

Select a surface

Whether improving what you have or starting from scratch, your driveway design is hugely impacted by the material you choose.

Concrete and tarmac cost around £80 and £70 per sqm respectively. Poured concrete can be coloured and stamped in various block and decorative effects. It can also crack in freezing conditions, unless fitted with control joints. Tarmac is suitable for all weathers, and for sloping sites. Narrow channels can be included to allow surface water to drain away.

Gravel is a more affordable option, costing around £40 per sqm. 'It's relatively easy to install and can be driven on almost immediately after installation,' says Lesley Marshall of Simply Paving

(simplypaving.com). 'It comes in several colours, but may scatter, so top-ups and regular maintenance are necessary.' Driveways should have three or four layers, a minimum 150mm-deep subbase of Ministry of Transport compliant (MOT) type 1, a weed membrane and a minimum 50mm-deep gravel layer rolled and left for a day to settle. A gravel retention system, such as Gravelrings (jewson.co.uk), stabilises loose chips and reduces dispersion. Self-binding gravel is a blend of stones, sand and clay firmly compacted together on site so it won't scatter.

Resin-bound aggregate is a mix of small stones and chips bound by an adhesive on site and has a smooth finish. It requires little maintenance and costs around £100 per sqm. >>



DRAINAGE PROVISION

Mark Gregory,

managing director of **Landform Consultants**, explores water management (landformconsultants.co.uk)

● Following the Pitt Review 2008, the flood and water management act dictates that all surface water has to be managed within the property boundary, making it illegal to direct runoff onto the street or into a mains drain.

● A permeable driveway allows water to drain through it. Gravel, grass and resin-bound drives with a Ministry of Transport (MOT) compliant type 3 aggregate subbase are good options.

● The soil conditions need to be established early on, as the type will determine how quickly water is absorbed. This will influence what kind of material is suitable and whether any Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are required.

● I recommend digging a hole the depth and breadth of a spade. Fill it with water and monitor how quickly it drains. Sandy and chalky soils will drain far quicker than heavy clay, which often requires help in the form of one or more soakaways.

● Once you know your soil type and whether there's a need for excavation or breakout – breaking up an existing driveway and removing the waste – contact companies for informed quotes.

Designed by Fiddes Architects (fiddesarchitects.com), this four-bedroom home in Banchory, Aberdeenshire, has a tarmac drive supplied and installed by Deeside Road Construction (drc.scot). It cost around £12,000

