a lasting, positive impact on the planet.

We were approached by our client of this cottage because of our strong belief in ecological design and our core ethos. This fabulous property sits high above Lake Coniston with a stunning garden that sweeps down to the lake shore. The property is surrounded by an enchanting natural forest, protected due to its location within the Lake District UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Wishing to use as many natural materials as possible within the design, we aligned the project to that of a squirrel's drey: a nest made of twigs and leaves, primarily symbolising shelter, safety and ultimately a place of refuge. One of our core ethos is that of human health within the built environment: we considered all the material used in order to create a home that was ultimately healthy for our client.

Our client wished for the interior of the building to be reflective of this special location, seeking to create an inside/outside feeling, a sanctuary that would also be reflective of her character.

In design, we bring characteristics of the natural world into built spaces, such as water, greenery, and natural light, or elements like wood and stone. Encouraging the use of natural systems and processes in design allows for exposure to nature, and in turn, these design approaches improve health and wellbeing. There are a number of possible benefits, including reduced heart rate variability and pulse rates, decreased blood pressure, and increased activity in our nervous systems, to name a few.





Establishing multi-sensory experiences, we can design interiors that resonate across ages and demographics. These rooms and spaces connect us to nature as a proven way to inspire us, boost our productivity, and create greater well-being. Beyond these benefits, by reducing stress and enhancing creativity, we can also expedite healing. In our increasingly urbanized cities, biophilia advocates a more humanistic approach to design. The result is biophilic interiors that celebrate how we live, work and learn with nature.

In order to stir people, architecture and interior design must have rhythm and harmony akin to music. It should have the passion of an aria and the power of beauty. The tools we wield to deliver this kind of emotional impact are light, proportion, materials, structure, opacity, and transparency to name but a few. These are some of the elements in design, which we use to create the desired emotional effect.

John Ruskin once said, 'When we build, let us think we build forever'. A timeless house speaks of authenticity, character, and lived in history that reveals itself through the natural patinas that come with age. Authenticity is important, because it seems in such short supply in our fast-paced world. It's there in buildings that have lasted because they were well constructed, that have endured. Timelessness may be a quality difficult to define, but we know it when we see it. It also has to do with honesty and integrity. It is immune to the changes and evolutions of fashion and trends – it's classic.

What we hope most is for the houses we design to affect people in an inspiring way. That's an ambitious and audacious goal, but I know that design has that kind of power. A house says things about us whether we like it or not. I want the houses we design to say the right things about the people who live in them. I try to intuitively understand our clients, to comprehend the deeper meaning of what they say and what is unspoken. What is the essence of these people? What are their values? I listen to their desires for the home. I begin to envision a trajectory for the design that would render shape and form to best express them as they truly are. If I understand them from the beginning, the design happens in an almost effortless way. In the end, there will be something standing that could cast a shadow for centuries, telling their story.

The analogy of a squirrel's drey has always resonated deeply and encompasses the idea of home as a sanctuary, the place where we shelter from life storms, and escape from the frenzied world that we live in. But on a more soulful level it speaks to the importance of creating a space that feels personal and nurturing. The spaces we call home, and with those that we care about. Being in our dreys isn't about shutting the world out; it's about focusing on the human touch. And how by listening to our hearts, we can transform and heighten our experience of a nurturing home.

Having finished the house we have now been tasked with the re-wilding of the garden and to incorporate fruit trees, vegetable beds and moments within the garden in which to socialise, eat and play. 🐿️

charlottefindlater.co.uk

