



The Lead Sheet Association



Rolled Lead Sheet plays a key role in Restoration of Scottish Castle

Lews Castle, a Victorian era building situated on the outskirts of Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis, is currently undergoing extensive renovation work to restore the castle to its former glory.

The tender for the work, issued by local council Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, specified that Historic Scotland standards must be incorporated into the tender documents, which meant that all leadwork was to be carried out by a contractor who is a member of the Lead Contractors Association. The first phase of the construction programme, involving repairs and conservation work to the external fabric of the castle, was completed in the summer of 2013, by John Fulton Ltd, the specialist leadwork contractor.

Approximately 65 tonnes of rolled lead sheet, sourced from British Lead Mills, was used for the project, almost exclusively using codes 6, 7 and 8. Code 6 was used for all lead flashing, and code 8 was used for all ridges, hips and gutters. The flat roofs were all ventilated and overlaid with code 8 sheets, dressed to recreate the original bullnose detail. A number of the flat roofs had to be redesigned so that they conformed to guidelines issued by the Lead Sheet Association.

It was found that some of the roofs had previously been overlaid with copper, and that they were failing due to incorrect detailing and poor workmanship. Indeed, mastic was found to have been extensively used to try – unsuccessfully – to keep the roofs watertight. It also proved necessary to redesign a number of gutters as, in their original state; they did not conform to the LSA guidelines.

The remainder of the project, mostly renovating the interior of the buildings, is due for completion in 2015. However, the owners of Lews Castle, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, can now rest assured that the building is protected by roofing that not only has a stunning aesthetic appearance which blends in perfectly with its surroundings, but they can also have peace of mind knowing that the leadwork is guaranteed for the next 25 years, as it was carried out by a Lead Contractors Association member. Furthermore, all evidence of leadwork correctly fitted on similar installations suggests that it will still perform excellently in a hundred years' time, even with minimal maintenance in the interim.

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



Once owned by soap tycoon William Hesketh Lever, who gifted the castle and grounds to the people of Stornoway, the upkeep of the building proved to be very expensive and over time had fallen into disrepair, to the extent that it was out of use for some 25 years towards the end of the 20th century.

Having been on the 'Buildings at Risk Register' for Scotland since 2000, a report in 2006 concluded that the "complete renewal of all roof coverings and leadwork is absolutely essential and requires to be undertaken as soon as possible"

As well as carrying out a full repair of the exterior fabric of the castle and repair and restoration of the principal rooms on the ground floor, the project is also seeing the castle transformed into a museum – the first in the UK to use Gaelic as the first language – an archive for the Outer Hebrides, as well as providing hotel accommodation for tourists.

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