



The Lead Sheet Association



Decorative lead detailing adds final touches to Africa House

Some fabulous examples of decorative leadwork have been produced to provide the finishing touches to a £25 million refurbishment project at Africa House in central London.

BAM Construction were appointed main contractors for a project that included converting the interior of Africa House, a Grade II listed building, into 118,000 square feet of ultramodern office space around a new full-height atrium with scenic glass wall-climbing lifts.

The architects of the project, JM Architects, insisted that the new roof for the building must be in lead and slate, and so a new Burlington slate mansard roof with a lead crown and lead dormer windows was constructed, with the works being undertaken by principal contractor T&P Lead Roofing Limited in conjunction with Architectural Lead & Metalwork Limited on behalf of BAM Construction.

The lead panel fitted at the top of the roof contains some delightful examples of lead craftsmanship, including finials, decorative ribbon detail and roses, as well as the lead dormer windows. The hollow finials positioned along the panel are made of code 6 bossed lead, with a code 8 welded back, whilst on the corners are positioned shell corner finials, made of code 8 lead, and the roll edge on the outside edge carries a stainless steel rod giving stability to the structure.

Most of the ornate leadwork, including the patterns and finials, was constructed in the factory before the lead panels were transported to site and craned into position. The detailed leadwork on display is indeed a suitably impressive sight on this historic building.

In total, in excess of 50 tonnes of British Standard 12588 Rolled Lead Sheet was used on the project, sourced from Associated Lead Mills, and the quality of the leadwork was recognised in being a finalist in the prestigious Murdoch Awards, the ultimate accolade for lead sheet craftsmanship.

For more information about using Rolled Lead Sheet to BS EN 12588 visit the LSA website at www.leadsheet.co.uk



Africa House is a landmark building located on Kingsway in the Holborn district of central London. It was constructed by Trehearne and Norman in 1921, shortly after the end of World War I and as the British Empire was beginning to decline. The building boasts a distinctive ornate Portland stone façade, which has been retained during the refurbishment, and one of the key features is an impressive stone sculpture over the cornice.

Designed by Benjamin Clemens, assistant master at the Royal College of Art, the sculpture has Britannia at its centre, flanked by two noble traders with their camel to their right and a big game hunter oiling his rifle to the left. Next to him a native bearer carries a pair of tusks while the hunter's victim lies open-eyed and tuskless next to them. Other animals include a lion and crocodile to her far right and a bison and large python to her far left.

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