

Conservation and Design Guidance Note 7

STONE SLATES

Sandstone roofing slates are a traditional roofing material found in the western areas of the Harrogate district, including the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. They are an important part of local character; therefore, proposals for their repair or replacement should be considered carefully and in line with this guidance note.



Above left: Stone slates. Above right: Typical Nidderdale barn with stone slate roof.

What principles should I follow when re-roofing or repairing the roof of my traditional building?

When carrying out re-roofing works to a stone slate roof it is usually possible to salvage and re-lay existing stone slates due to their innate robustness.

However, if additional slates are required to replace slates that are beyond their useful life, the following should be sourced:

- New stone slates that match the existing ones as closely as possible in terms of geological type, colour, texture, size, thickness and edge dressing, or;
- Reclaimed slates that match the existing ones as closely as possible in terms of geological type, colour, texture, size, thickness and edge dressing.

If difficulties are encountered in achieving a good match locally, it may be acceptable to source slates from outside the region provided that they are geologically and visually

similar (in terms of colour and texture) – and that they have suitable weathering and durability characteristics, and are finished in the local tradition.



****Please note that stone slates from other countries, such as India, are not usually considered to be an appropriate alternative on a listed building – see below for further guidance relating to listed buildings****

Left: Indian slates displaying colour variations that are not typical of local natural stone slates.

Reclaimed slates should be reused with their original orientation (top face up, top edge up). This is because the underside and the head of the slate deteriorate most rapidly and may not be as weather resistant as the

originally exposed surface.

When purchasing reclaimed slates, care should be taken to ensure that they are from a reputable source (as it is common for stone slates to be poached from rural buildings).

Can I use alternatives to natural stone slates?

On non-listed buildings, alternatives to natural stone slates can be specified when re-roofing. However, consideration should always be given to maintaining the existing character of a building through specification of traditional, locally distinctive materials.

Planning permission may be required for a change of material and it is recommended to check first whether permission is required. Details of how to check can be found on our [‘Do I need planning permission?’](#) webpage.

For listed buildings, listed building consent will be required for a change from natural stone slates to engineered or pre-weathered stone slates.

This is because of the need to ensure the use of traditional materials and to avoid the use of slates that do not replicate the appearance of natural stone slates of matching qualities to those that are found locally.



Left: engineered, pre-weathered slates.

Right: natural stone, pre-weathered slates.

Pre-weathered slates are not considered to be acceptable for listed buildings. Instead, new materials are preferred, in order to be left to weather naturally. In addition, many pre-weathered stone slates are imported from other countries.

In order to maintain local distinctiveness, the council encourages the application of the above principles to all traditional buildings, not just listed buildings.

Do I need listed building consent when re-roofing?

Listed building consent is required for works of alteration or demolition to a listed building. The following would **not** need listed building consent as the works are considered to be repairs rather than alterations:

- Renewal of existing stone slates with new stone slates that match the existing as closely as possible in terms of geological type, colour, texture, size, thickness and edge dressing.
- Renewal of existing stone slates with reclaimed stone slates that match the existing as closely as possible in terms of geological type, colour, texture, size, thickness and edge dressing.
- The carrying out of re-roofing works so that the following traditional detailing is replicated:

- o Size and pattern of graduation of slates.
- o Ridge / hip treatment, verge and eaves detailing (form, materials and means of fixing / bedding).

Right: stone ridge tile.



- o If existing, cleft laths (split from hardwood) with stone slates fixed with oak pegs that hang over the laths (as opposed to nailing slates to new battens). Note - nails cannot be used with laths. If the existing laths and pegs are in good condition, these should be retained.
- o If existing, lime torching (the application of lime mortar to the underside of the slates, also known as being back mortared). This provides wind proofing and also helps hold the oak pegs in place. Note - Roofing felt should not be used in place of a torched roof covering.

However, the following are considered to be alterations and **would** need listed building consent (but as they are not considered acceptable, would not likely receive approval):

- A change from the existing natural stone slates to engineered stone slates.
- A change from existing natural stone slate to non-matching/local stone slates (e.g. those sourced from other countries), including those that are pre-weathered.
- A change of the detailing such as size and pattern of graduation, ridge, eaves hip and verge detailing.
- A change of the means of fixing (e.g. change from laths and oak pegs to battens and nails).
- The change from lime torching to roofing felt.
- Changes to the construction and/or appearance of the roof due to the introduction of insulating materials.
- Changes to the construction and/or appearance of the roof due to the introduction of a means of ventilation (which is sometimes required as a consequence of a change from traditional to modern roof detailing).

Further guidance

The council's **Heritage Management Guidance** (an adopted supplementary planning document) provides useful guidance on extension and alteration and is taken into account when we assess proposals affecting listed buildings. This guidance is found within [Chapter 8](#). It also provide other guidance, such as on setting, accessible via the online via the [contents page](#).

Other conservation and design guidance notes

Additional conservation and design guidance notes are available:

Note 1 – Rooflights

Note 2 – Listed Buildings

Note 3 - Window Repair and Replacement in Listed Buildings

Note 4 – Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Note 5 – Conservation Areas

Note 6 – Curtilage Listing