

Slating & Tiling

TIPS 80

Planning part 2

In the first part of the article we looked at the need for training and planning. This section will deal with some of the more practical issues. **Co-ordination of trades**

Whilst the roof is the domain of the roofer, there are many tradesmen who need access to the roof to complete their work, and it is often these people who can affect the finished roof. Scaffolders gaining access to high level areas will not only install a scaffold onto a finished low level roof, but can damage the roof by dropping fittings and poles and walking all over the roof.

Lightning conductor contractors will install strike plates and aerial rods through the roof covering after it is finished and will often not come onsite while the roof is being installed as this would require additional visits to site.

Electricians installing ventilation slates, or tiles, long after the roof has been finished. Plumbers installing vent pipes and boiler flues through the roof and carpenters installing roof windows and dormers with no consideration for the slate or tile module, making it difficult to finish at the side and top edge abutments.

If all trades talked to each other prior to work starting, they could help each other by appreciating each other's problems, and coming to an amicable solution. This normally only happens when the tradesmen are on site and face to face. But as the roof is one of the first elements to be completed the roofer is often long gone before the electrician or plumber arrives on site so it is the manager's role to think ahead.

It is also quite common for the order of construction to change such that because of ground work problems the first phase of the building is delayed and can not be roofed first and therefore the roofing work starts in another place and work is done out of sequence, resulting in some elements being done back to

front. How often have you seen the left hand half of an interlocking tiled roof finished and the right hand side left pending other works or a roof being tiled or slated before the fascia boards have been installed.

Instructions

Most proprietary products come with fixing instructions, but there are many products like slate that do not come with instructions, and rely upon the skill of the tradesmen to install them correctly. Where instructions are provided they should be read, understood and followed, as often compliance with the fixing instructions will ensure the product performs its function correctly and will be covered by a guarantee. Too often fixing instructions are not read or understood and therefore not installed correctly resulting in failure. Of course, fixing instructions tend to cover the majority of situations and discussion with the manufacturer is needed if used outside of the situation normally used.

The fixing instructions should be seen by the specifier and the managers, but as they only come with the products that arrive on site, this does not often happen. It is essential that fixing instructions are seen and understood at all stages of the planning process as often they will have an effect on the overall plan. It may be that an electric screwdriver is needed which will need a power supply, or a bench mounted disc cutter, which would be quicker to use if located on the scaffolding, is recommended. Too often technical literature from manufacturers does not contain sufficient information for the managers who need to plan the work.

Over planning

The plan should never rule the project. With fast track projects where there is a deadline and a high penalty for overruns, it is essential that everybody understands their part and meets the plan targets, but removing scaf-



This is the damage left after the scaffolders dropped the scaffold.

folding before roofing works have been completed, just because the plan says that at 12.30 on a particular day the scaffold will come down, is a breach of health and safety. Plans need to allow for inclement weather, unforeseen circumstances like theft of materials, material delivery bottle-necks from tower cranes, road closures due to civic events, or lack of accommodation due to big sporting events. If the programme is tight it is likely to fail. But, having said that, you cannot plan for every eventuality and, therefore, records need to be kept of all delays, and day to day progress honestly appraised and set against the plan, to account for any delays and to add to the learning process.

Conclusion

Undertaking any project requires planning that starts years before the project starts on site, with the training of staff. When a project is put out to tender there should be full and adequate documentation to allow the next level down the contractual chain to be able to both provide a competitive quote, and to plan the project accurately. Too often projects are not planned adequately and bumble along hand to mouth, and these are the ones that appear to go wrong and end in disputes and litigation, cut into

profit margins and do none of us any good.

We are not suggesting undertaking a full critical path analysis of each and every element of each tradesman's work, timing the installation of each nail down to seconds. We are talking about a respectable plan that can be presented and compared with other trades to highlight difficulties and allow the difficulties to be resolved prior to work starting on site. Once work has started on site, expect problems to arise. If 95% of all problems can be resolved before arriving on site, only 5% will need to be resolved on site, not the other way around.

Tips

- If roofing is the only work element, such as re-roofing a house, then coordination with the client is essential.
- Speak with the other contractors on the project; they should not be seen as competitors but colleagues. They will have plans and need to blend theirs with yours. If you do not have a plan then that is made more difficult.
- Always review the project when it is complete and see where things could have been done better for next time.

Compiled by Chris Thomas FIoR
The Tiled Roofing Consultancy
2 Ridlands Grove, Limpsfield Chart,
Oxted, Surrey, RH8 0ST
tel: 01883 724 774

email:
chris.thomas@thetiledroofingconsultancy.com
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www.thetiledroofingconsultancy.com

