



DEL CARMEN®

WORLD'S MOST SPECIFIED SLATE



**Ahmed El-Helw**  
Founder and  
Managing Director



**Manuel Maestre Vega**  
Founder of the  
Del Carmen Quarry

## Welcome

Hello,

When I first saw Spanish slate more than 40 years ago, I was transfixed. I became fascinated with how strong it is, and how thinly it can be split while retaining that strength.

I then set out on a journey to source the finest slate in Spain, and bring it to customers around the UK.

Before long, I found Del Carmen. As quarries go, Del Carmen had it all – uncompromising quality standards, decades of expertise, and the most stunning blue-grey slate with the longevity to last up to a century.

I met with the founder, Manuel Maestre Vega, and quickly discovered we shared the same values. In 1992, we shook hands on a deal that would see us become the exclusive suppliers of Del Carmen slate everywhere in the world except France and Spain.

We had so much trust in and respect for one another that we have never signed a formal agreement.

In the decades since, we have used Del Carmen to roof thousands of buildings around the world.

We hope you find this brochure informative – and if you need any further information, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Best wishes,

Ahmed El-Helw  
Founder and Managing Director

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# Why natural slate?

## A stunning material that can last a century

For centuries, when people have needed a material that lasts, they have chosen natural slate.

Neolithic hunters used it to tip arrows and spears. As far back as Roman times, it was being used to roof palaces and forts.

So it is no surprise that, even thousands of years later, natural slate is still prized for its strength, low maintenance and long lifespan.



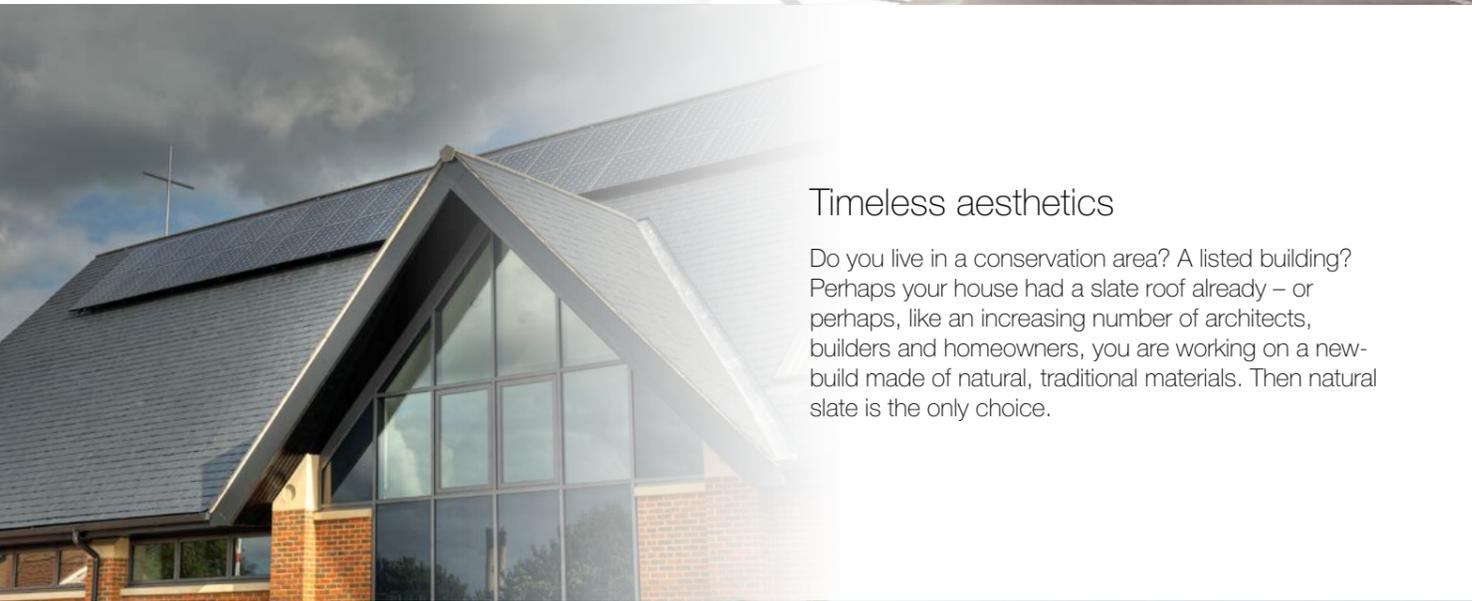
## Material that lasts a lifetime

Perhaps the biggest benefit of natural slate is that it lasts. A quality slate roof, for example, that is expertly installed, can last over a hundred years – in many cases, longer than the building it is originally fitted on! Those lengthy lifespans mean that, over time, it is much more cost-effective than the alternatives.



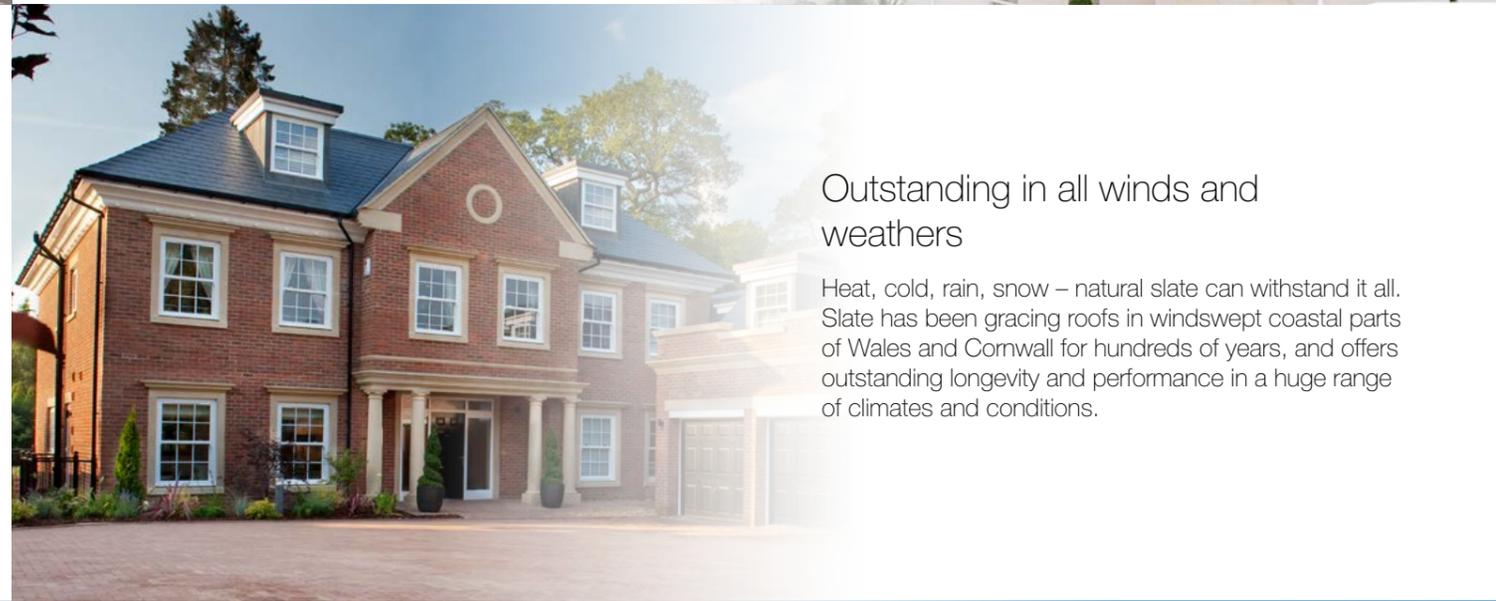
## Timeless aesthetics

Do you live in a conservation area? A listed building? Perhaps your house had a slate roof already – or perhaps, like an increasing number of architects, builders and homeowners, you are working on a new-build made of natural, traditional materials. Then natural slate is the only choice.



## Outstanding in all winds and weathers

Heat, cold, rain, snow – natural slate can withstand it all. Slate has been gracing roofs in windswept coastal parts of Wales and Cornwall for hundreds of years, and offers outstanding longevity and performance in a huge range of climates and conditions.



## The greenest roofing material of them all?

The clue is in the name. Natural slate is 100% natural. It is the product of hundreds of millions of years of geology, and contains none of the chemicals that many synthetic alternatives do.

When it comes to embodied carbon – in effect, a material's carbon footprint – natural slate is even more impressive. Concrete tiles create 0.19kg of CO<sup>2</sup> per kilogram. Clay tiles are worse – they produce 0.43kg per kilo. Natural slate, however, contains far less – between 0.005-0.054kg per kilo.

If you are looking for a long-lasting, great-looking roof, then natural slate is the eco-friendly choice.



## Limitless design potential

Slate is a flexible material and can usually be tailored to fit with your design requirements. It is particularly suitable on complex pitched roofs and can also be used (subject to a technical appraisal by us) on low pitch applications. The only limiting factor to your project's design with slate is your imagination.



# Del Carmen quarry

In the slate sector, good quarries are like gold dust.

That is because it is the individual quarry, much more than the region or country, that makes the biggest difference to the quality of the slate you end up with.

For three decades, we have been working with Del Carmen.

Located in North West Spain's Cabrera Mountains, Del Carmen slate is prized worldwide – often hand-picked by architects for its distinctive, faintly-rippled texture, deep blue-black colour and longitudinal grain.

## Forming the partnership

We first came into contact with Del Carmen after conducting a comprehensive geological survey of North Spain.

At the time, however, Del Carmen purely supplied the French market – the biggest in the world, and where the finest slate ends up in almost all cases.

Eventually, though, we were able to tempt them away - and in doing so SSQ became the first company to bring French-approved slate to Britain.

## Uncompromising quality standards

With quality controllers based practically on site in our Spanish office, we are uncompromising about quality, ensuring our slate meets the most exacting international standards, and can trace all our products back to their source.

And today, thanks to Del Carmen, we are the only company capable of supplying genuine Ultra grade slates in the UK.

Many providers claim to be able to get their hands on Ultra slate – but in reality, of the tiny number of quarries capable of producing it, the vast majority export exclusively to France.

That is the benefit of working with a company that deals exclusively with one of the best quarries in the world.



# St Joseph's College

London

Completed in 1866, St Joseph's College was once a grand, sprawling seminary for training priest and missionaries (it also once doubled for a convent in ITV's Call the Midwife) – but by 2008, the last of the clergymen had left, and the stately complex lay abandoned.

Developer Berkeley Homes quickly recognised that the site had huge potential, and got to work transforming it into 49 luxurious apartments set in seven acres of mature parkland, and just ten miles outside central London.

It was a major task for a number of reasons – not least because the site was in sore need of a facelift, and carried a Grade II listing.

The roof posed a particular challenge. They needed a material that looked authentic, offered superb performance, could be supplied in large quantities and that came at a competitive price.

Together, that made SSQ's Del Carmen natural slate the most attractive choice. The celebrated material had already

doubled for indigenous slate on dozens of prestigious buildings, and impressed geologists and conservation officers around the country.

Thanks to SSQ's long and successful partnership with North Spain's Del Carmen quarry, the development was guaranteed a consistent supply of outstanding slate.

The project went on to receive a much sought-after National Federation of Roofing Contractors Award.

<b>Roofing</b>	Contour Roofing
<b>Type</b>	Residential development
<b>Category</b>	New Build & Refurbishment
<b>Element</b>	Roof
<b>Product</b>	Del Carmen First
<b>Scope</b>	2000m <sup>2</sup>



# Selections

We offer Del Carmen in several selections – including Ultra-grade, the thinnest, highest-quality natural Spanish slate we provide

**Ultra**

5-6mm

- Thickness 5-6mm
- Weight 36.5kg/M<sup>2</sup>\*
- Very smooth texture
- Extremely flat uniform thickness
- Simple & fast installation
- Minimum sorting required
- < 3% wastage
- 100 year guarantee
- Complies with NF 228, ASTM C 406, ATG H664



**First**

5-6mm

- Thickness 5-6mm
- Weight 40kg/M<sup>2</sup>\*
- Moderate flat slight thickness variation
- More complex installation
- Moderate sorting required
- 3%-5% wastage
- 75 year guarantee



**Celtas**

5-7mm

- Thickness 5-7mm
- Weight 42kg/M<sup>2</sup>\*
- Relatively smooth texture
- Some thickness and flatness variation
- Requires an experienced roofer
- Custom sorting required
- > 5% wastage
- 50 year guarantee



**Ultra Heavy**

8-10mm

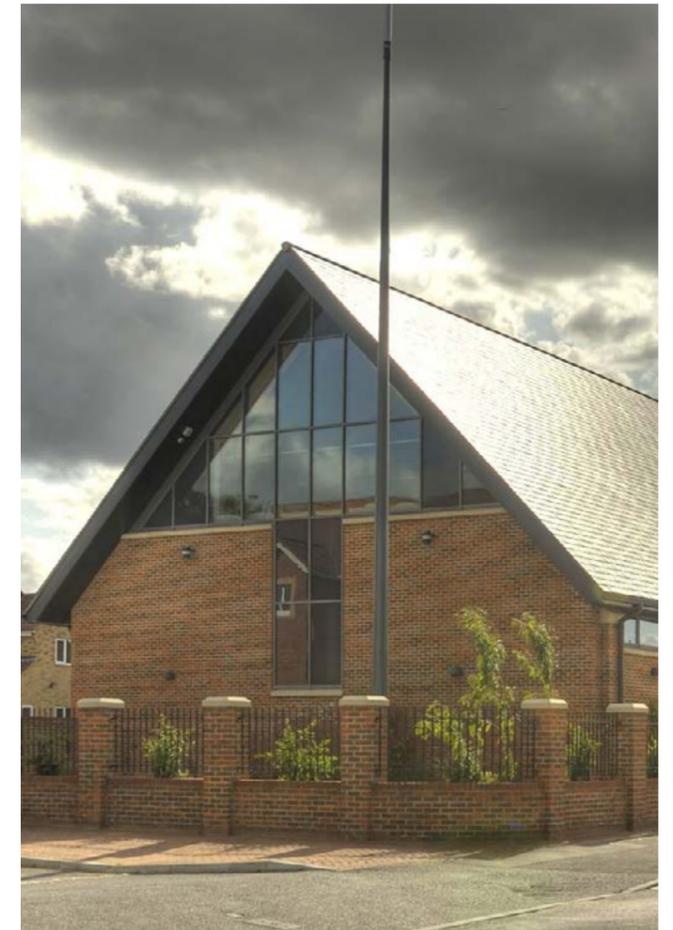
- Thickness 8-10mm
- Weight 49kg/M<sup>2</sup>\*\*
- Relatively smooth texture
- Some thickness and flatness variation
- Requires an experienced roofer
- Custom sorting required
- > 5% wastage
- 100 year guarantee



Size (inches)	24 x 12	20 x 12	20 x 10	18 x 12	16 x 10	16 x 8	14 x 8	12 x 8
Size (mm)	600 x 300	500 x 300	500 x 250	450 x 300	400 x 250	400 x 200	350 x 200	300 x 200

Please contact us if you require other sizes, thicknesses or shapes. All dimensions and weights are nominal approximations. Slates are cut to metric measure.  
 \*Based on 500x250 | \*\*Based on 400x250

Notes  
 Colours and textures have been rendered as accurately as possible; the photographic process and the nature of natural stone prevent exact representations. Being a natural product, slate's physical and chemical characteristics can vary.



## Case Study

# St George's Church

Bracknell, Berkshire

In 2002, the church that served Bracknell's Britwell Estate for more than forty years was declared unsafe and scheduled for demolition.

For the sitting vicar, the Reverend John Charlton, this was hugely upsetting – and he embarked on a heroic six-year fundraising drive that generated the £1.7m he needed to build a replacement.

In October 2009, the finished building was officially opened by Anne, the Princess Royal.

Reverend Charlton wanted a place of worship that was welcoming and homely, made using traditional materials, but that was also fit for the twenty-first century.

The resulting design combined a sleek and contemporary glass-fronted entryway and solar panels with handmade brick and a stunning Del Carmen natural slate roof.

Around 12,000 blue-black Del Carmen roofing slates were fitted to the building by Attleys Roofing of Banbury in Oxfordshire.

Today, its stunning roof supports enough solar panels to generate 8,300 kilowatts of energy per year.

Thanks to the strength and longevity of SSQ's Del Carmen natural slate, the church and its parishioners can rest assured that St George's will continue to serve the community for decades to come.

<b>Architect</b>	Allen Associates Architects, Bracknell, Berkshire
<b>Roofing</b>	Attleys Roofing, Banbury, Oxfordshire
<b>Type</b>	Church
<b>Category</b>	Newbuild
<b>Element</b>	Roof
<b>Product</b>	Del Carmen First
<b>Scope</b>	c.12,000 slates



## Del Carmen vs indigenous slate

For centuries, people across the British Isles have been roofing their homes with slate – and that is no surprise.

Quality natural slate is hard, strong, extremely long-lasting, and often gorgeous to look at. But today, if you find yourself in the position of having to replace a roof made with slate from quarries in Cornwall, Scotland, Wales or elsewhere, you have got a problem.

Indigenous slate is extremely hard to get hold of. Many of Britain's traditional slate quarries have closed – or produce so little material that sourcing it is hugely challenging.

But fortunately, Del Carmen offers an outstanding alternative.



### An alternative to Welsh slate

On dozens of projects around the country, Del Carmen has been chosen to replace Welsh slate.

Independent testing concluded that Del Carmen has "a virtually identical composition" to Cwt y Bugail, the dark blue grey Welsh slate.

As expert geologist Barry Hunt explains: "there is all sorts of arguments over Spanish versus Welsh slate. But actually, many of these darker slates come from roughly the same geological time period."



	Del Carmen Ultra	Welsh Slate
Visible pyrites	✘	✘
Very low water absorption	✔	✔
Unfading colour	✔	✔
Well developed cleavage	✔	✔
Snowdonia National Park approval	✔	✔
Rust free guarantee*	✔	✘
Water tightness guarantee**	✔	✘
Conformity to NF 228 standard	✔	✘

\*Only available with the purchase of our premium grade slates.

\*\*Subject to being fixed in accordance with SSQ Fixing and Design Guide, BS5534:2014 & BS 8000 part 6

## Case Study

# The Cowyards

Blenheim Palace, Woodstock, Oxfordshire

Blenheim Palace is a piece of British history – a three-century old World Heritage site built for General John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough, that later served as the birthplace of his most famous descendant, Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

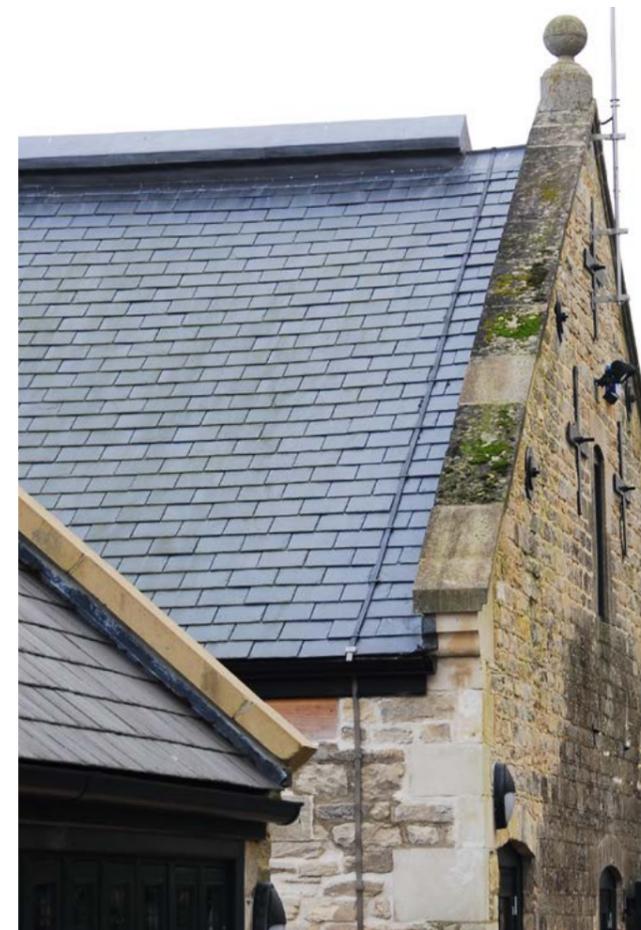
Carrying out renovation work on such a prestigious location is a serious undertaking – and when the Palace's owners decided to sympathetically restore some disused buildings for use as an office, only the finest materials were considered.

Four long, low outbuildings dating from the mid-nineteenth century were fitted with more than 1,800 square metres of SSQ's Del Carmen natural slate – around 40,000 individual slates in total.

Del Carmen impressed both the Palace's owners and local planning authorities to be approved for use on these Grade II listed buildings.

They went on to become the modern headquarters of the very architects that designed it, Ridge Group – while remaining perfectly in keeping with its historic surroundings.

<b>Architect</b>	Ridge, Woodstock
<b>Roofing</b>	Atleys Roofing, Banbury
<b>Type</b>	Office
<b>Category</b>	Refurbishment
<b>Element</b>	Roof
<b>Product</b>	Del Carmen First
<b>Scope</b>	c.40,000 slates / c.1,800 m <sup>2</sup>



# Testing

Del Carmen has been extensively tested to some of the world's strictest and most respected standards for natural slate.

After rigorous assessment by experts in the field, it has achieved outstanding results.

Del Carmen has achieved W1-T1-S1 classification, the highest result possible, in the UK's BS EN 12326 testing.

It has achieved Grade S1, again the highest result possible, when tested to the American US: ASTM C 406 standard.

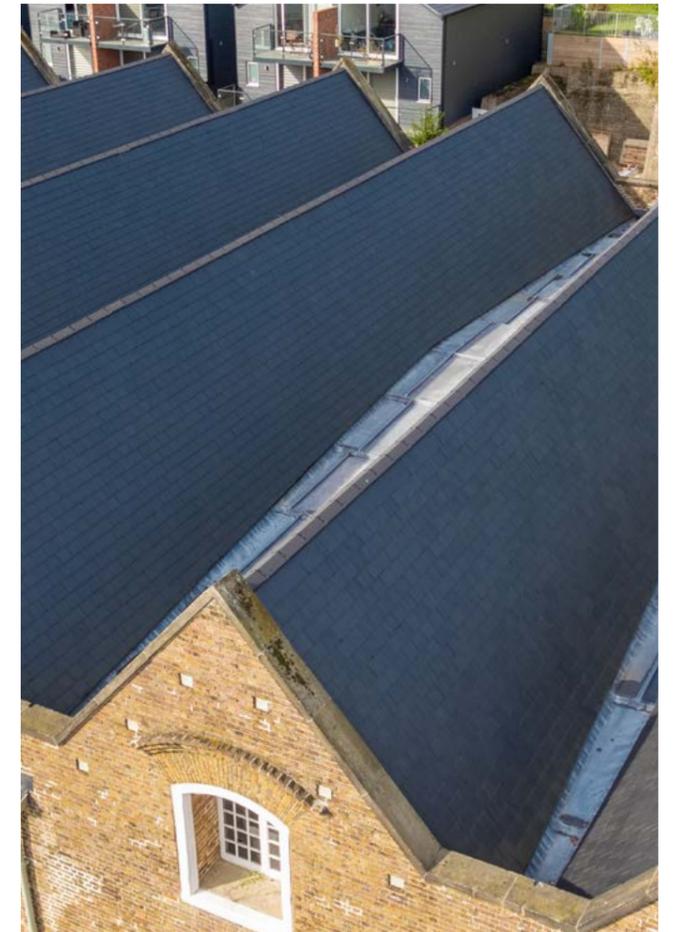
Del Carmen also conforms to the most rigorous testing criteria in the world – Norm Francais 228 - to ensure compliance regular checks are performed by independent experts at source throughout the span of 3 years.

Del Carmen also demonstrates exceptionally low water absorption, far outperforming test requirements. It can withstand extreme freeze-thaw cycling, as well as salt exposure, that can weaken more absorbent slates.

It exhibits excellent resistance to acid and weather damage, making it suitable for the harshest of climates, and nearly impervious to atmospheric pollutants

Del Carmen also achieves T1 standard, meaning that it will not severely weather or oxidise.





## Case Study

### Magazine B Rochester, Kent

Magazine B is a series of Grade II listed brick sheds in Rochester, Kent. Its unusual name stems from the fact it was originally used as a Victorian military installation – ‘magazines’ were buildings constructed to store gunpowder and ammunition.

Long left derelict, the site was acquired to convert into a series of offices – and Southern and County Roofing were engaged to fit replacement slate roofs that were sympathetic to their nineteenth century appeal.

Southern and County were tasked with finding a premium, natural product with a long life span, and excellent consistency in colour and texture.

SSQ's Del Carmen natural slate ticked all the boxes.

Its stunning aesthetics helped preserve the site's historic character – while its tried-and-tested strength and endurance mean it will continue looking pristine and offering superb performance for decades.

<b>Roofing</b>	Southern and County Roofing
<b>Type</b>	Residential development
<b>Category</b>	Refurbishment
<b>Element</b>	Roof
<b>Product</b>	Del Carmen First
<b>Scope</b>	1300m <sup>2</sup>

# Ultra Cover from SSQ

A roof is a serious investment – and that means you want a material you know is going to last.

That is why, at SSQ, we have introduced Ultra Cover – a comprehensive package of guarantees designed to ensure our products last longer than the building they are installed on.

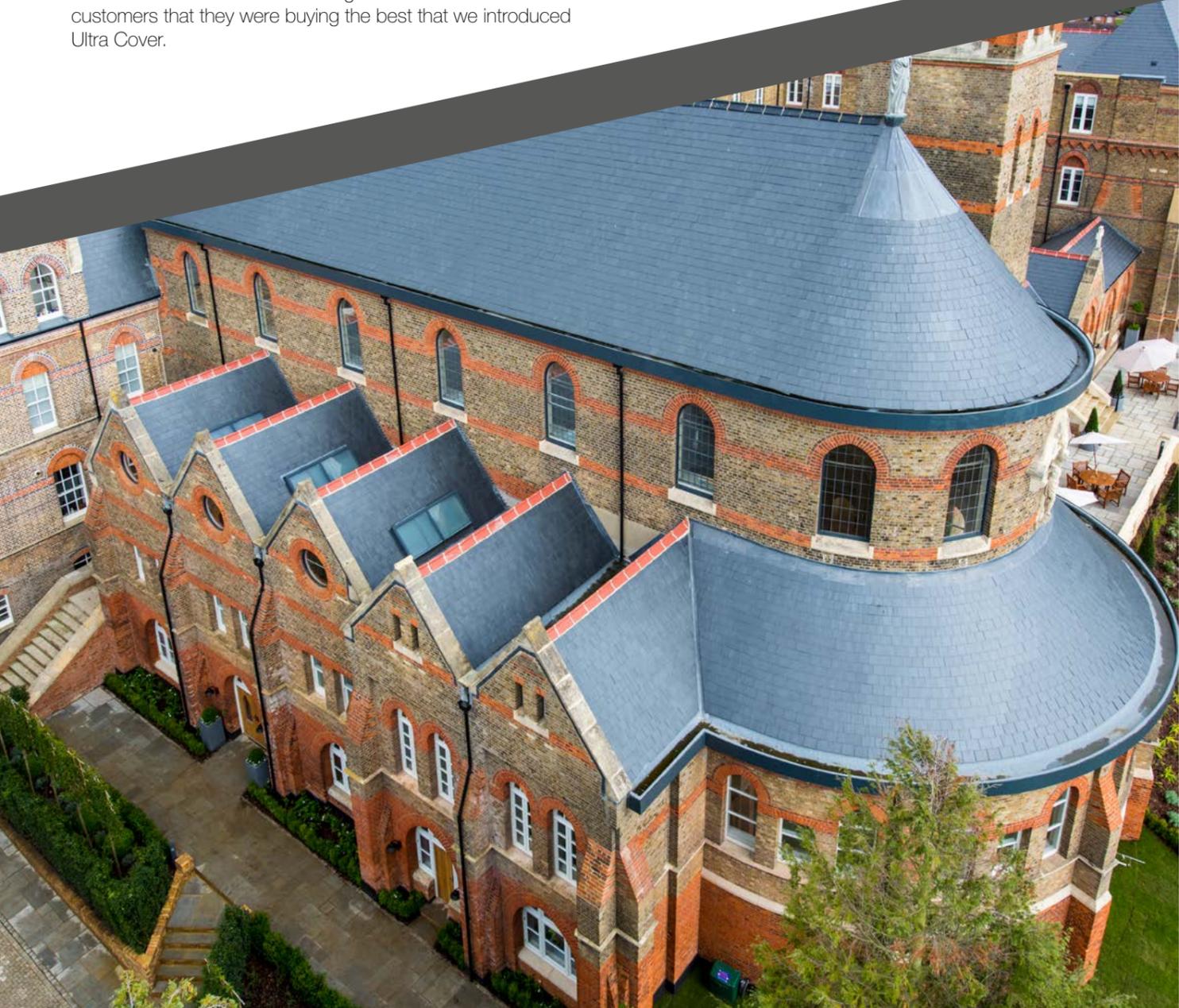
## Why is it needed?

Because there are thousands of companies selling slate all around the world – but sadly, some are not as reputable as others.

In any quarry, between 85 and 90% of the material produced is not good enough quality to be used for roofing. However, some businesses go on and sell this sub-par slate into the roofing market anyway, resulting in roofs that quickly rust, delaminate or otherwise fail.

Many quarries sell their best material to France, with customers in the UK and elsewhere receiving slate that is lower quality.

At SSQ we do none of those things – and it was to reassure our customers that they were buying the best that we introduced Ultra Cover.



## Ultimate peace of mind

Ultra Cover seeks to address five key areas that are crucial to the health and longevity of a quality slate roof.

### Slate quality

To qualify for Ultra Cover, a roof has to use ultra-grade Del Carmen, the highest Spanish slate we offer. Installed on prestigious projects around the world, it is even been accepted for use in some conservation areas and to replace indigenous slate

### Surveys during installation

An Ultra Cover roof is independently surveyed several times during the installation process, as well as by SSQ representatives

### Market-leading fittings, fixings and ancillaries

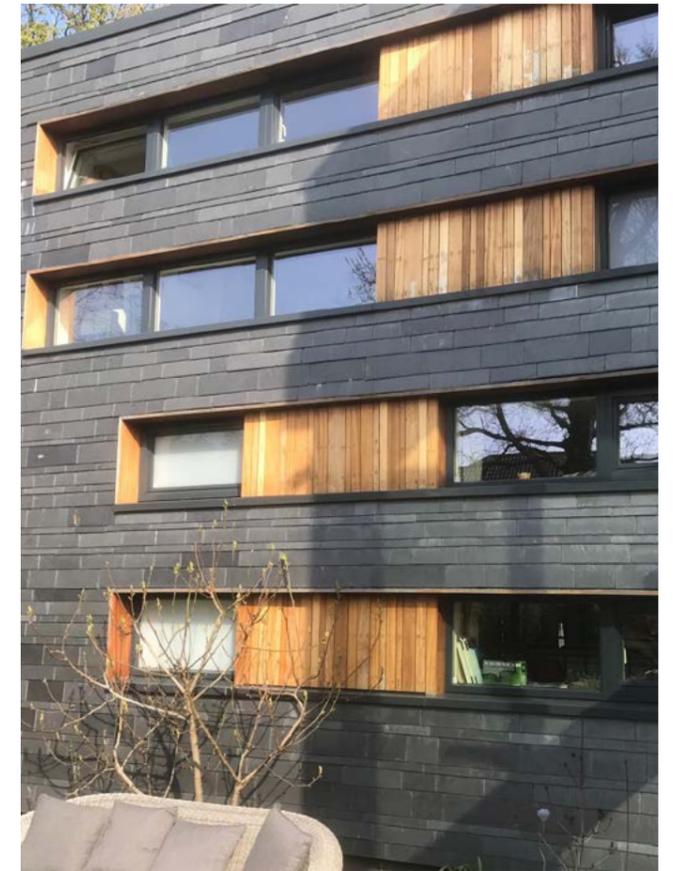
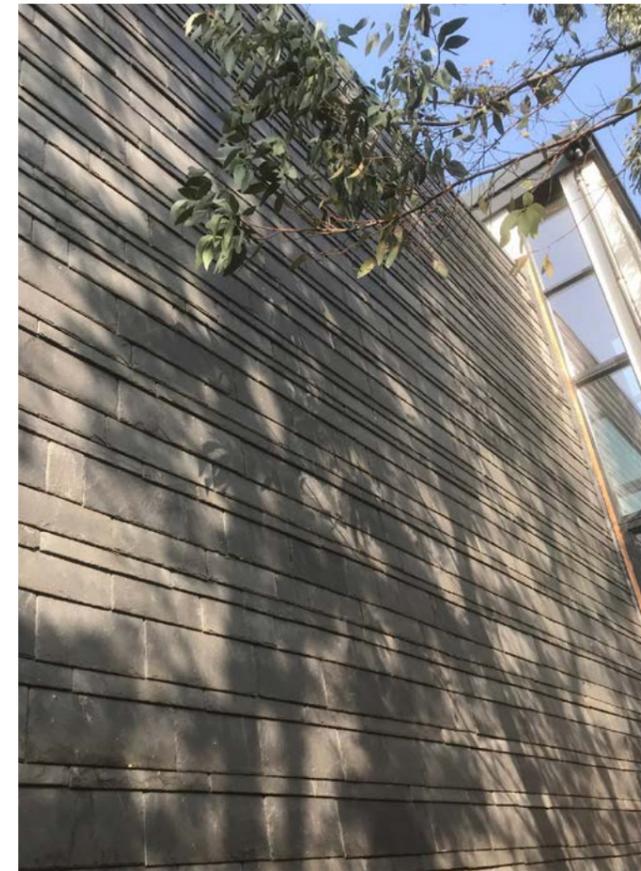
We have developed an exceptional roof installation system made up of a whole range of quality components – including dry fix ridge & hip kits, hip trays, a choice of breather membranes to suit project requirements, dry verge, ventilation, slate hooks, batten, copper nails and more

### Workmanship

Ultra Cover roofs are installed by one of our network of comprehensively vetted SSQ Assured Installers

### 100-year guarantees

We are so confident in the quality of the material we provide, and the skill of our SSQ Assured Installers, that we guarantee our Ultra Cover roofs for 100 years – considerably longer than the lifespan of the average building



## Case Study

### Ty Oriel Cyncoed, Cardiff

When it came to Ty Oriel ('Gallery House' in Welsh), the brief was ambitious.

Architects Nic Downs and Carolyn Merrifield wanted something sleek but striking. Eco-friendly, but instantly classic. A family home that was angular and modern, but that could simultaneously blend with its more conservative suburban surroundings.

And they were that demanding for a very good reason. The house was theirs.

Clean and minimalistic, the resulting build is stylishly open-plan, incorporating an office and an art studio as well as four bedrooms, all south-facing to maximise natural light.

And to honour its location, it has been made as much as possible from natural materials – lime, render, zinc timber, and, arguably most important of all, slate.

Two hundred square metres of SSQ's Del Carmen Celtas slate were used on Ty Oriel's roof and to clad its walls.

Where most slate suppliers only offer a choice of a few off-the-shelf specifications, here SSQ provided something entirely bespoke. Slates in eleven different sizes, all custom cut and holed at an SSQ depot, contrasted the building's sleek lines with a more rugged, rustic aesthetic.

Without it, the house would have looked too modern – too brash and outlandish for its sleepy outer Cardiff location. But with it, Ty Oriel achieves that incredibly difficult balance between traditional and contemporary – providing Nic and Carolyn with a thoroughly modern, high-performance family home, without clashing with its surroundings.

<b>Architect</b>	Downs Merrifield Architects
<b>Type</b>	Self-build residential
<b>Category</b>	Newbuild
<b>Element</b>	Roof and cladding
<b>Product</b>	Del Carmen Celtas in 11 sizes
<b>Scope</b>	200-250m <sup>2</sup>

# Del Carmen: crowning buildings around the world

All around the world, thousands of stunning new-builds and historic renovated properties have roofs made of Del Carmen natural slate.

Architects and homeowners as far afield as Australia and the US have chosen Del Carmen over dozens of potential alternatives.



Here are just a few of Del Carmen's international highlights.



Private residence, Czech Republic



Housing development, Lithuania



Hayman Island, Australia



Ted Baker store, Beverly Hills, USA



Private residence, Germany

## Sensational slate, all from the same source

Some quarries mix and match slate from different seams of rock, and even different quarries, then sell it under the same brand name. At SSQ, that goes against everything we stand for. When you buy slate from us, you are guaranteed the very finest quality – and we can point to the exact seam it came from.

# About SSQ

## Labour of love

The SSQ story is one of passion, perseverance and a love for natural materials that has lasted four decades.

When our founder, Ahmed El-Helw, started Spanish Slate Quarries UK Ltd in the early 1980s, he was just one man with a phone book.

But a burning desire to bring the world's best slate and natural stone products to customers across Britain and beyond sustained him through early setbacks – and eventually saw SSQ become one of the world's leading suppliers.

## What is it that sets SSQ apart from the competition?

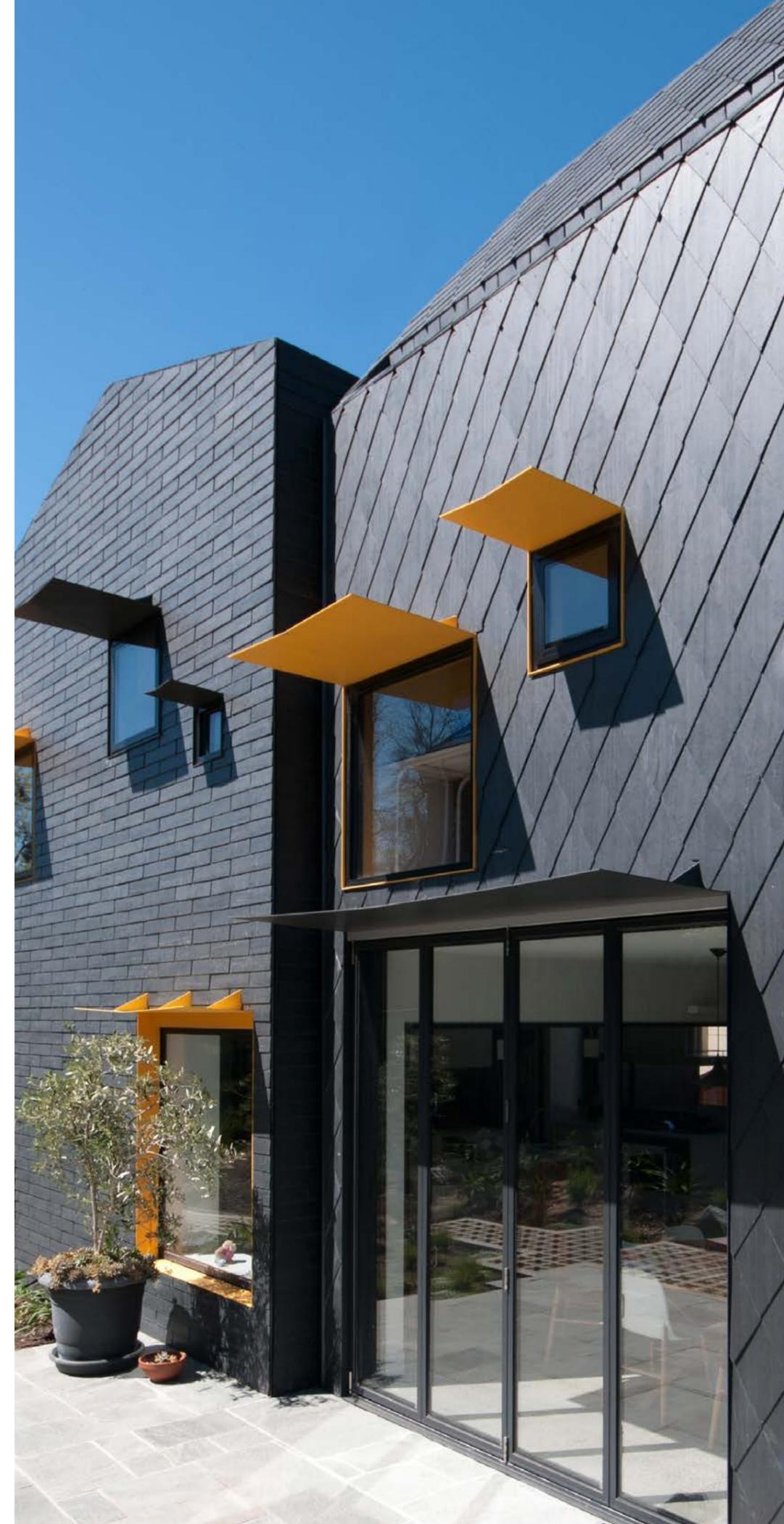
For us, this is not just a way to make a living. Anyone who has ever met one of our sales managers or come on an SSQ CPD will tell you that it is a passion.

From the Managing Director down, we are driven by a heartfelt belief in the materials we provide – and a desire to see them benefit architects, contractors and homeowners all around the world.

## Unparalleled expertise

Work with a product long enough, and you get to know it inside out. But where some businesses are extremely protective of that knowledge, at SSQ, we want to share our four decades of expertise with as many people as possible.

More than anything, we just want to see more roofs, floors and building projects in general that use outstanding quality slate and natural stone – and in our Professional Resources Centre, you can access a wealth of useful information completely free!



# Reference list of projects

## Heritage projects



Penoyre House  
Tyndall Avenue, Bristol, BS8 1TL

- Priddy's Hard - Gosport, Hampshire, PO12
- The Cowyards - Blenheim Palace, Woodstock, Oxfordshire OX20 1QR
- Cranwell House - Weston Park East, Upper Weston, Bath, BA1 5ES
- Woolwich Creative District - Building 19 - Cartridge place, Woolwich, London
- Saltash Railway Station - Saltash PL12 4EP
- Temple Methodist Church - Upper High Street, Taunton, TA1 3PY
- Hope United Reformed Church - Trinity St, Weymouth, DT4 8TW



St Joseph's Gate  
Lawrence Street, Mill Hill, London NW7 4JZ



The General  
Lower Guinea Street, Bristol, BS1 6SX

## Church projects



St George's Church  
Long Furlong Drive, Britwell, Berkshire, SL2 2LX



Methodist Church - Huddersfield  
3-13 Lord St, Huddersfield, HD1 1QA

- Chapel Of Rest - Off Station Road, Pontyberem, Llanelli, Carmarthenshire SA15 5LF
- Petersfield United Reformed Church - College St, Petersfield GU31 4AG
- Hope United Reformed Church - Trinity St, Weymouth, DT4 8TW
- Cadoxton Methodist Church - Brecon, Powys

## Education projects

- Bignold Primary School & Nursery - Wessex St, Norwich NR2 2SY
- Trent University - Trent University, Burton St, Nottingham, NG1 4BU
- Kennet Valley Primary School - Lockeridge, Marlborough SN8 4EL
- Sambourne School - Sambourne Road, Warminster BA12 8LF
- Prestwood Lodge School - Nairdwood Lane, Great Missenden, HP16 0QQ
- Pipers Corner School - Pipers Ln, Great Kingshill, High Wycombe HP15 6LP



Royal High School  
Landsdown Rd, Bath, BA1 5SZ



Ashridge Management College  
Ashridge, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire HP4 1NS



Millbridge Junior Infant And Nursery School  
Vernon Road, Liversedge WF15 6HU

## Commercial projects



Stanwick Lakes Visitor Centre  
Stanwick Lakes, Northamptonshire, NN9 6GY

- Bredenbury Court - Bredenbury, Bromyard, Herefordshire HR7 4TB
- Parkside Community College - Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB1 1EH
- Butchers Hall - Bartholomew's Close, London EC1A 7EB
- Thingoe House - Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP32
- Craig y Nos Castle - Brecon Rd, Pen-y-cae, Swansea, Wales SA9 1GL
- Chafford Gorges Nature Park Visitor Centre - Drake Road, Chafford Hundred, Grays, Thurrock, Essex RM16 6RW
- Batley Mosque - Batley, West Yorkshire WF17 5AQ
- Tooting Library - 75 Mitcham Rd, London SW17 9PD
- Upper Rissington Community Centre - Wellington Rd, Upper Rissington, Cheltenham GL54 2QW
- Celtic Manor Hotel outbuilding - Coldra Wood, The Usk Valley, Chepstow Rd, Newport NP18 1HQ
- St John's Hospital - 4-5 Chapel Row, Bath BA1 1SQ
- 4-5 Chapel Row, Bath BA1 1SQ - Haig Rd, Royal Military Academy, Camberley GU15 4PQ



Fremantle Court Care Home  
Risborough Rd, Stoke Mandeville, Aylesbury, GP22 5XL



Little Haven Hospice  
Daws Heath Rd, Benfleet, Essex SS7 2LH

## Residential projects

- Private Residence - 30 Chepstow Villas, London, W11 2QZ
- The Old Rectory - The Tye, Lindsey, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP7 6PP
- Regency Gate - Beech Drive, Kingswood, Surrey, KT20 6PS
- Virginia Park - Christchurch Road, Virginia Water, Surrey GU25 4BH
- Thurlestone Beach House - South Milton, Kingsbridge, Devon TQ7 3JJ
- Thames Edge - Clarence St, Staines, Surrey TW18 4SU
- Post Office Square - London Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1
- Gwenllian Morgan Court - Heol Gouesnou, Brecon, Powys, Wales LD3 7EE
- Castle Quarter Apartments - Castle Lane, The Strand, Swansea, Wales SA1 2AH
- Hyperion Apartment House - Underhill Road, Torquay, Devon TQ2 6SL
- Hereford Road - Abergavenny, Monmouthshire NP7 5PR
- Bourne Place House - Nizels Lane, Hildenborough, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 8NZ
- Cavendish Lodge - Cavendish Lodge, Cavendish Road, Bath, BA1 2UG



Kilmersdon Hill House Development  
Radstock, Somerset, BA3 5SZ



Misbourne House  
Amersham Rd, Chalfont Saint Giles, Buckinghamshire HP8 4RY



St Andrews Park Apartments  
Tarragon Road, Maidstone, ME16 0WD



Bolingbroke House  
Games Road, Hadley Wood, Greater London, EN4 9HN



EXCLUSIVELY **NATURAL SLATE**

301 Elveden Road  
Park Royal  
London  
NW10 7SS

E: [info@ssq.co.uk](mailto:info@ssq.co.uk) T: 020 8961 7725

[www.ssqgroup.com](http://www.ssqgroup.com)

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