

TIMBER DECKING

Editorial for "Willerby Leader" the glossy magazine of Willerby Holiday Homes

Timber decking gets its name from the wooden battleships of old, where sailors had the unenviable task of rubbing them down with a sandstone to ensure their vessel was maintained in "ship-shape" condition.

No doubt the sailors of yore would be a little dumbstruck at its usage today. Timber decking has now become one of the most popular external addition to homes in the UK.

Decking is an extremely versatile product, allowing any outside space to be transformed into a comfortable leisure area that both surrounds and extends the home.

And it is the latter advantage that is appealing to Holiday Home owners more and more. Timber decking provides that extra space that is only perfect for dining, barbecuing, entertaining or just to look really fantastic.

Because of its unique ability to blend with all types of home and leisure park landscaping, it has quickly become the 'must-have' addition to the Holiday Home. Decking also offers the versatility of either an elevated design, freestanding island-style or more traditional deck style designed to simply extend beyond your French, patio or entrance door. And because decking is not supplied directly by Willerby Holiday Homes, the full choice of style is yours.

SETTING THE DECK IN MOTION

Your Willerby Holiday Homes distributor or holiday home site manager will usually be able to recommend a professional decking supplier. This will be made all the more plausible by being able to see and discuss their work with neighbours at your location. They will be able to assess your individual requirements, have a detailed knowledge of the site and carry out a survey prior to designing a deck for you that best suits your family needs.

Holiday home owners will be surprised how much decking can enhance the value and appearance of their holiday home. It's a totally natural solution, and the variations and permutations are limited only by the decking supplier's creativity coupled with the owner's imagination. All that is then needed to bring your external area to life is some careful planning, a little style and a quality installation.

A VERY NATURAL CHOICE

Decking is now acknowledged as the natural choice when it comes to defining an external area or creating extra leisure and a stable seating area. As a rule, it is not only strong and versatile, but relatively light and very friendly on the environment.

In particular, timber decking can be easily designed to either enhance and 'work around' existing features or to create new ones.

INSTALLATION

Individual holiday home owners will have their own unique reasons for installing decking. Some may want it to simply extend their holiday home, others may wish it as a focus for entertaining, while

there will always be some who simply want a private outdoor escape for relaxation that is a little more special than just placing a folding chair on the grass outside the door.

Regardless of what your reason is for installing decking, it is vitally important that any installation is carried out correctly and by a professional. You must bear in mind that decking is usually elevated and will always have to bear a load – the lack of correct design means that the latter won't be synonymous, so you'll end up with either that sinking feeling or a case of the wobbles! Remember that should you entertain half a dozen guests plus your own family and furniture, the load bearing will be quite high, and the last thing you need is a dangerous collapse!

DECKING TO MEET YOUR NEEDS

There can be no doubt that decking really does offer so much in terms of versatility, shape, size and format that really anything is possible! While holiday home owners and decking installers can allow their imagination to run riot, you really do have to consider some safety ramifications.

A good design and a professional installation will minimise if not alleviate any chance of collapse or people falling from the decking. Access and general safety are the other points which have to be considered, as do damp proofing and overall structural design.

Also, you will want to consider where and when the sun shines – hopefully, however, your Willerby Holiday Home will have already been sited in the best possible position for this. Remember the basics such as, do you want grooved, ribbed or just plain deck boards. Don't forget to give a little thought as to when you might plan to make use of your decking – it will be slightly elevated, so you must give consideration not only to your privacy, but also to your neighbours. Work with your installer and try to imagine how the finished product will look in terms of your holiday home environment.

And don't forget to discuss your plans with your neighbour! While there may be every chance that they will have decking themselves, a little advance planning can often save a lot of goodwill disappearing.

DECKING DURABILITY

While UPVC decking requires a minimum of maintenance, some people have a preference towards wooden decking. Simply check that while hardwoods, by nature, have a resistance to rotting, will your softwood decking have been treated to a high pressure anti-rot treatment?

If installing a softwood deck, you can always be upfront and ask for a cross cut of any boards to be used – the preservative should be visible across the grain.

And you can always further protect your wooden decking by staining or tinting with a water-repellent coating.

Any decking, as long as it is of quality manufacture and installed by a reputable professional, will offer years of use without giving any trouble.

DECKING GUIDANCE AND SAFETY NOTES

Hardwood decking has a natural durability while softwood should be pressure-treated with preservative.

It is often not necessary to apply stains or coatings but these can improve the appearance and durability of the deck further.

Deck boards come in plain, ribbed and grooved varieties, but grooved and ribbed decking varieties improve drainage and grip when wet, especially for UPVc products.

Decks must be cleaned from time-to-time, especially in Autumn when leaves fall and decay.

Always check the underside of any decking at least twice a year.

Remember always that a gram of prevention is heavier and more valuable than a kilogramme of cure.