

RAISE THE ROOF



Paul Newman starts a three-part series beginning with the benefits of roof terraces and the logistics of tackling their builds

Many properties, particularly in built up environments, don't have gardens at ground level but may still have an outside space, usually with direct access. These spaces can range from a tiny balcony in a block of flats, to a substantial roof terrace in a penthouse apartment or a corporate development that caters for functions.

More often than not these are neglected or, at best, used to catch a few hours of sun or for the occasional barbecue in our less than tropical climate. Personal outdoor space in a city is precious and should be exploited to its full potential, whatever the size.

Roof terraces make great outdoor spaces, often with fantastic views that ground level gardens can't offer. When thinking about the design and construction for a roof terrace there are a number of key points to take into

consideration, particularly if you are planning on using different materials, as weight can be an issue. The starting point for any potential roof terrace work should be the existing roof structure and its load-bearing capacities. This is best calculated by a structural engineer. In general, newer properties are fine due to modern building techniques and materials, but period properties may need additional support so it's well worth seeking advice for best practice.



Materials loaded onto the hoist for a fifth floor build



Planters and compost stacked neatly against the property

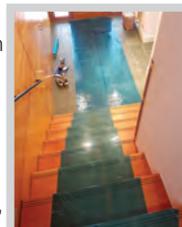
So, you get a call from a new client for a roof terrace consultation. You get to the site and look up. The first thoughts are: how will I get everything up there? Where will the guys park? If it's an apartment block, how will I keep the other tenants happy? What about deliveries? It's

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very different to ground level landscaping, which usually has easy access and doesn't cause problems with deliveries to site.

For smaller, low-level roof terraces in domestic situations, most can be accessed via the internal stairs. Careful consideration should be taken to protect the client's property. By this, I mean protection for stairs, door frames, architraves and any vulnerable corners.

It pays to spend a few hours the day before starting to fit carpet protection film and heavy duty corner protectors. No matter how careful you may think you are, long lengths of decking seem to have a habit of bashing themselves into door frames or exposed wall edges, especially if there are corners to negotiate. Price it into the job – it doesn't cost much, your client will

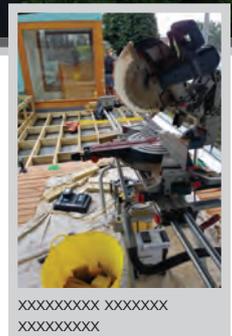


Internal floor and stair protection

thank you for being thoughtful and professional, and there will be no costly and time-consuming

work to walls and furnishings afterwards.

If the build is higher up in a shared apartment block then I would suggest a furniture hoist; a great time-saving piece of equipment and the only practical solution. This large telescopic platform is capable of lifting 400kg to 35m. Parking in towns is always a pain, so again, a bit of forward planning pays off. The furniture hoist company will probably ask for two parking spaces so they can manoeuvre the vehicle, but actually only take up one space. Use the other



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for storing your materials close to the hoist for easy handling. If you're clearing things off the roof first, suspend another parking bay and use this to stack the waste material, or better still, have your truck or waste collection company ready.

Ask your client to notify any tenants that may be affected by the build or leave a notice in the lobby with your contact details. Politeness costs nothing and it may also entice others to look into having their roof terrace transformed with your company. If they see the job is being handled professionally and with minimal fuss, you may have just bagged yourself another client.

ABOUT PAUL NEWMAN

Paul Newman Landscapes provides a complete landscaping service from concept to completion for clients throughout London and Hertfordshire, offering high quality individual design and build projects to suit any client's style and budget. www.paulnewmanlandscapes.co.uk