

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT:
GLENRIDGE HALL,
SANDY SPRINGS, GA
THE R.W. STOKES COMPANY

The Glenridge Hall slate roof restoration project is a good one to shine the spotlight on for several reasons. First, it was a difficult job, being a graduated, mixed Vermont slate roof with rounded valleys and eyebrow dormers. Secondly, the proprietor and resident of the building, Joey Mayson, wanted the job done right and was willing to go the extra mile to ensure that this is what happened. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, the existing roof was an "economy method" roof that had to be completely re-slatted.

Glenridge Hall is on the National Register of Historic Places and is privately nestled in the middle of 47 acres in a business district just north of Atlanta, Georgia. The roof on this 14,000 square foot Tudor style house is made of Vermont slates of three color types: purple (30%), sea green (35%) and unfading green (35%). It is installed with copper nails on a 3/4" yellow pine deck in a graduated pattern and is characterized by random widths, graduating thicknesses and lengths, eyebrow dormers, rounded (slated) valleys, large chimneys, hipped roof sections, and some curved roof sections. It is a complicated roof design with many penetrations, planes, and obstructions.

The approximately 170 square slate roof was originally installed in 1929 and could have been expected, under normal circumstances (with proper maintenance), to last at least 150 years. However, at 50 years of age, in 1979, some leakage developed in the roof, probably in a valley area. At that time, the owner was convinced by a local roofing contractor that the entire roof had to be removed and then re-installed in what has been termed the "economy" method, even though the roof probably could have been easily repaired. The "economy" installation technique relies on felt paper installed over every course of slate to keep the roof from leaking. All headlap is eliminated; even side-laps were ignored during the "economy" re-installation of Glenridge Hall in 1979.

Twenty-three years later, the felt, which was exposed in the slots between the slates, had deteriorated to such an extent that the entire roof had to be essentially "condemned." The existing slate was re-usable, however, and was removed and re-installed using correct procedures in order to preserve the look and historical integrity of this architectural gem. The correct removal and re-installation of the slate roof on Glenridge Hall, using the existing slate roof as the primary source of roof slate, could be expected to last perhaps another century. This project was successfully undertaken by The R.W. Stokes Company of Atlanta, Georgia, in the winter of 2002.

Ron Stokes' crew foreman for this project was Manuel Avila whose crew had to remove all of the slate on the entire Hall, salvage it as best they could, then re-install it back on the same building with proper headlap over half-lapped 30 pound felt. The salvaged slates were used on the front of the Hall first, in order to preserve the historical look of the building. The front, however, consumed just about all of the salvaged slates.



Photo by Joe Jenkins

Glenridge Hall, front entrance, after the original slate had been removed and stacked in the driveway and the new felt installed. Re-slating is just beginning.



Photo by Ron Stokes

Glenridge Hall. The finished roof is not only beautiful, but also historically accurate. It can realistically last another century.

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New slates of the same color mix and graduation scheme were installed on the back of the building, supplied by Steve Yoder of Classic Slate and Tile in Atlanta. The rounded valleys and eyebrow dormers were fortified by 20 ounce copper flashing applied underneath each course of slates in the curved sections. All of the remaining flashings on the roof were replaced during the re-installation, again using 20 ounce copper. This was a long, arduous project delayed by a lot of rainy weather, but The R.W. Stokes Company managed to complete it in the summer of 2003.

There is a moral to this story: In this case, the so-called "economy" method of slate installation simply wasted a huge amount of money (\$200,000.00 in 1979). It involved the entire removal and reslating of 170 squares, all installed at that time in a faulty, temporary manner, essentially a roofing time-bomb waiting to go off twenty years later when the felt wore out. It is obvious that calling this an "economy" installation is a gross misnomer. It would better be called the "wasteful, shoddy, and very expensive" installation, one which should be soundly condemned and avoided at all costs. There is no economy in the economy method.

A tip of the hat to The R.W. Stokes Company and to Joey Mayson for a job well done! 🍷