

Daniel Platt floor tiles star at the Barbican

Stoke-on-Trent based specialist floor tile manufacturer, Daniel Platt, has supplied 45,000 pavior-sized floor tiles for use on the external walkways of the Barbican Centre, Europe's largest multi-arts and conference venue.

Craftsman-made in Daniel Platt's Staffordshire Blue colourway, using the finest Etruria marl, the tiles were required to replace the existing quarry tiles that had been laid when the Barbican Centre was originally completed.

Secured by Gary Russell, Northern Regional Sales Manager of Birmingham-based architectural supply company, Solus Ceramics, this prestigious contract involved the Daniel Platt technical department specially re-manufacturing a pressing die in order to first demonstrate to the building contractors that the exact shape and size of the original 8 by 4in tiles could be recreated.

As well as being installed at the Barbican Centre, a quantity of these specially made Daniel Platt floor tiles have also been used to floor a contemporary new roof terrace restaurant at the London School of Music.

Used in hotels, restaurants, hospitals, schools, colleges, retail outlets, leisure centres and numerous industrial applications world-wide, Daniel Platt traditional quarry floor tiles are available in a wide range of sizes, thicknesses and finishes to meet all requirements.

A considerable choice of colours, textures, borders and dots is available and provides the perfect palette for architects and specifiers to create the most imaginative of floors. While the fact that all tile colours result from the blend of clays chosen, and are then fired through, ensures that the subtle shades that Daniel Platt is able to offer won't fade or wear, even with round-the-clock usage.

For restoration projects, or where historic authenticity is required, the use of Daniel Platt quarry tiles will help to achieve a look that is faithful to the project. By contrast, where uniformity and precision are key, the company also offers a wide range of pressed clay Ferrolite floor tiles. Available in several striking textures and hues: including black, chocolate, cinnamon and steel - these tiles are well suited to the creation of contemporary, often bold designs and are created by carefully blending, then pressing superior English clays.

The company also produces Carborundum quarry tiles and Ferrundum Ferrolite slip-resistant tiles. Incorporating carbide grit, these tile surfaces are particularly appropriate for school kitchens and hospital applications.

With all Daniel Platt tiling products, specifications can be written to meet individual needs, samples are available on request and a full technical support service is provided to help ensure the desired effect and required level of functionality is achieved.

Full specifications can be provided as to the correct laying, bedding and fixing of floor tiles, as can advice regarding a suitable cleaning regime depending on the particular application.



NIGEL WITHAM

"Last month was an exciting one for my team. At last, after two years' work, we completed a major new showroom in Cwmbran, a small town in South Wales, for Tiles Ahead.

It would be inappropriate for me to use this column, which I try to keep as honest and punchy as possible, as an advert for our own services but I am very pleased with this project, as is Nick

McDonald, Managing Director of Tiles Ahead.

As you will see from the pictures elsewhere in the magazine (page 18, ed) the store does look fabulous. I am not patting myself on the back too hard though. Nick was as a perfect a client as one could wish for and backed our ideas and expertise with his own commitment and a heavy investment. Believe me, he has worked much harder than us on this and dug very deep. This is not always the case and it would be hard for any competent retail designer to fail a client like Nick.

I have written before about the issues I have observed with business that fail to empower their employees or inspire their customers, or who talk down to them with tacky never-ending sales offers and empty price guarantees. It has been a pleasure for us to work with someone who so clearly thinks beyond the obvious and who cares about his staff and his customers. There really are no substitutes for original thought and sincerity. I'm afraid I have found these attributes to be a little scarce in retailing.

One of the most damaging misconceptions that I have come across is that you can only sell tiles by making them look cheap. By stacking them high and presenting them casually some retailers think you can kid people that they are getting a good deal. I'd say this is insincere and thoughtless. There are retailers like Topps and Tiles 'r' Us who are undeniably lower to mid market. They make no pretence but to offer cheap tiles. They present them as cheap tiles and then sell them at cheap prices. Just like Tiles Ahead their offer is consistent, honest and clear. It does not appeal to everyone but it delivers to those who want a cheap deal. It lives up to its promise and that is what customers want.

If you look at the photo you can see that a smart showroom can also be full of customers. There are all types of people here at the Tiles Ahead opening weekend. Some are obviously wealthy and have been attracted by the high quality displays and product offer but others appear less so and have responded to other messages. The customer-service perhaps, the prices, the wide range, the piped band, the web site, the collateral advertising. Who knows? Perhaps the store design even played a part. The important point though is all of these promotional tools are used with thought, care and consistency. The result though is a shop brim-full of people."