

GLOSSARY OF ROOF TERMINOLOGY

Terminology used to describe building components and construction might as well be a foreign language for those who are not familiar with it. Whilst it is appreciated that certain words have other meanings we have listed below an explanation of words used when discussing the structure of a roof. We hope that you find this useful.

Barge Board: Wide board fitted on the end of a gable roof just beneath the edge of the tiles/slates following the slope of the roof from the eaves to the ridge.

Batten: Long strips of soft wood, usually 38mm x 19mm or 25mm to which roof coverings or plasterboards are usually fitted. When used to support roof coverings battens are fixed to the (Common) Rafters and referred to as roof tile battens.

Collar: Horizontal timber tie attached at each end to opposite spars in a pitched roof. Fixed at any height between the wall plate and half way up the roof to prevent roof spread.

Common Rafter: See Rafters below.

Rafters: Part of a roof construction. Sometimes referred to as Common Rafters. Similar to joists but inclined rising from the eaves (foot) to the ridge (head). Collectively with other common rafters they support a pitched roof covering.

Covering: The external material laid or fixed on a roof to protect the building e.g. slates, interlocking and plain tiles, zinc, corrugated sheets etc.

Eaves: Means 'edge' and the eaves of a roof is its lowest edge. The eaves may terminate flush with the outer face of the wall when it is known as a '*flush eaves*' or it may project.

Fascia Board: External horizontal timber board attached to the ends of rafter feet to which the gutter is fixed.

Flashings: These are narrow pieces of lead that are required at the intersection between the vertical faces of walls or framing and pitched roofs, flat roofs, gutters etc. to prevent moisture ingress.

They are classified into 1) *Horizontal Cover Flashings*, 2) *Apron Flashings*, 3) *Stepped Cover Flashings* and 4) *Raking Cover Flashings*.

Flaunching: Cement mortar filler on top of a chimney stack at the base of chimney pots or protruding flues.

Gable: Triangular upper part of wall at the end of a ridge roof

Hipped Roof: A term used to describe a pitched roof, the ends of which are also sloped.

Jack Rafters: These are short spars that run from a hip to the eaves or from a ridge to a valley.

Joist:

- 1) *Floor Joist:* A bearing timber forming part of a suspended timber floor to which the floor boards are nailed to the top and a ceiling may be attached beneath or
- 2) *Ceiling Joist:* A bearing timber spanning an area to which a ceiling is fixed to the underside only.

Lean-to Roof: The simplest form of pitched roof consisting of rafters inclined at 30° against a wall.

Mansard Roof: A roof that has two pitches on each slope. A purlin normally supports the rafters where the two pitches on the same elevation meet. These roofs often include living accommodation in the roof void.

Parapet: A low wall that projects beyond the eaves at the edge of a roof.

Pitch: The slope of a roof.

Purlin: Part of roof construction. A horizontal timber beam, providing intermediate support to rafters. Supported by walls, hip and valley rafters and roof trusses.

Rafters: Part of a roof construction. Sometimes referred to as Common Rafters. Similar to joists but inclined rising from the eaves (foot) to the ridge (head). Collectively with other common rafters they support a pitched roof covering.

Ridge: The highest point of a pitched roof that receives the head of the spars (common rafters/rafters).

Ridge Tile: A purpose designed tile that covers the ridge of a pitched roof.

Roof Truss: Quite common until the 1920's the function of a roof truss is to support the purlins. Sometimes found in very large buildings where big rooms resulted in few load bearing walls. More recently a roof truss means a prefabricated structural timber framework delivered to site to form part of a roof.

Roof Void: The space beneath the roof structure and above the ceiling joists of the uppermost room(s) in a building. Sometimes called an attic.

Sarking: Boards nailed to the upper edges of spars to which slate and other roofing materials are secured.

Sarking Felt: Waterproof material, supplied on a roll. Fixed beneath roof tile battens when laying a new roof or recovering an existing roof.

Soffit: The visible covering of the underside of flight of stairs or a projecting surface such as projecting eaves of a roof.

Spars: Part of roof construction. Sometimes referred to as Common Rafters Similar to joists but inclined rising from the eaves (foot) to the ridge (head) to support a pitched roof covering.

Strut: Intermediate supporting timber for a purlin.

Valley: Formed by the intersection of two roof surfaces having an external angle less than 180°. The wood member at the intersection is called the valley rafter and the feet of short spars are nailed to the valley rafter.

Verge: The edge of a roof which runs from eaves to ridge at a gable.

Wall Plate:

- 1) Part of a pitched roof construction that receives the feet of the spars (spars) and ceiling joist ends.
- 2) Part of a flat roof structure that receives the ends of the flat roof joists.
- 3) Part of a suspended timber floor construction that provides a level bearing and fixing point for the joists and uniformly distribute loads from the joists to the wall below the plate.