# BEST PRACTICE GUIDES

## SECTION 7 SURFACE FINISHES (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)





# BEST PRACTICE GUIDES

Our series of Best Practice Guides will take you through what the Pride in the Job judges look for at each stage of construction and when considering the site manager's overall organisation and management skills.

The Pride in the Job marking sheet used by our judges has 44 marking lines split across 9 sections. The judges will give a score for each line - where there is no work to mark, that line will be left blank and no mark given. A mark of 4 indicates compliance with NHBC Standards and with Building Regulations. A mark of 5 indicates extra attention to detail over and above compliance standards. A mark of 6 would indicate that much of what the judges have seen cannot be improved upon. A mark less than 4 would indicate varying issues relating to workmanship and non-compliance with NHBC's Standards - the greater the issue or number of the same issue. the lower the mark. The final score will be all the marks awarded expressed as a percentage.

These Guides set out what the judges are looking for with clear hints and tips on the sort of practice that will lead to higher marks.

Clearly it is impossible in these short guides to cover every single point of construction - we try here to cover the main issues that are taken into account when considering a mark for each score line.

When looking at the photographs, consider each one in the context of the score line heading – don't be distracted by something else that isn't as good – that will be marked accordingly elsewhere.

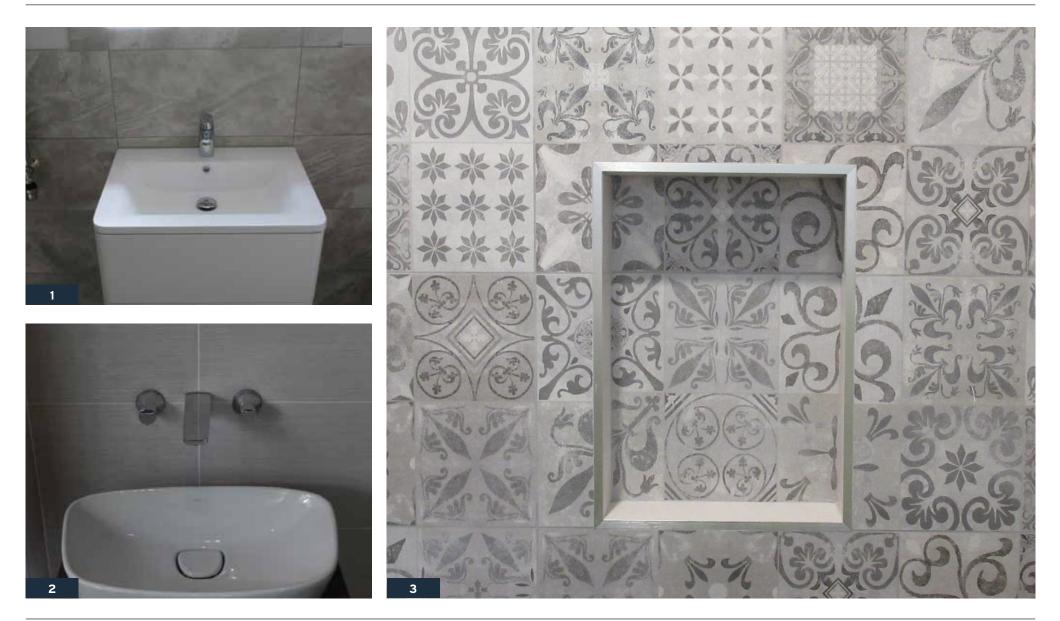
# SECTION 7 SURFACE FINISHES (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)

INTERNAL FINISHES FLOOR FINISHES EXTERNAL FINISHES

This is another section where the aesthetic finish is what is seen by the home owner and can have a significant effect on customer satisfaction.

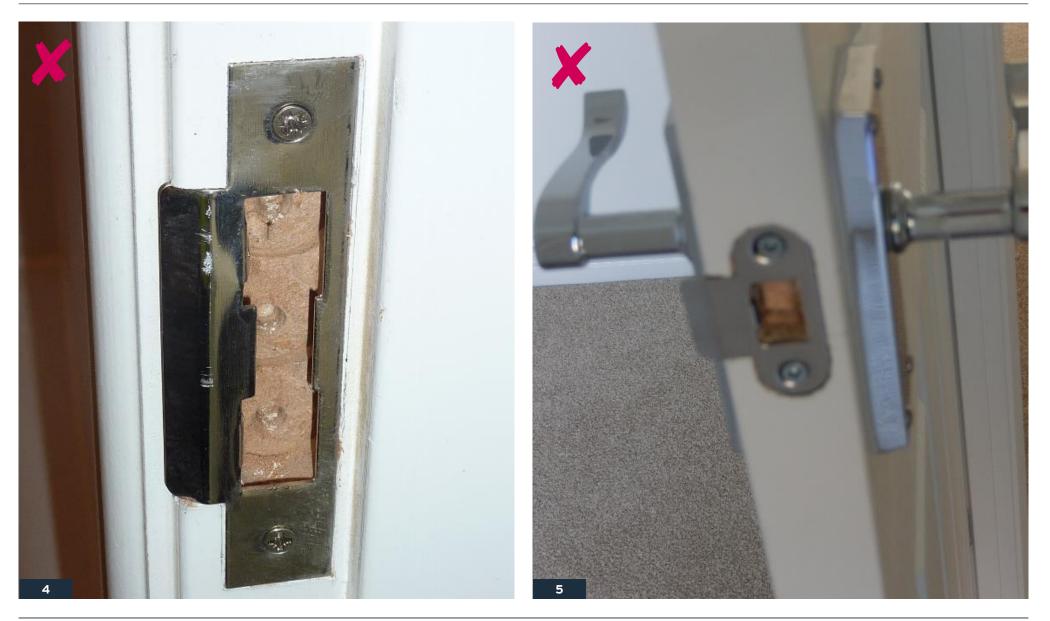
As with Section 6, a significant proportion of this work can be affected by works undertaken at earlier stages of the build. It's the mark of a site manager in full control of a site who can anticipate problems later on in the build and solve them by having processes, templates or systems in place. The judges will reward this behaviour in Section 9 of the marking system.







### **INTERNAL FINISHES**





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#### **INTERNAL FINISHES**

From the purchaser's perspective the internal decorative finish sets one property ahead of its rivals. Quality paintwork, staining, wall tiling and ceiling finishes add to the attractiveness of a home and its common parts, and plays an important role in customer satisfaction.

Judging finishes can be a little subjective, which is why we do not mark the specification, but only the workmanship of application. For example, it doesn't matter if gloss, satin or matt paint is used - it just needs to be applied neatly and with as little evidence of brushmarks as possible.

For extra marks, the judges will be looking for superior preparation of surfaces to receive finishes, fullness of paint and stained finishes, attention to detail of work around doors, windows etc.

Quality of tiling work and mastic finishes around tiles, fitted units and bathrooms is also important. Lack of sharp corners to tiling and awkward details finished off with care will all count. Consider also the cuts to tile edgings, particularly when they are metal.

**Images 1, 2 and 3:** Wall tiling to an obvious centre line makes for a much more pleasing aesthetic finish. It would be so much easier to start tiling from the nearest wall, but that extra effort in thinking about it makes all the difference. These are two lovely examples where the tiler has worked hard to give the best finish possible.

Image 3 shows the result of the amount of effort that has gone into creating this niche. The tiler has worked very hard to ensure that the overall pattern is not broken at all, and it looks magnificent because the niche almost disappears. Workmanship at this level would earn very high marks from the judges – if consistent at this level across the site, then a 6 would be fully deserved. **Images 4 and 5:** Judges are often asked whether they want to see black plastic boxes inside door keeps. The answer is no but whatever is done, it really has to be neat and tidy. These images show poor practice with obvious chisel and drill marks and no painting and would lead to a low score. Had they been chiseled sharply, kept clean and decorated to match, then that would contribute to a much higher score.

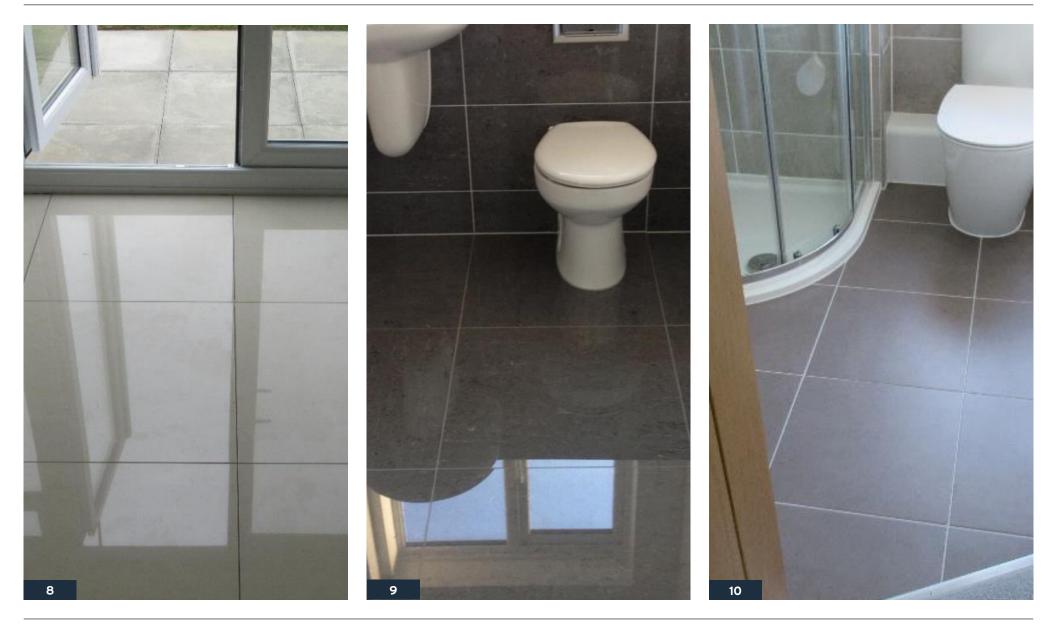
**Images 6 and 7:** The judges will look for all cut or exposed edges of chipboard to be properly sealed i.e. the shelf, the worktop and, often missed, any cut edges of the cupboard carcass.

A neat and tidy layout of the plumbing that yields, wherever possible, a working cupboard is also positive. Notice how neatly the shelves has been cut to fit the pipework.

In image 7 you can see that they have gone to the trouble of putting in a false back to tidy up the pipework even more and have hidden the stop cock behind an access hatch.

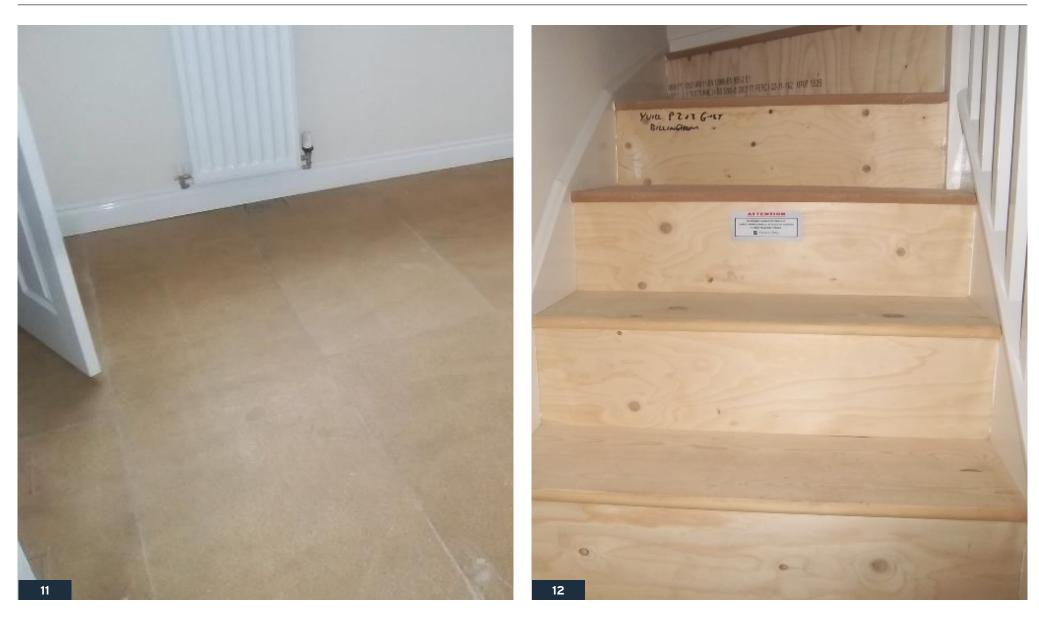


### **FLOOR FINISHES**





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Quality of workmanship is paramount, regardless of the floor covering. Protection of the floors during construction will help to produce a floor that looks new, rather than one covered with plaster and paint splashes.

Both concrete and timber floors are to be considered under this heading. In addition, we will also consider finishes to common parts when we are judging an apartment development.

For extra marks the judges will consider any work that the builder carries out to make the floor attractive for the purchaser. Quality of fitting work, accuracy of cuts and setting out and alignment will all be scrutinised. Planning of floor tile jointing needs to be evident, whether it results in equal tile cuts or the lining of the joints with wall tile joints or centre lines.

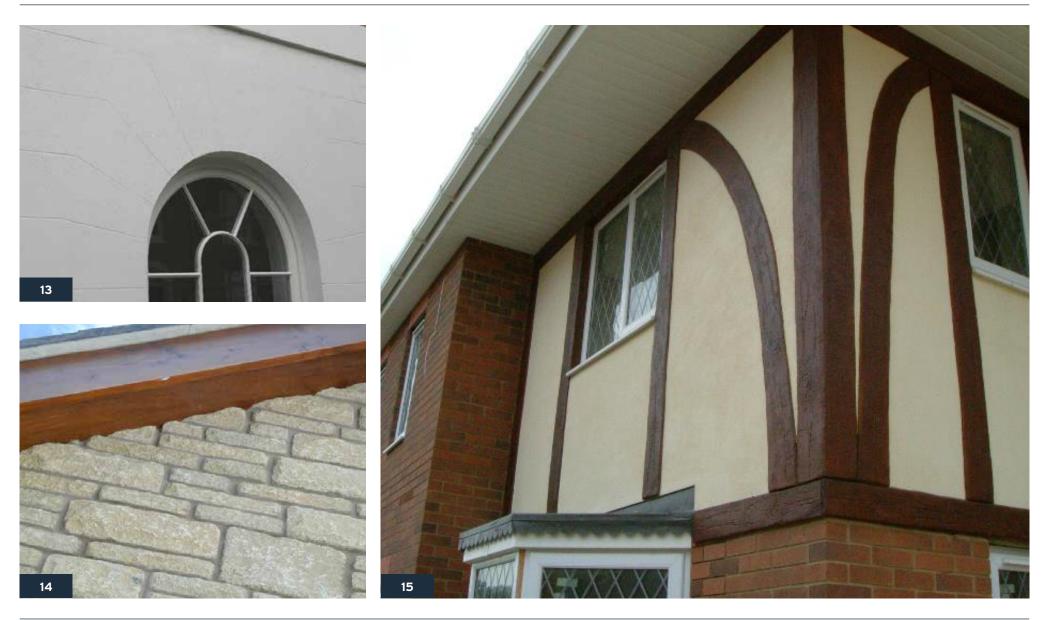
**Images 8, 9 and 10:** Floor tiling needs to be laid level, with good sharp cuts and excellent joints, but it also needs to demonstrate that some thought has gone into the visual appearance. In this first slide, the obvious focal point of the room are the patio doors and the tiler has done a superb job by picking out the centre line.

Image 9 shows how the centre lines were not that obvious but the neat trick here was to line up the wall joints with the floor joints. Image 10 shows how a difficult space has been managed beautifully. Floor tiling of this quality would clearly merit high marks, and if at this level consistently across the site, the judges would be looking to give a 6.

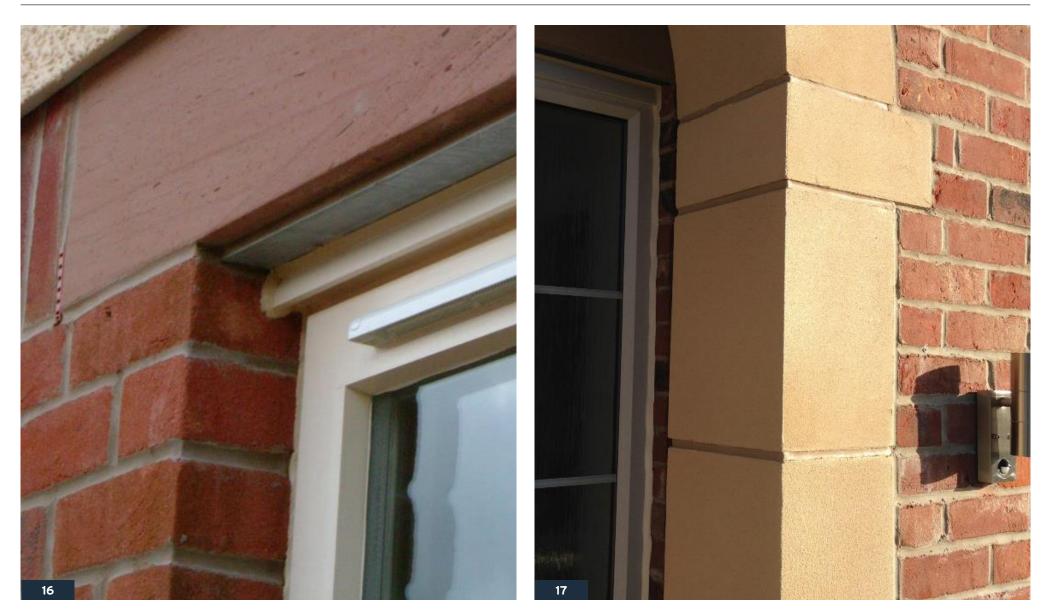
**Images 11 and 12:** Even if you are not fitting a final decorative flooring finish, it's good to try and hand over a nice clean concrete or chipboard floor and timber stair finish to the customer. Note the clean paint line to the stair treads and risers. Some real care taken here to protect the final product which doesn't cost a penny to achieve - the decking in image 11 looks as fresh as the day it came out of the factory!

Possibly the only issue that could be picked up in image 12 is the use of quadrant molding to the staircase string. Quadrant is usually used to hide unsightly gaps; if the plasterboard has been taken tight down the back of the string, then a quadrant isn't necessary – it only adds an extra joint line to make good. An example of where some forethought at first fix stage will reap rewards. In this image, it looks like something isn't square as the string seems to be tapering into the quadrant.





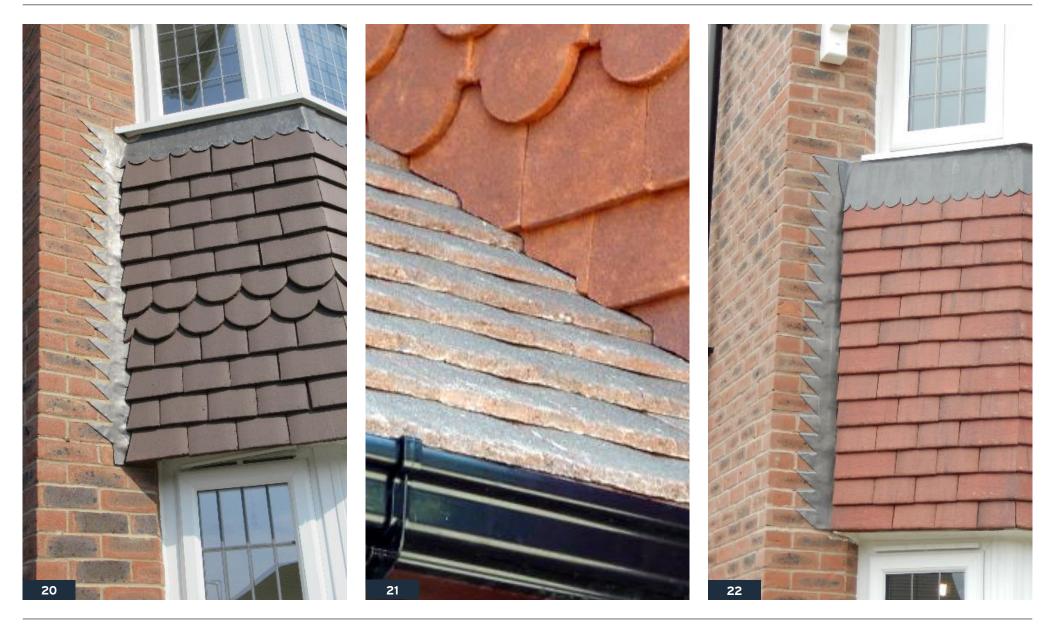












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As mentioned above with internal finishes, the quality of the external finish of a property is a major factor that affects customer satisfaction. Many properties are bought either before build or whilst they are being built. No-one wants to be handed the keys to a new home where the external finish is uneven. External painting or staining to all woodwork and metalwork should be compatible with the surfaces being treated. The primary function of any system adopted is for weather protection but the appearance of the finish will be taken into account.

For higher marks the judges will also scrutinise the quality of the fitting of fascias, claddings etc, looking at the overall presentation and sharpness of the end-product.

You will be given credit for measures taken during the build that avoids the need for extensive cleaning.

Consistency of render shading is also very important as is care taken at interfaces of materials and colours and different material elements.

**Images 13, 14 and 15:** Show examples of some fine external finishing. Image 13 shows excellent render application with accurate cuts to give an ashlar finish. Image 14 shows where the carpenter has gone to the effort of scribing the soffit to the stone walling. It's that good, it looks as though the soffit is sitting on top of the stone. The effect is superb and the effort would demand top marks. Image 15 is a great example of architectural render where the Tudor timber effect is in fact hand carved render with a different paint finish.

**Images 16 and 17:** More examples where a lot of care and attention has gone into the final visual effect. Image 16 is a complicated intersection of angles and materials that has been kept very crisp and clean. Image 17 shows where mortar joints in the stonework have been left back and

then filled with an exterior mastic to make the final effect very sharp indeed.

**Images 18 and 19**: Stone cills should be very neat in their installation and in how the joints are treated.

Image 18 shows some pretty average workmanship where the joint has been pointed. It would need some cleaning down and possibly even the art-stone painting, which seems to defeat the object of having art-stone in the first place. It's difficult to stop the mortar 'bleeding' across the face of the stone work.

Image 19 shows where the joint has been partially pointed up in mortar, just enough used to fix the units together. The final joint has been done carefully using an external mastic and someone with a steady hand to tool it to shape. In our experience, fully jointing in mortar between stone or concrete cills can often lead to the joint shrinking, cracking and coming loose or even falling out. Applying a flexible external mastic joint potentially eliminates post occupation snags or defects.

Where stone is used as a cill above a splayed bay structure, carefully consider the alignment of the angle of the stone with that of the wall below. The attention to detail as shown in these and other images in this section would give the judges comfort in awarding a 5 or a 6 based on complexity and consistency across the site.

**Images 20, 21 and 22:** Tile hanging and the associated flashing must be executed well as this will be a significant decorative feature to the front of the property. Image 21 shows some very careful tile cutting at a tile abutment, fantastic attention to detail.



# **GOOD LUCK!**

We hope you have found this best practice guide useful in gaining a better understanding of what the judges are looking for at each stage of construction.

Remember, the six characteristics the judges are looking for in a site manager are:

- consistency
- attention to detail
- technical expertise

- leadership
- interpretation
- health and safety.

We wish you all the very best in the Pride in the Job competition as you strive for your very first win or to repeat or even improve on your performance in previous years.

