



The Old Mill at Lewinshope, above, won a Scottish Borders Council Design Award for best work to an existing building, while the Eildon Housing Association earned a commendation for its affordable housing scheme at Yarrowford Grazings, below

Mill restoration wins design award for Johnny and Lulu

THE renovation of a former farm mill at Lewinshope near Yarrowford has lifted a top design award.

The transformation of the property into luxury holiday accommodation was deemed the best example of "work to an existing building" at the biennial Scottish Borders Council Design Awards, held at the Scottish Borders campus in Galashiels last Saturday.

Chaired by Peter Leggate, the independent judging panel also comprised David Suttie of the Royal Town Planning Institute Scotland and Dermot Patterson, representing the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland.

Of Johnny and Lulu Watson's Lewinshope project, they enthused: "We considered the redevelopment ... was a positive balance of modest alterations to the exterior, including the restoration of the weatherwheel, together with a reworking of the internal spaces over three linked levels to create high-quality holiday accommodation.

"We particularly appreciated the use of a rich variety of local timber in the doors, floors and staircase and the use of a wood chip boiler to heat the property. The attention to detail throughout and the workmanship of local tradesmen was self evident."

Design credits for the project go to Philip Mercer and Gareth McRae.

"We're absolutely thrilled ... a labour of love for the past three years," said Mrs Watson.

Receiving a commendation in the same category was the

Eildon Housing Association for the transformation of the former weaving shed at Ettrick Mill in Selkirk into the organisation's headquarters.

Eildon also collected a commendation for "placemaking" with its affordable housing scheme at Yarrowford Grazings.

Despite recessionary pressures inhibiting new builds and conversions, a total of 14 entries were received across the categories. The results were announced at the first gathering of the recently established SB Design Forum, set up to improve placemaking and design standards.

Opening the event, Selkirkshire councillor Carolyn Riddell-Carre, SBC's executive member for planning and environment, who presented the awards, said her council had been committed, since 2007, to defending the character of the region by raising standards of building design.

This, she explained, had been taken forward by the awards, the creation of the forum "to educate and inspire all those involved in new developments to raise their standards" and the adoption last year of supplementary planning guidance on placemaking and design which was now embedded in assessments of planning applications.

The other awards went to Berwickshire: Gunsgreen House in Eyemouth (best restoration), Legars Farm, Hume (best new rural build) and Thistlegorm, Buskins Farm, Coldingham (commendation for new rural build).