In practice

In each issue of Profile, we'll be reporting on a recent project where Alutec has provided the solution to a particular problem or architectural requirement. We begin with one of the UK's most sustainable developments, in a city that once made concrete famous…

In 1978, the then new city of Milton Keynes appointed Canadian-born sculptor Liz Leyh as its artist-in-residence. Her herd of six concrete cows became a cultural icon, and were taken by many commentators as confirmation of their preconceptions about modern development in general, and Milton Keynes in particular. Which is a shame, because it was originally conceived as a 'city in the forest', full of green spaces – the very opposite of the 'concrete jungle' the tabloids made it out to be.

But now, the tables have been well and truly turned. The city's Broughton Atterbury site is the largest UK development to be awarded a BREEAM EcoHomes 'Excellent' award, the construction industry's gold standard for environmental sustainability.

Built by contractors Inspace, the development consists of mixed tenure residential homes and commercial properties, designed specifically to minimise environmental impact. All 220 homes in the £27million scheme have been fitted with Black Alutec 120mm x 75mm Aligator® Deepflow gutters, which offer a smooth, inconspicuous shape against the roof edge. For the retail and commercial units, Aligator® Giant trapezoidal profile gutters measuring 200mm x 150mm were specified: specifically designed for large roofs, the system can deal with capacities of over 10 litres per second.

Our products were chosen on the strength of their low maintenance requirements, and 100% recyclability, which fit perfectly with the development's sustainable philosophy. Something any city would be proud to be famous for.

Next time...

In our autumn issue of Profile, we'll be looking at sustainability and recycling, and our work with the Council for Aluminium in Building. We'll also go into the practical and aesthetic benefits of our polyester powder coating options – and update you on our CPD seminars.

Your comments and suggestions are always welcome - please email us at: enquiries@marleyalutec.co.uk

ALUTEC
ALUMINIUM RAINWATER SYSTEMS

PROFILE

News from Alutec aluminium rainwater systems

Issue 1 - July '08

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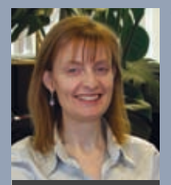
MARLEY
PLUMBING & DRAINAGE

Flow of information



Fiona Bashford
Editor

We're delighted to introduce this first issue of Profile, a regular roundup of technical know-how, product information and news from Marley Alutec. At a time when sustainability and lifetime costing are high on the agenda for designers, specifiers and clients, aluminium guttering is becoming an increasingly popular and logical choice. Through this newsletter, we'll provide the latest industry information, practical advice and product updates to help you make informed decisions, and balance aesthetic and functional factors when specifying guttering for your projects. We hope you find it useful.

Time for change

Look carefully at the cover, and you'll see we've updated our logo. As revamps go, it's fairly subtle, but we felt that the previous version just wasn't quite 'us' any more. We think the new look better reflects the business we've become: sharper, more forward-looking and, thanks to our durable, 100% recyclable products, a genuinely sustainable choice.

As you'll appreciate, changing a brand takes time, so you may find the old logo resurfacing occasionally over the next few months; please bear with us, and be assured that whichever version you see, it's still us!

Setting the standard

Alutec has spent years fighting to establish a new BSI Standard for traditional-style aluminium guttering – and next year could see that effort finally pay off.

As many readers will be aware, there's been a steady harmonisation between British and European standards in recent years. In 1997, the outdated UK standard for aluminium gutter systems BS 2997:1958, which generally matched British Standard cast-iron styles to BS460, was deemed 'obsolescent' in favour of EN612. This new standard threatened historic British styles of decorative gutter and rainwater pipes systems, giving an unfair advantage to mainland European style imports to the UK market.

In 2007, BS2997:1958 was finally declared 'obsolete', and BSI and the metal gutter industry set about drafting a new EN/BS Standard to cover all UK gutter styles. However, due to the diversity of products in the UK brought about by an outdated and weak standard BS2997, the venture failed.

Fortunately, the Metal Gutters Manufacturers' Association (MGMA) took up the baton, and will soon launch its "Industry Good Practice Guide", which could potentially be adapted by BSI as one of its Publicly Available Specifications (PAS). Here at Marley Alutec, we're also leading a joint project with the MGMA to produce a new British Standard representing heritage style aluminium gutter systems that replicate historic cast-iron styles – basically what was intended with BS2997. This new standard will protect this specific 'bygone' product range, which is still in popular demand, helping to maintain our historic styles and product quality for future generations. All being well, it should be published in April 2009.

It will also address the serious problems that the lack of a credible product standard has created for the aluminium rainwater industry. Few of the numerous low-quality, low-cost 'copycat' systems that have found their way onto the market have delivered the claims of durability and functional performance expected of aluminium guttering: as a result architects struggle to maintain credible product specifications. We'll bring you more news on the new standard, and the application of British Standards generally in our industry, in future issues.

For more information about the MGMA visit: www.mgma.co.uk

METAL GUTTER MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION

Down to the metal

For our first issue of Profile, we've put together this back-to-basics overview of aluminium guttering – and why it's becoming the material of choice in an age of lifetime costing.

In 1945, Britain found itself chronically short of iron, despite the sacrifice of virtually every garden gate and set of iron railings in the land. Aluminium, however, was relatively easy to come by, with its principal raw material, bauxite, still in plentiful supply. As a result, many of the old cast-iron gutters left damaged by the Luftwaffe were replaced with aluminium – and are probably still there and working perfectly to this day.

And for many specifiers, this longevity is the main appeal of aluminium. Unlike cast iron, which relies on paint to remain rustproof, aluminium guttering resists corrosion even in its raw, unpainted form. When exposed to air, aluminium forms an oxide 'barrier layer' on the surface, which despite being only nanometres thick, is bonded extremely strongly and prevents any further attack. In practice, this means a predicted service life for aluminium guttering of around 40 years, even if it never sees a paintbrush. Which, of course, it doesn't need to.

Compare this to cast iron, where manufacturers recommend applying a coat of primer, then undercoat and two coats of gloss paint before installation, and repainting roughly every five years. Not that even this laborious regime offers any guarantees. Even the most accomplished painter can't reach inaccessible surfaces like the backs of pipes and gutters; these eventually rust through, causing leaks, water ingress and, in many cases, dampness in the building. Plus, the HSE isn't exactly in favour of painters working at height using ladders, so there's the extra cost of scaffolding or other access equipment to factor in.

It's a similar picture with galvanised steel, which, as another ferrous metal, is also vulnerable to rust. It can be coated to extend its life expectancy, but any damage to this protective coating will expose the base metal, and give rust a way in. This Achilles heel explains why steel guttering is generally only guaranteed for 15 years.

In an age when lifetime costing is coming to the fore, aluminium's long life and low maintenance makes it highly attractive to clients. But there are a couple of other benefits for specifiers and installers, too. Because aluminium is around 65% lighter than cast iron, it's easier to handle and fix, and puts less strain on whatever surface it's attached to. It's also more malleable, so copes much better with impacts, temperature extremes and frost expansion.

But guttering is more than a functional element of a building. Aesthetics matter, too, and whatever the project, one of our three ranges – Classic, Modern and Traditional – will offer an appropriate style. This even applies to historic and heritage buildings: because our Traditional products are completely interchangeable with old British Standard cast iron gutters and pipes, many trust and local authority Building Conservation departments are perfectly happy to see them used as replacements on Grade 2 Listed buildings, especially where access for repainting and maintenance is restricted.

To find out more, you may be interested in attending our specialist seminar, accredited by both RIBA and the Construction CPD Certification Service. Aimed at designers and specifiers, it covers the benefits of aluminium, correct installation practice, aesthetic finishes and specific applications.

For details, please call 01234 359438 or email cpd@marleyalutec.co.uk