

Tesla solar roof london

Residential Sales Manager Jon Cowdrill discusses Tesla's recent announcement about its new solar roof tiles. Is it the future of solar roofing? Read what Jon has to say!

Elon Musk recently announced a range of new solar roof tiles in a presentation alongside the launch of Tesla Powerwall 2. (You can find the full presentation [here](#)).

At Joju Solar we are very keen to see the full specification for these products. At the time of writing there are no datasheets for us to look at and no UK release dates. In fact, we have been reliably informed that the products are at least a year and a half away from being sold in the UK.

While we got off to a good start with the solar slates they haven't been massively successful due to their higher cost and lower efficiencies. The current technology also has some technical limitations such as the requirement for up to three courses of regular tiles or slates around the edge of the array. It is also harder to use technology like individual panel optimisation or micro inverters with the smaller module sizes of roof tiles.

Where the new Tesla offering looks like an improvement is that their tiles appear to be installed right up to the edge of the roof. This is great news as it means a larger collection area.

To be fair, maximum efficiency may not be the main driving force. Making an aesthetically pleasing product will probably be more important for some people. If your roof is big enough, efficiency may not be a concern as you'll be able to hit the generating capacity you require regardless.

The other technical constraint mentioned earlier was that it is hard to make solar tiles work with optimisers and micro inverters. There is a good chance that Tesla will have thought about this and will have a way to link sets of tiles together and optimise them. This will be incredibly important, especially if we want to install on partially shaded roofs (not unlike the roofs in the Tesla presentation).

The current solar slates like the Solar Century C21E or the more expensive but realistic looking GB-sol slate are often seen on sensitive buildings such as churches and other listed buildings. However, their use has not been that wide spread due to the constraints mentioned above.

When it comes to the aesthetics of solar panels, generally the choice is yours as there are very few planning constraints. Domestic solar panel installation is permitted development, even in conservation areas (although there are a few limitations). See the guidance [here](#). The exception to this is if there is an "Article 4" in the conservation area or if you are in a listed building. \*\*



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This is all good news for potential solar customers. It means you can make your own mind up on which type of solar you go for, whether building-integrated solar tiles, recessed in-roof systems or conventional modules

Update: On 10th May 2017, Elon Musk announced that the solar tiles would be going on sale. Additionally they also announced the product will come with a warranty of the lifetime of the house, or infinity, whichever is sooner. This so-called infinity warranty shows their confidence in the durability of the product, which is glass encapsulated. It is important to note this warranty does not cover the performance of the solar cells which we would expect to degrade slowly over time as all conventional modules do.

For those of you reading in the UK, the product will not be available until 2018, so you won't be able to get your hands on this immediately. However, we have a very good relationship with Tesla, being certified installers of their battery systems, and we expect to be installing their roof tile product once it is available.

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