

Design Techniques

Why Plain Tiles?

The small size of plain tiles provides the versatility for the architect to design roofscapes that contain infinite interest. Hips, valleys, dormer windows, towers and vertical cladding are roof features that embellish a gable to gable roof surface, producing shadows that break up potentially monotonous areas of roof. Large format tiles simply do not offer this flexibility.



Left: Oast Houses, Kent in a mix of Country Brown, Brown Antique and Red/Blue blend.

Below: A mitred octagon in Red Blue blend."



Why Clay rather than Concrete Plain tiles?

The case for clay does not rely upon its superior strength and durability provided by modern technology. The case for clay, and it is overwhelming, rests upon aesthetics. The wide range of natural burnt clay colours from Red to Brown to Blue can be imitated but never reproduced with artificial colouring. Moreover the permanence of pigmented colours is not guaranteed. It is the variable but controlled tones of permanent natural clay colours that exudes quality and makes the

blatant and powerful case for plain clay tiles. Sadly, this argument no longer endorses the use of all modern clay tiles. The colours of many modern clay tiles are no more authentic natural burnt clay colours than those of some concrete tiles. Artificial stains and pigments have now widely replaced the traditional kiln firing expertise that has for centuries produced beautiful products. The difference between natural colours and artificial stains is all too obvious when confronted with samples and it is still clearer on a completed roof.

Durability of Colour



Left: Both of these properties were roofed in the 1960's, with red roof tiles. The house on the left of the picture was tiled in Dreadnought Red clay smoothfaced tiles; the house on the right with Red concrete tiles. The picture taken 40 years later shows that whilst the clay roof has remained a rich red colour, the concrete roof has faded to a grey colour, and lost all its pigmentation.



Left: Blue Brindle Tiles have been broken up by the use of ornamental banding used in 3 courses – Club/Fishtail/Club.

- Below:**
- Brown Antique Smoothfaced Tiles
 - No 4 Ornamental Ridge with “V” Groove
 - Scroll Finial Stop End – Dormers
 - Fleur de Lys Finial – Main Roof

Ornamental Tiles

Complex roof details were common in Victorian architecture. Ornamental tiles, ridges and finials and intricately cut barge boards were used to break up hard straight edges.

Ornamental tiles were either laid in bands or in diamond patterns. They were used to add interest to large expanses of roof or vertical cladding. Dreadnought offer 4 ornamental patterns – fishtail, club, spade and arrowhead. A popular and visually attractive combination is the use of club and fishtail laid in the pattern – club/fishtail/club.

Ornamental Ridges

Interest can also be added to the roofs by highlighting the ridgeline via the use of ornamental ridges. (See p.29).

Finials

Finishing touches can be provided by the use of finials. These need not be elaborate and very often the occasional use of a scroll finial does add a subtle finish to a roof.

