

EXTERIORS

Paving the way with clay

Alex Patrick-Smith, Managing Director of Ketley Brick, examines some of the recent trends and practical considerations for housebuilders using clay paving materials on new-build projects.

Clay paving materials of various types have been a constant feature of British landscape design for centuries. Quarry tiles in particular have become increasingly popular in recent years, as their naturally warm appearance, low-maintenance and versatility means they are suitable across a wide range of new homes and applications.

Recent trends

With living space at a premium in new homes, developers are tending to design

more flexible living areas by creating a sense of flow not only between interior spaces but also by merging the indoors and outdoors.

By extending traditional living areas into a shaded courtyard, a modern urban patio or an open terrace, the garden can become a natural extension to the home, whilst making the combined space seem much larger.

One important way of creating a smooth effortless progression from the inside to the outside is by using the same flooring

products on the same level to link the two areas seamlessly. Specifying aesthetically suitable products that perform equally inside and outside is therefore critical.

Practical considerations

Durability is important for any floor surface, particularly where there is heavy wear from traffic in places such as entrances, kitchens and hallways, and externally the material also needs to be low maintenance, frost resistant and have good slip resistance when wet.



By specifying the right materials gardens can become a natural extension to the home





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Other considerations include resistance to spills of acids, alkalis, oils, grease and fat, compatibility with underfloor heating systems and ease of cleaning.

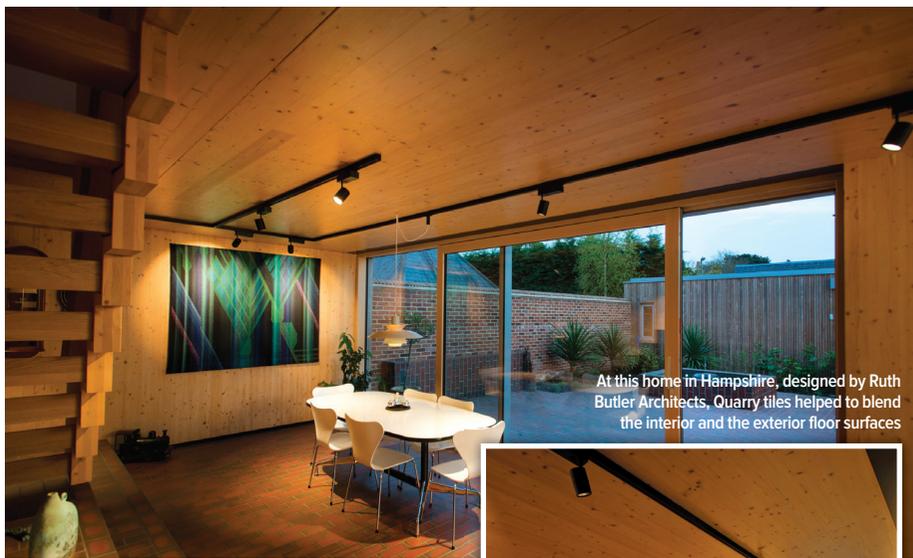
Another increasingly important factor in new homes is the absence of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC), often found in flooring materials and wall coverings, which are toxic to both the environment and to people.

Quarry tile revival

Quarry tiles are used across a wide range of new housing types due to their aesthetic appeal, versatility and performance benefits.

Although stone and materials like Terracotta may have an attractive rustic appeal when used indoors, they do not generally have the right technical characteristics to withstand the elements outside. Conversely, heavy clay pavers may have the durability for harsh weather conditions, but the thickness of the blocks and their rugged drag-faced finish does not necessarily lend itself to smaller interior areas.

As they are fired at high temperatures of over 1130 degrees over a long duration, quarry tiles offer immense durability. For optimum performance in use, it is advisable to specify tiles that have less



At this home in Hampshire, designed by Ruth Butler Architects, Quarry tiles helped to blend the interior and the exterior floor surfaces

than 3% water absorption to enable better frost resistance, and comply with R11 and category C of BS EN 14411:2012, which is the highest rating for slip resistance.

Quarry tiles are not glazed and, being less absorbent than Terracotta, they do not generally need to be sealed unless at particular risk of water stains. However, once sealed they can easily be kept clean by sweeping then washing with warm water and a non-soapy detergent.

As unsealed quarry tiles are made from natural clay, they do not contain VOCs or release any toxic substances into the atmosphere.

Aesthetic appeal

Although they come in a range of shades, red and multi browns are still the most popular colours across all house types as they reflect the tones of natural clay – as well as being the optimal colour for hiding stains – whereas cooler blue tones tend to be suited to modern styled homes.

The availability of different sizes and formats allows for a variety of stunning geometrical pattern effects, which can be used to help create a sense of flowing space or subtly divide the floor into different designated areas.

Square quarry tiles were once the most widely used in new homes, but rectangular 215 by 102.5mm or 215 by 65mm formats are now becoming increasingly popular as they lend themselves to a variety of different bond patterns such as chevron, or the ever-popular herringbone pattern.

New-build home

The new-build passive house in Hampshire (pictured here), designed by Ruth Butler Architects, uses Ketley quarry tiles in order to blend the interior and exterior floor surfaces.

On the outside, a blend of Staffordshire light and dark multi, laid in half bond



patterns, run perpendicular to each other across the terrace and around the perimeter of the fishpond. The blend of colours introduces a variety of warm clay tones to the outdoor space, complemented by the natural timber cladding of the building.

On the interior, a running bond and a simple herringbone pattern in Staffordshire light-multi effectively breaks the floor space up into different areas.

In addition to the aesthetics, durability and low maintenance benefits of these quarry tiles, it was important to the architect to find a VOC-free flooring material that would give the best possible air quality inside the house and promote healthy living.

Ruth Butler from Ruth Butler Architects said: “We’re delighted with the quality of the Ketley quarry tiles, they add a rich colour and texture to our home, linking inside and outside in a seamless way. They are also integral to our vision for a healthy home, with VOC-free finishes and excellent indoor air quality.”

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Alex Patrick-Smith is Managing Director of Ketley Brick.

For more information visit www.ketley-brick.co.uk

Images supplied by Ruth Butler Architects, taken by Peter Langdown Photography.