

CASE STUDY

LEAD DETAILING ON SARAH BEENY'S LATEST LONDON PROJECT



QUICK FACTS

- **Project focus:** Lead detailing around valleys and windows
- **Lead products used:** 14 rolls of Midland Lead's Code 4 BBA-accredited machine cast lead, and patination oil
- **Project timings:** January-April 2015

THE PROJECT

Renowned property expert, writer and TV presenter Sarah Beeny approached lead sheet manufacturer Midland Lead back in January 2015, when she began improvement work on a South London property.

Working on an extension to the turn of the century, late Victorian build, Sarah – who's best known for fronting Channel 4's Double Your House for Half the Money, Restoration Nightmare and Property Ladder – decided she wanted traditional lead detailing around the valleys and windows.

"I'm quite traditional and I knew that lead was the best product to use; it not only looks great, but will last a lifetime. I don't think you can get a really lovely finish that looks high quality without using lead to be honest. It will always look a little bit like it's a temporary repair."

Sarah Beeny

While alternative materials may come with a slightly cheaper price tag, Sarah says the benefits of traditional lead far outweigh other products. "Lead does cost a bit more, admittedly, but sometimes in life if you spend a little bit more, you really reap the rewards in the long-term.

Over the last 20 years working in the building industry we've really learnt that if you buy cheap, you pay twice. Ultimately lead is good value for money and worth every penny," she says.

Clear on specifying lead for the project, Sarah goes on to explain why she insisted on lead sheet from Midland Lead for the job: "If you've decided you're going to use lead for the job, you need to get the right lead, which is by far the loveliest building product to use if you're doing a roof. And all the people I've previously worked with recommend Midland Lead's lead sheet.

"Poor quality lead is really not worth it. It's a massive mistake; it costs nearly the same amount and you'll just have to replace it. You have to go for quality if you're going to use lead."

Sarah Beeny

As well as being known in the industry for its high quality, Midland Lead's machine cast lead also comes with a 60 year guarantee as part of its BBA certificate (86/1764).

But Sarah says, from past experience, that she expects it to last much longer than that. "Having dealt with a lot of historic buildings in my time, I've seen lead last for a 100 years. So a 60 year guarantee is great, but I think it has much more life in it than that anyway!"

Although keen to use traditional materials and to follow the architecture and design of the original house, Sarah also wanted to bring an element of fun into the extension: "We wanted it to look in-keeping with the rest of the building, yet still really fun and interesting. So we decided to have lots of different bits of lead detailing, which change from one pitch to another.

"We had a brilliant local roofer do the work, who did a beautiful job with all the intricate lead detailing. He also used patination oil to finish the job off, which helps prevent staining on the lead work or adjacent tiles and brickwork, and gives a nice clear shine to the finished job. I'm really pleased with the end results."

Sarah Beeny

While Sarah's background in property has seen her specialise in older builds, she says she wouldn't rule lead out on contemporary properties: "I don't tend to do contemporary builds, but I don't see why lead should be only used in traditional buildings.

"The thing about design is that buildings shouldn't be built on a temporary basis and design shouldn't be temporary. For the good of the environment as well as your own back pocket, you want to design something that lasts and is good quality, whether traditional or contemporary in style. So I think lead would be a really good building product in a contemporary building, just used in a slightly different way."

Concluding, Sarah adds: "I would be happy to recommend Midland Lead to the people I work with, and actually would have recommended them before this project. I have a few companies, people and products that I know do the job properly, and Midland Lead is one of them."

