

## Finnish Housing Company Eliel Gets a Roof Garden (Green Roof) Yard Covering.

In the Lahti city area, about 100 km north-east of Helsinki, there are a number of architecturally significant buildings so it is important that the style of any new buildings planned in the vicinity are in harmony with the existing structures. One example is a new apartment block on Puistokatu 1, which will be completed at the beginning of 2014, in the neighbouring plot to Eliel Saarinen's Lahti City Hall. This new apartment block will showcase Finland's new innovative building culture as it will feature a roof garden (green roof) as a yard covering.

The garden has been designed by Environmental Products Manager Taina Suonio from Envire VRJ group, which is the main contracting firm for the landscaping in the project.

'Architect Ilkka Ridanpään's design for the site includes the idea of a roof garden. In this instance this kind of construction is technically demanding as it was designed as a cover over a yard. This, among other reasons, is why we needed the lightest filler available,' Ms Suonio explained.

Ms Suonio has a diverse education in this field and is an expert in the choice of plants in such projects. She knows that the Stonecrop plant is one of the best choices for the Finnish climate because it is able to sustain harsh weather extremes and still maintain its appearance.

'The yard cover roof garden surrounds the building in three directions. This means different sides of the building may become extremely hot or cold in comparison to each other.'

The very nature of plants is used to bring aesthetic pleasure to the resident's. To achieve this both plants and trees need to receive a sufficient amount of moisture. This will only succeed if the substructure has been measured and installed correctly.

'The Stonecrop plant only needs shallow bedding but trees need about a metre depth of growth. This difference has to be taken care of with bulk fillers and this where Foamit foamed glass has proven to be a perfect product for a variety of reasons. In the main these reasons include lightness, ease of handling and workability.'

At the beginning of the projects we did look into other filling options but found that there was no comparison to Foamit. Other lightweight granular fillers were far heavier and harder to work with.

'As an environmental planner I must also emphasize the ecological side of use of recycled glass. It is important that products are recyclable. This is also coupled with the fact that Foamit absorbs just the right amount of water for optimal plant growth.'

Ninety-four one cubic metre big bags of Foamit were delivered to the roof garden project in Lahti.

Taina Suonio has extensive experience in the field and has worked both in London, UK, and in other countries. Taina has exhibited at the Chelsea Flower Show with many different designers (including Andy Sturgeon, Thomas Hoblyn, Paul Stone, Nigel Dunnett and Carol Klein). This year's show will be her eighth year. Taina was also part of the team responsible for the landscaping of a roof garden that won a gold medal at the Chelsea Flower Show, the world's largest horticultural event.