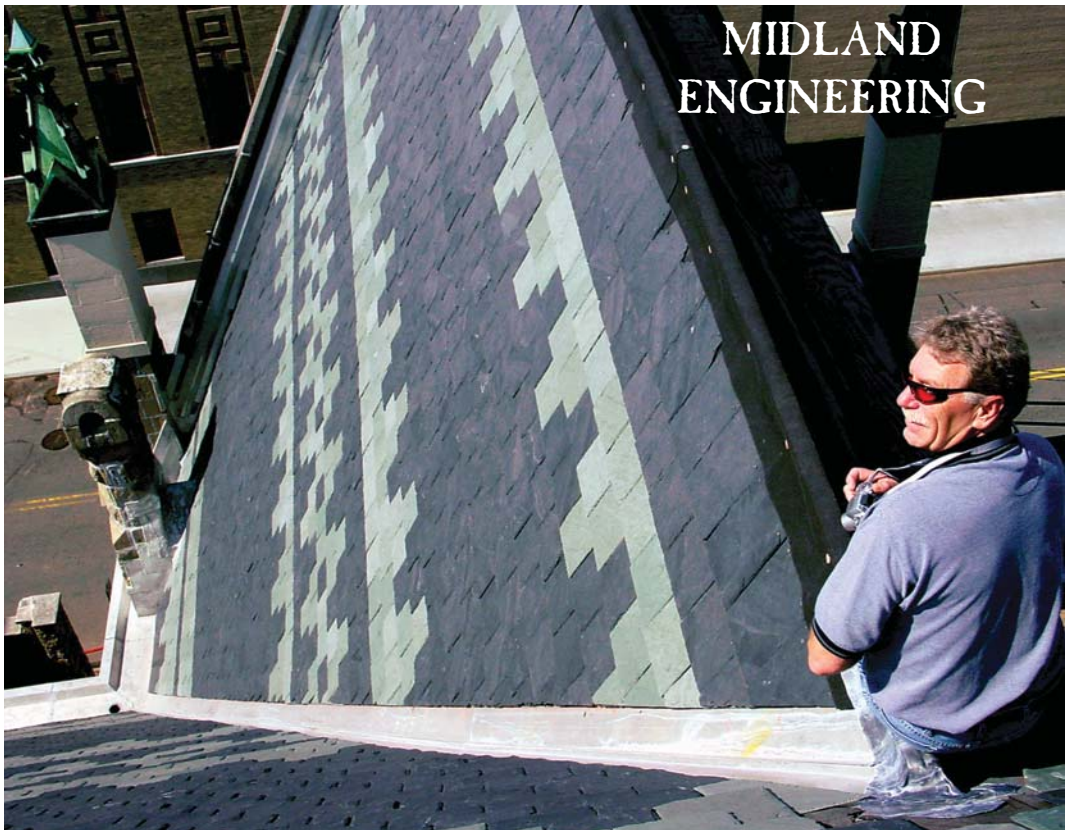
PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

CATHEDRAL OF SAINT ANDREW

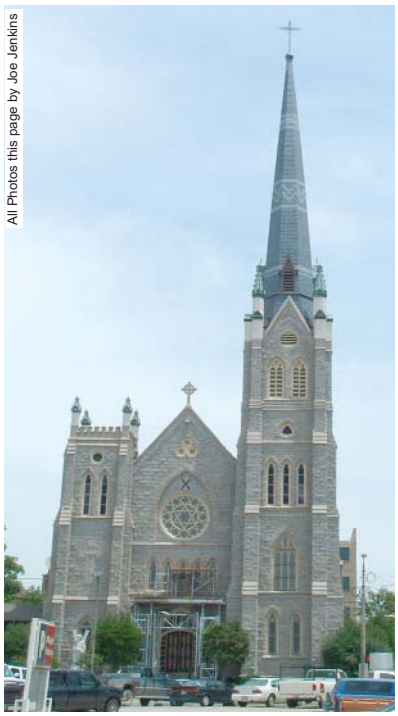
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS



It's not very often anyone has an opportunity to slate a cathedral, but such a monumental project was recently undertaken by Midland Engineering of South Bend, Indiana, on the Cathedral of Saint Andrew in Little Rock, Arkansas. The project was coordinated by Monsignor Scott Marczuk who had correctly ascertained, with the aid of a roof consultant, that the original 120-year-old slate roof had reached the end of its life and needed to be replaced. The original slates were about two thirds Pennsylvania black, which were deteriorated beyond repair, and one third Vermont unfading green, which were still quite sound despite their age. When the original slates were removed, many were salvaged and used for fund-raising by the church to help pay for the new roof. It is worth noting that the original slate roof reportedly had no underlayment.

The Cathedral consists of a main roof with transept and parapets, plus a 220-foot octagonal spire, an attached rear chapel and an attached rear dome totaling 245 squares. The slate was originally installed in an intricate pattern of green slates over a black slate background — a pattern meticulously replicated by Midland during the roof replacement.

The roofs had been slated in 1881 at a cost of $1,951.50, including labor and materials. Prices have gone up since then, and so has the quality of flashings and nails. Although the original flashings were tin and copper, terne-coated stainless steel flashings were used on the new slate roof in the valleys, box-gutters, ridges, chimney flashings and step flashings. Four-pound sheet lead was used for counter-flashing against the rough stone parapets. Stainless steel slater's nails were used on the main body of the cathedral in order to penetrate the old yellow-pine sheathing more easily.



All Photos this page by Joe Jenkins

Master slater Lyle Bandurski (below, right) and project manager Steve Kurtz (above) teamed up to construct a beautiful roof of Cwt-y-bugail Welsh slates blended with Vermont unfading green slates, both from Hilltop Slate in Middle Granville, NY. The project won the Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas's Outstanding Craftsmanship Award, an annual award presented in Arkansas for "outstanding achievement in historic preservation."

Midland Engineering can be reached at 52369 US 33 North, South Bend, Indiana (ph: 574-272-0200) or at midlandengineering.com. Hilltop slate can be reached at PO Box 201, Rt. 22A, Middle Granville, NY 12849 (ph: 518-642-2270) or at hilltopslate.com.