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Restoring *grandeur*

The Durable Slate Co. reroofs Zion Lutheran Church

by Ashley St. John

Project name: Zion Lutheran Church
Project location: Akron, Ohio
Project duration: October 2008-April 2009
Roof system type: Slate
Roofing contractor: The Durable Slate Co., Columbus, Ohio
Roofing manufacturer: The New England Slate Co., Poultney, Vt.

Zion Lutheran Church, a congregation of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, was founded Aug. 6, 1854, in Akron, Ohio, with a congregation of 15 families. The congregation grew, and in 1877, the church moved from its original building to a new larger High Gothic Revival-style building that features a prominent steeple reaching 130 feet. The church continues to operate in this building.

When the building's roof started leaking, the church hired Chambers, Murphy & Burge Restoration Architects Ltd., Akron, to figure out what repairs were needed. After determining the building needed a new slate roof, the architect referred The Durable Slate Co., Columbus, Ohio, to the project.

"We were asked to present a proposal to the church based on the specifications and drawings that were provided," says Gary Howes, The Durable Slate Co.'s executive vice president. "We also were asked to provide ideas and solutions to enhance the project's success."

Replacing the roof

The Durable Slate Co. began work at Zion Lutheran Church in October 2008. The company was asked to reslate the 34-square steeple and make slate roof repairs on the body of the church.

"The steeple's original slate roof had been removed many years before," Howes says. "The existing roof system consisted of a 1-inch-thick yellow pine deck, asphalt-based underlayment and a single layer of three-tab asphalt shingles. We removed all roofing materials down to the deck."

The Durable Slate Co.'s five-man crew

then replaced all the rotted wood deck materials with a new yellow pine roof deck and installed a layer of Warrior® Roofing Manufacturing No. 30 underlayment.

"Then, we installed The New England Slate Co.'s Semi-Weathering Grey/Green, Unfading Mottled Purple and Unfading Red slate with copper slating nails," Howes says. "We used two nails per piece and hung the slates on stainless-steel hooks, as well. All flashings are 20-ounce copper, and all seams were pre-tinned and hand-soldered."

The Durable Slate Co. also repaired, primed and painted all louvers and

decorative cornices and performed stone and brick repairs.

"We also spot-pointed missing mortar using historically correct soft mortar from U.S. Heritage Group," Howes says.

Additionally, the company capped the building's four pinnacles with 20-ounce copper and replaced the copper gutters, which totaled about 80 feet per side.

Special considerations

Reroofing Zion Lutheran Church presented some challenges. One of the most daunting was matching the original roof system's slate pattern.

"We were asked to match the pattern but only had a grainy, faded black and



For more information about the companies highlighted and additional photos of the project, log on to www.professionalroofing.net.



Photos courtesy of The Durable Slate Co., Columbus, Ohio

Photos from left to right: The Durable Slate Co. had scaffolding erected for work performed on Zion Lutheran Church's steeple; the company performed stone and brick repairs on the building; Zion Lutheran Church's steeple reaches 130 feet.

white photo to go by," Howes says. "Our site foreman, Jason Leach, sketched a colored interpretation of what the pattern would have looked like based on those original photos."

And despite the extra time this task required, Howes appreciates the request to match the original pattern.

"What is unique about this church and steeple is the slate pattern's creativity," he says. "It is rather involved, and it always is a good feeling to see a property owner seek to match the original roofing material despite any additional cost."

Additionally, the steeple's height was an issue.

"Because of the steeple's height, we had scaffolding erected," Howes says. "And a hoist was used to safely lift materials."

"Because the church is located in downtown Akron, there is a lot of pedestrian traffic," Howes continues. "We cornered off a perimeter outside the scaffolding's base to push pedestrian traffic away and create a safe buffer."

Beauty restored

The Durable Slate Co. completed work on Zion Lutheran Church's steeple in February and is scheduled to complete slate repairs on the church's body in April. Chambers,

Murphy & Burge Restoration Architects is encouraging the church to complete other restorations to get listed on the National Registry of Historic Places, which could make the church eligible for funding for the restorations.

And The Durable Slate Co.'s work has allowed the church to retain its original beauty.

"The most rewarding part of this job has been restoring the steeple to its original grandeur," Howes says. "The church is well worth saving." 🔄 ❄️

Ashley St. John is *Professional Roofing's* associate editor.