



ADDING instant character

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO RECLAMATION

character

Recycling has become a popular and necessary trend, but it need not simply constitute a bi-monthly trip to the bottle bank. New houses or conversions may be built using demolition salvage and fitted out with architectural antiques to add instant character.

Above: Salvage has been used to great effect in both the construction and fitting out of this self built property.

Not only is using recycled materials in your building project environmentally sound and eminently fashionable, it can often save money and create the kind of unique fixtures and finishes which give a house that certain wow factor. Salvaged items are frequently of superior quality to modern equivalents, and give a new house an instant aged effect which no amount of 'distressing' can achieve.

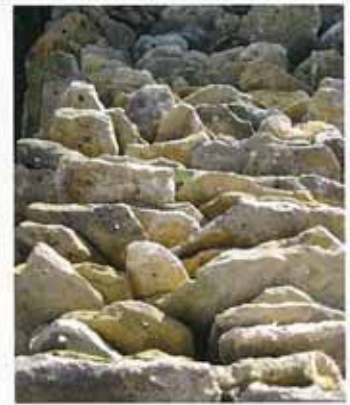
They are invaluable for renovation projects, especially if you need to match a broken piece, but there is a busy traffic in stolen items. Currently there is an almost endless source of both demolition and architectural salvage, but it's important to know exactly what you are buying and what to avoid – particularly if you're considering spending

a significant sum of your budget on large quantities of salvaged materials such as bricks or roof tiles.

PLANNING AHEAD

It's important to include salvaged building materials at an early stage in the design process because recycled goods don't usually come in standard shapes or metric sizes. The building often has to be adapted to fit the salvage, rather than vice versa, and what may have been satisfactory in Victorian times might not be acceptable to the modern day building inspector.

Staircases are a good example, and may need adapting to meet current building regulations regarding the gap between treads or balusters. Most old doors won't be



exactly rectangular, so it's important to measure all the sides carefully to check they will fit. It's always better to buy one a little too large for the frame and then plane or cut it down as required.

SOURCING

Much of the reclamation industry is generally set up to meet the needs of homeowners and small to medium-sized builders. To stock up enough reclaimed materials can take months, especially for grander projects. Some reclamation yards may be able to store the materials prior to selling, others may not.

Reclamation yards sell everything from period sanitaryware and chimney pots to church pews and door knobs. In the past such places offered bargains galore, but with a growing interest in architectural antiques, our national love of all things traditional, and a burgeoning awareness of just how

much money such items can fetch, you may be shocked at some of the prices!

Reclamation yards stock both salvaged materials and architectural antiques, whilst architectural antiques yards may stock new replicas as well as cleaned up salvage, for which you will pay a premium. Architectural salvage (the antiques element of demolition salvage) is an evolving trade primarily concerned with interior fittings, joinery, reclaimed ironwork, glass, flooring and garden furniture.

Traditionally, salvage yards deal in raw, recycled goods which usually need to be cleaned or repaired. Prices are rarely displayed in reclamation yards, and it's important to have a rough idea of an item's value and to be prepared to haggle.

Newspapers – especially the local 'free ad' style papers – auctions and even recycling centres or tips are also worth checking out, but remember that with private sellers you often have no idea from where the items originated. →

Above left: With some imagination almost anything can be given a new lease of life, often in a different role.

Above: Reclaimed building materials such as stone, bricks and slates are readily available from salvage yards.

USING THE INTERNET

Some companies specialise in particular items, and the internet is a good source of information. Materials such as reclaimed roof slates are often less expensive than new, and are available from companies such as Coleman Roofing Supplies (www.colemanroofing.co.uk), and Reclaimed Bricks (www.reclaimedbricks.com) which offers a free brick matching service ideal for those extending a period building.

eBay (www.ebay.co.uk) is becoming a popular source of second-hand items for the home, and other websites such as www.whatdoidowilht his.com, www.salvomie.co.uk and www.freecycle.org list low value and free items.

SalvoWeb (www.salvo.co.uk) is a comprehensive website run by the organisation Salvo, which has been providing information on antique and reclaimed materials since 1992, including demolition alerts. Restoration & Beyond (www.restorationandbeyond.co.uk) is an online store for self build and period homes which offers everything from lime mortar to works of art and is a specialist in new build and restoration.





Above: The flagstones of this floor were dug up by the owner when excavating for the foundations of his new home. They have been laid to complement the antique dining table which dates from the 16th century.

Above right: Salvaged items including an old life buoy, rigging, chains and rope have been used to give this interior a decidedly nautical feel.

If you are aware of a building being demolished there's no reason why you can't approach the owner and try to negotiate a private deal. This can be an economical way to purchase large amounts of building materials like floorboards or stone. Remember to add on the cost of arranging transport and to allow time for cleaning and preparation, as well as a percentage of wastage for broken or substandard materials.

It's not a good idea to try to save money on delivery by using your own car for extremely heavy loads – the resulting hefty garage bill may be far higher than the cost of renting more suitable transport for half a day!

PREPARATION

Cleaning old materials can be a time-consuming business and needs a degree of understanding. Stripping paint from old doors might seem a simple task, but lead paint can be potentially hazardous. Always wear suitable protective clothing and read the labels when applying paint strippers, primers, timber preservative or hydrochloric acid. And be prepared for some surprises when the paint is removed!

When buying period tiles make sure there are enough for the job and allow for breakages. Check for chips and cracks and that colours match. Tiles should be free from adhesive and grout, as removing this can cause damage.

Restoring and re-using original cast iron baths and sanitaryware is a popular method of adding some instant character to a bathroom, although builders often break up potentially valuable cast iron baths in situ because they are difficult to remove whole from buildings they are renovating. Many companies offer a re-enamelling service, with roll-top baths ranging in price from a few hundred to several thousand pounds.

Such baths weigh a great deal, so ensure your bathroom floor is reinforced to withstand the additional



If not, it may be best to buy good quality reproductions made to original casts.

BUILDING

Some building companies and architects specialise in incorporating reclaimed building materials in house designs, and will often undertake the legwork of sourcing materials on your behalf. Others are unhappy about the additional work involved in using irregularly-shaped reclaimed materials, so it is important if you're intending to build in this way that your builder is made aware of the fact from the outset and prices the work accordingly.

If you are using reclaimed materials for renovation work then try to stick to traditional building methods, and remember that if you use modern cement with reclaimed bricks you are effectively ending their life as they cannot easily be recycled again.

A wide range of reclaimed materials is suitable for use in the garden: brick and flagstones for paths, railings and gates for boundaries, and even old Belfast sinks as planters. Antique and salvaged garden statuary, such as sundials, garden seats and urns, are also in plentiful supply – but take photographs of such objects and scratch your postcode on a hidden part, as thefts of garden items are rife.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Even when they are sourced from far away, reclaimed materials are still the most environmentally friendly option for supplying materials to the building industry. Substitution of a few well chosen, locally sourced reclaimed materials can significantly reduce the environmental impact and the embodied carbon of a project.

These savings can sometimes be achieved with little or no additional expense, making reclaimed items an extremely cost-effective way of cutting carbon emissions. With imagination and creative design the opportunities to



RADIANT RECLAIMED

Choosing reclaimed products is not an exact science. Stock constantly changes and the gem you spotted last weekend might be gone forever by the time you decide to buy it. Buying reclaimed means you have to be an opportunist, and snap up your finds when you see them. We went shopping to



1 CELL DOOR Probably from an East Anglian gaol, these Victorian panelled pine and ironclad doors have been blasted, polished and varnished. Price £960 each. (01844 277188, www.lassco.co.uk)

2 SPIRALS Get a taste of history with a reclaimed spiral staircase. This one is made of cast iron and came from a Victorian courtyard, for sale for £1,500. (01452 387890, www.ransonreclaim.com)

3 INSIDE AND OUT Architectural antiques and garden items are easy to incorporate into your home and outdoor space and can add texture and substance to the building and garden. Prices vary for these pots depending on size. (01889 574066, www.cawardenreclaim.co.uk)





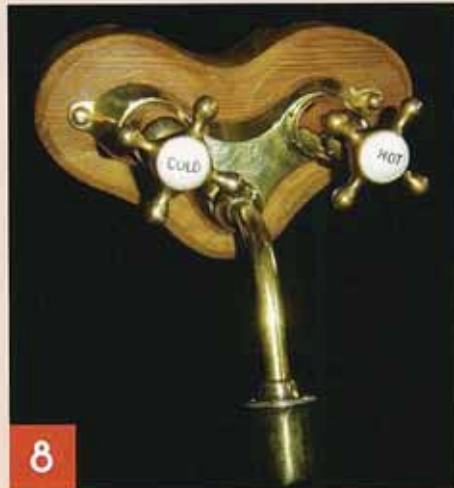
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4 RECLAIMED ROOF These peg tiles, so called because of the way they are fixed, are taken from the roof of Fulham Palace and cost £750 plus VAT per thousand. (020 7394 2100 and 01844 277188, www.jassco.co.uk)

5 FIT FOR A PRINCESS The restored Princess radiator has an ornate polished finish with British manufactured nickel thermostatic valves. Prices for a fully restored radiator start from £340. (01233 850082, www.theoldradiatorcompany.co.uk)

6 GLORIOUS GATES Great for rugby fans, these imposing gates came from the Twickenham Rugby Club. They probably date back to 1908 when the South stand was built and were removed in 2005 when it was re-developed. These are now for sale for £3,500. (01452 387890, www.ransonreclaim.com)

7 NAVAL LIGHT This naval cargo light is one of a pair, salvaged from a ship in India. Made of smooth, polished spun copper, glass and brass, it is priced at £220. (01326 314528, www.skinflintdesign.co.uk)

8 RARE WALL MIXER An Edwardian brass wall mounted mixer with oak mount and hose attachment on the spout. Price £625. (www.antiquetops.com)

9 OLD FLOOR TILES Quarry tiles can be red (pictured) or grey, and are often found on the floors of Victorian houses. These cost between £2.75 and £3.25 per tile from Ranson, although prices vary from yard to yard. (01452 387890, www.ransonreclaim.com)

10 BEAM ME UP Oak beams can be used as feature steps or lintels in period homes. Prices vary widely, depending on width and length. (01452 387890, www.ransonreclaim.com)

11 CARRARA MARBLE From the William IV period (late 18th to early 19th century) this chimneypiece has a rectangular shelf above the channelled frieze and jambs, and end blocks carved with laurel wreaths. Price £3,800. (020 7394 2100 and 01844 277188, www.jassco.co.uk)