

Help and advice



Ian Knifton on protecting tiles in car showrooms

Protect tiled areas and earn top marques

WHILE more and more architects are learning about essential tiling protection through RIBA Continuing Professional Development seminars, when they're designing car showrooms in particular, they very often rely on the flooring contractor to recommend ways of protecting the tiled surface.

But not all architects are as familiar with specific solutions, as the designer of a Mercedes and Smart car showroom in Birmingham was.

Q: How did the architect know precisely which protection system to specify?

A: In the particular case of the Birmingham showroom the architect had worked with the tiling contractor and had used heavy duty stainless steel movement joints before on similar installations.

He knew they had to be installed at perimeters and at set intervals in the tiled surface, and directly following the line of existing subfloor movement joints, to take up the surface movement within the tile covering. But if it hadn't



been the absolutely right system, the tiling contractor would have recommended something different.

Q: I'm never sure if I should suggest alternatives to an architect. Their job is to specify the materials, mine is to install them.

A: With literally thousands of products on the market to protect tiles, it can be very difficult for architects to know which individual product is right for every single application.

They will know, for instance, that they need to create individual tile fields of between 8-10m, but they may not be aware what type or

width of movement joint will be the right one for that particular application.

If a joint is used which is not capable of doing what is asked of it, the installation will fail. Many flooring contractors take great pride in having been trained on movement joints, uncoupling, waterproofing and modular screed systems.

Q: I will look at going on a training course to increase my knowledge of tile protection systems, but that doesn't help me right now, as a specifier is seeking my advice, and I'm not sure exactly sure what to recommend.

A: Take a leaf out of a contractor's book who was tiling a showroom for the exclusive luxury car marque. With each of these cars weighing nearly three tons, the challenge was not only to provide a joint capable of absorbing movement in the tiles to keep them looking as good in years to come as when they were installed, but is strong enough to withstand the weight of the cars without buckling themselves.

Although the contractor had a very good idea of what to use, he discussed it fully with his tile supplier, who had extensive knowledge of protection systems.

Architects are aware of the need for incorporating movement joints into the structure, but many rely on the flooring contractor recommending the appropriate protective measures for the job. The contractor should have the technical knowledge to rise to that challenge. **CFJ**

Ian Knifton is technical manager at Schlüter Systems

Further information on
T: 01530 813396

Dids MacDonald on protecting your IP at trade show



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Dids MacDonald is ceo of ACID (Anti Copying In Design)

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