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The Pros and Cons of Metal Roofs

Historically Accurate Metal Roofs Are Also Reliable And Long-lasting

BY TOM DANIEL

Historically, almost all the original and original-replacement flat and low slope roofs on Capitol Hill were made of standing-seam tin. Tin was one of the most common metal roofing materials used throughout the 19th century, when most Capitol Hill homes were built. Today, you will still find many roofs in the area that are 40+ years old that are standing-seam tin. In recent years though, roofs have been replaced with “built-up” asphalt or rubber-based roof systems. These roofs are less expensive than tin, copper or other metal roof systems and are of better quality than earlier built-up roofing materials, but metal roofs will last two to three times longer than a traditional asphalt roof.

There is a recent trend to go back to tin or metal-based roof systems on Capitol Hill because of an historical interest in restoring roofs to their original materials. I will discuss some of the installation components, benefits of metal roofing systems and some of the concerns regarding metal roofing. Metal roofing systems can generally be constructed of copper, zinc, tin, terne, stainless steel and aluminum. While most of these types of roofs can be found on Capitol Hill, the most common new roof installations on flat and low slope roofs are standing-seam copper and tin.

Standing-seam is a hidden fastener metal roofing system. Panels

overlay in side-by-side fashion with each overlapping panel hiding the fastener that holds the previous panel in place. Penetrations of the fastener-holder are below the metal surface directly onto the roofing deck and thus protected from leaking entry points. Most standing-seam roof systems are fastened in a way that allows for expansion and contraction of the metal. The panels are roll-formed at the job site or roofing supply warehouse or can be pre-cut and delivered by the metal roofing company manufacturer. Panels are usually made from 16 to 20 ounce copper or 24-gauge galvalume coated steel.

The installation methods and the composition of the materials offer a longer lasting and more reliable roofing alternative to other roofing systems. Metal roofing is also an environmentally safe building material. Metal roofs contain a significant proportion of recycled metal content. When the time comes to replace your metal roof, the removed roof materials are fully recyclable and the recycled materials can be readily re-used for other purposes. Metal roofs reflect solar radiant heat and reduce your cooling costs. Metal roofs are also impervious to rot and mildew and insect damage, such as termites.

Concerns Regarding Metal Roofing

There are some concerns that have

been expressed by homeowners about metal roofing systems such as noise levels, danger in lightning storms and cost.

It is true that metal roofs can be noisier than other types of roofs, but new metal roofing systems are typically installed over a solid substrate. Additionally, the attic and proper insulation levels provide a sound barrier. Metal roofs do not attract lightning any more than a conventional roof does. If the metal roof does get struck by lightning it is less combustible than conventional roofing materials. Copper roofs are fire and spark resistant and resistant to hail and wind.

Cost considerations do come into play when you are considering replacing your existing roof with a new metal roof. Initial costs of a metal roof are unquestionably higher, but the cost becomes considerably lower in the long run. As mentioned previously, metal roofs last two to three times longer than asphalt-based roofs, maintenance expenses are minimal (tin roofs need to be painted every few years, copper roofs never need to be painted), and it is reasonable to assume that the value of a home is increased with a new metal roof. The investment depends on your outlook and time frame. As customers Joe and Vicki Smith of Capitol Hill explained of their investment in a new copper roof; "This was a long term investment in our home that was consistent with our long term outlook."

With the renewed interest in metal roofs on Capitol Hill and the historically and aesthetically appealing charm of metal roofs, we are reminded that "the old is new again."

Tom Daniel is the owner of R. Thomas Daniel Roofing and specializes in working on flat and low slope roofs on Capitol Hill. He and his family have been in the roofing business on the Hill for more than 90 years. He can be reached at 443-968-0311 (Maryland #) or by email at tom@rthomasdanielroofing.com. Please check his website www.rthomasdanielroofing.com

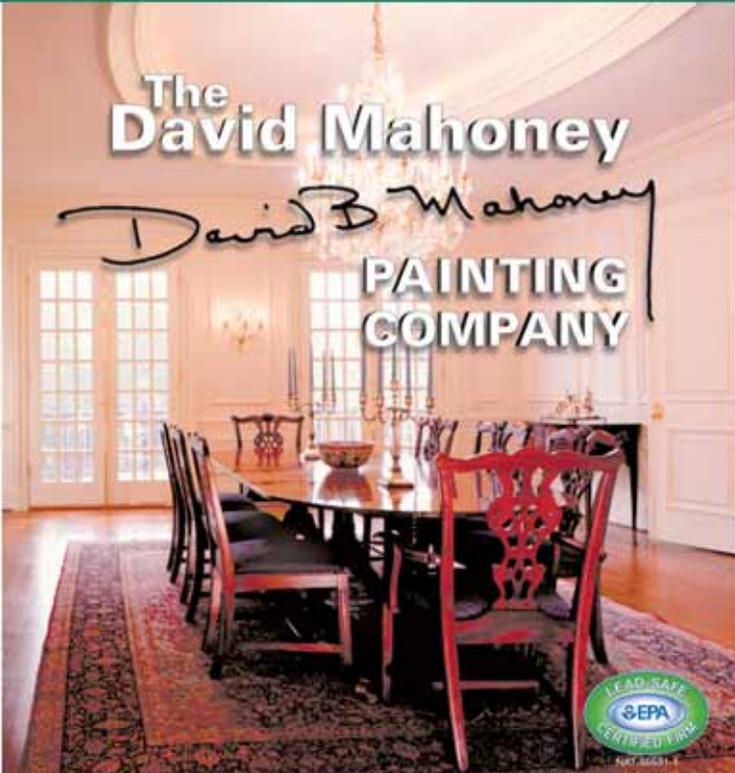
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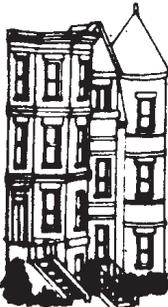
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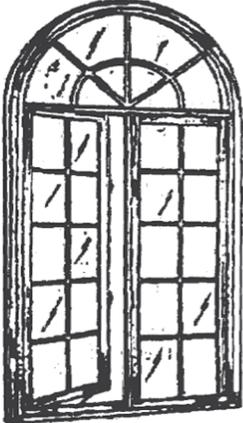
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