



Sid Bourne on the importance of qualifications

Bob the builder causes lipping and gives lip

I WAS recently involved with a herringbone solid block complaint where there was severe gapping, lipping, and crowning.

The consumer was rightly very unhappy with the installation. The installer, Bob the builder, said there was nothing wrong and the effects were normal. I can confidently say that they are not normal under any circumstances.

Originally the consumer got a quote from a wood floor shop and planned to book the job, until Bob stepped in and said he could do it cheaper.

Just remember this house was worth over £3.5 million, so you may well ask why the £250 discount offered by Bob the builder was such a big deal.

Clearly a consumer able to afford such an expensive property was not short of a bob or two, so why the saving of £250 was irresistible something I don't understand either.

I was met on site by Bob and the customer, both putting their point over to me.

Bob told me: 'Typical these people with money always complain so they don't have to pay. I have already done the job and not made anything from it.'

'Why did you do it then?' I asked Bob.

'Well I thought it would be easy,' said Bob. Then, cooking

'Just remember that this house was worth over £3.5 million, so you may well ask why the saving of £250 offered by Bob the Builder was such a big deal. That's something that I don't understand either!'

his own goose, he added: 'Let's face it, there is no skill, is there!'

I counted to 10, smiled and carried out my inspection. I haven't got space here in **CFJ** to list everything that was wrong, but I will mention a few of many faults.

The design was running out by over 7in on a length of 9m; the walls were straight (I checked) and what should have been a 2 block border became 2 to start and finishing with 3/12 blocks at the other end.

'How come you are running out so much?' I asked Bob.

'The stupid blocks are not right, they are not square,' he retorted.

'I have checked them and they are perfect,' I told him.

'If they put furniture over it, nobody will notice,' he advised.

The customer, listening to this conversation, was clearly not happy with this suggestion. I took up some blocks and found three

types of adhesive, some trowelled, some spot dabbed, and some just not there.

I asked about this. Bob was getting angry: 'As long as there is some adhesive, it don't matter, mate! It's a load of b*^&%\$0 that you have to get glue on all the blocks!'

I thanked Bob for his time and said I would finish my inspection and send a report to the customer. Outside Bob told me: 'That consumer is taking the piss, I hope your report puts her in her place.'

'Don't worry, my report will tell it how it is!'

The entire floor had to be replaced; it could not be recovered. Before I left the customer admitted having made a mistake giving the job to Bob.

She then asked about qualifications. Ideally, installers should have an NVQ in wood flooring, I told her. Some weeks later she rang me to say she had

been given all her money back.

About replacing the floor, as luck would have it I was assessing wood flooring NVQs for installers at a particular company. I passed the details to the customer who duly paid them without any haggling.

She later phoned me to say how beautiful they had done the job.

Recognised qualifications are going to become more and more important, especially for wood floor installers. I find it sad to hear installers saying they don't need qualifications.

But think about the Corgi stamp of approval. These days many more people have heard of NVQ qualifications in other trades, whether hair dressing, building or plumbing, etc, etc.

I applaud those guys out there who have taken NVQs in wood flooring and passed. They are the smart ones.

If you are an individual, a retailer or even a flooring contractor and want to know about getting the qualification, I will advise you at no cost other than a phone call to me. I will even guide you through all the way to completion.

Don't be afraid of doing it, as long as you know you can do your job correctly, there is no problem whatsoever. **CFJ**

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Keith Hall on advice at design stage

Key factors when specifying carpets

WITH the credit crunch never far from our minds it's important to look at the practical aspects of the type of flooring needed when specifying a project.

Flooring needs to be hard wearing for high traffic areas so durability and safety in use is vital.

Carpets and carpet tiles must meet and exceed the appropriate test criteria for heavy contract carpet and satisfy international safety standards for aspects such as flammability. A rigorous in-house testing

regime at manufacturing stage ensures the highest all round performance possible.

Ease of maintenance in areas with the heaviest footfall is paramount. Anti-soil treatments in modern carpet tiles help to keep tiles in good condition for longer as will a regular cleaning regime.

Carpets only need regular vacuuming with an appropriate upright cleaner, and periodic dry compound cleaning.

The benefit of this simple dry cleaning procedure is that the

flooring can be used immediately after, with no down-time for drying or airing.

Advances in manufacturing techniques has allowed for carpet to be anti-static, providing comfort for users in many environments from schools to retail, and safeguard against any electronic mishaps.

Flooring must be acoustically sympathetic, offering good levels of soundproofing, especially important in schools, hospitality venues and open plan offices.

Carpet tiles provide optimum choice to reduce noise transfer and reverberation.

In summary, durability and longevity of any surface must be considered whilst maintenance will be key for the upkeep of a flooring's finish.

The lifecycle for the type of flooring required should also be considered and communicated at design stages where costs and type of flooring can be discussed. **CFJ**

Keith Hall is technical director at Desso