

The Art of Tiling and Slating: What Every Homeowner in Bearsden Should Know

Understanding the Basics of a Solid Roof

When you own a home in Bearsden, the roof over your head takes a fair bit of weather. Rain, wind, frost, and the occasional bit of snow all test the materials we choose. I have worked with roofing contractors across central Scotland for years, and one thing I keep coming back to is the skill involved in proper tiling and slating. It is not just about covering a frame. It is about selecting the right materials, understanding the local climate, and making sure every fixing holds for decades.

Many homeowners first think about what their roof looks like from the street. That matters, of course. But the real work happens underneath. Roofing felt, roofing underlay, roofing battens, and proper roof ventilation all play a part in keeping the structure dry and breathable. Without them, even the best roof tiles or slate can fail early.

Choosing Between Tile and Slate

The choice between concrete tiles, clay tiles, and natural slate often comes down to budget, look, and longevity. Concrete tiles are popular in new builds because they are cost effective and come in many colours. Clay tiles give a warmer, more traditional appearance and age beautifully. But for many homes in Bearsden, especially older properties, Scottish slate is the go to. It has a distinct blue grey tone and a texture that blends with the landscape.

Slate is a natural stone. It splits into thin sheets, which means each piece is unique. That makes [tiling and slating](#) with slate a slower, more labour intensive job than using factory made concrete tiles. But slate can last over a hundred years if fixed properly. I have seen roofs where the original Scottish slate is still sound after a century, with only the fixings needing replacement. That kind of durability is hard to beat.

That said, slate is heavy. Roofing tools and fixing methods have to account for the extra weight. Roofing nails, sometimes called slating nails, need to be the right length and material. Copper or stainless steel nails resist corrosion, which matters in our damp climate. Lead flashing is another essential detail where slate meets a chimney or a wall. It keeps water out at the most vulnerable joints.



What Goes On Underneath

A roof is a system, not just a single layer. Roofing underlay sits directly over the rafters. It acts as a secondary barrier if wind drives rain past the tiles or slate. Above that, roofing battens create a cavity for ventilation. Good roof ventilation stops condensation building up inside the roof space, which can rot the timber and ruin roof insulation over time.

Roofing felt is sometimes used as an underlay, but modern breather membranes are more common now. They let moisture vapour escape while stopping liquid water from getting in. The choice between felt and a breathable membrane depends on the roof pitch, the type of tile or slate, and local building regulations. In Bearsden, where we get plenty of rain, a breathable underlay gives better long term performance.

Roofing mortar is used to bed in ridge tiles and to point around chimney stacks. It needs to be the right mix. Too hard and it cracks as the building moves. Too soft and it washes out in a few winters. A good roofing contractor knows the blend that suits the local stone and brick.

The Importance of Good Fixings

I have seen roofs where the tiles were simply nailed straight into the battens with cheap nails. That works for a while, but over time the nails corrode or the timber shrinks, and tiles start to

slip. Proper tiling and slating uses the right fixings for each material. Slate often gets double nailed, with two nails per slate. Concrete and clay tiles usually clip onto the battens with a nib at the top, but nails or clips hold them at the bottom edge in high wind areas.

Roofing adhesives have improved a lot in recent years. Modern adhesives bond ridge tiles and hip tiles without needing as much mortar. They stay flexible and resist frost damage. But they are not a substitute for mechanical fixings. The adhesive holds the tile in place, but the wind uplift is resisted by nails or clips. A roof that relies only on glue will not last.

Guttering Systems and Roof Repair

Guttering systems are often treated as a separate job, but they are part of the same water management system as the roof. If the tiles or slate are sound but the gutters leak, water will find its way into the fascia boards and the walls. I always advise homeowners to get guttering checked whenever they have roof repair work done. It is far cheaper to replace a gutter at the same time as fixing a few slipped slates than to come back later.



Roof repair in Bearsden often involves replacing a few broken tiles or slates after a storm. That sounds simple, but matching the colour and size of old materials can be hard. Scottish slate from a quarry that closed fifty years ago is not easy to find. Good roofing contractors keep a

stock of reclaimed slate and tiles for exactly this reason. They also know how to remove a broken slate without disturbing the ones around it. That takes practice.

Lead flashing is another area where roof repair can get tricky. Lead work is a specialist trade. It needs to be dressed properly over the slate or tile and into the wall. If it is just pushed into a joint and pointed over, it will lift and let water in. A proper lead flashing has a welged edge and is fixed with lead clips, not nails that rust.

Safety on the Roof

Roofing safety is not something to cut corners on. Working at height on pitched roofs in Bearsden means dealing with steep slopes, wet surfaces, and variable weather. Good roofing contractors use scaffolding, safety harnesses, and edge protection. They also make sure the roof is dry before they walk on it. Wet slate is as slippery as ice.

For homeowners, safety means not attempting roof work yourself. Even a quick look at a slipped tile can end badly. Leave it to the professionals who have the right roofing tools and training. The cost of hiring a contractor is small compared to the risk of a fall.

How Tiling and Slating Affects Your Home's Value

A well fitted roof adds real value to a property. Buyers notice when the tiling and slating is done well. They also notice when it is not. Uneven lines, broken tiles, and poorly sealed valleys all show up in a survey. If you are planning to sell your home in Bearsden, getting the roof in good order is one of the best investments you can make.

Conversely, a roof that has been patched badly or fixed with mismatched materials can put buyers off. They worry about hidden leaks and future costs. A roof that looks consistent and has been maintained properly gives confidence. It tells the buyer that the rest of the house has been looked after too.



Final Thoughts from the Trade

I have worked on roofs where the tiling and slating was done by people who learned the trade from their fathers and grandfathers. That kind of knowledge is hard to replace. They knew how to cut slate by hand, how to set out the battens so the courses line up, and how to work with the natural variations in the stone. Modern roofing tools have made some jobs faster, but the basics remain the same. A roof is only as good as its weakest fixing.

If you live in Bearsden and are thinking about a new roof or a repair, take time to find a contractor who understands the materials and the local weather. Ask about the underlay, the ventilation, and the fixings. A roof is a long term investment. Getting it right the first time saves money and stress later.