

Keeping it real

A leading Yorkshire bespoke joinery manufacturer discusses the economical and environmental advantages of using timber windows and doors

Timber window and door replacements that combine character and performance will almost certainly add value to your home, whilst reducing energy costs and consumption.

'Bespoke timber windows and doors can transform even the most prosaic of properties,' says Ben Biker, who manages Biker Bespoke Joinery. 'They not only revitalize period properties, adding style and environmental recognition, but can turn sterile modern buildings into homes with character.'

Research undertaken in 2009 discovered that 82 per cent of estate agents believed that original period features such as timber windows and doors add financial value to a house. Seventy eight per cent also believed they helped sell the property quicker. 'If you are looking to sell your property, timber windows and doors can make a big difference in terms of marketability,' says Ben Biker. PVC-u windows may be cheaper initially, but can often reduce the value of your home by more than it will cost to install timber windows. On the other hand, research conducted by the BBC has shown that wrongly specified PVC-u windows in period properties can knock up to £12,000 off their value.

'While uPVC windows might be cheaper upfront (though not that much cheaper), if you live in anything other than a new building in a contemporary design those uPVC windows can cost you dear. Taste might be subjective, but it still has a price,' says Naomi Cleaver at www.telegraph.co.uk

Certificated timber is the most renewable and sustainable natural raw material on the planet and there is no larger promoter of timber windows than



Greenpeace. 'Timber is a sustainable resource. As long as the timber is sourced from properly managed forests and care is taken with preservatives, paints and stains, timber windows are by far the best environmental choice,' says Greenpeace, in *Installing New Windows*.

By choosing good quality timber windows, developers, local authorities and homeowners will be helping to reduce energy costs and consumption as well as encouraging the planting of more farmed trees. Due to climate change, the cost and replacement of fossil fuels and the increasing necessity to conserve energy, using energy efficient timber windows and doors is a clear way to show your commitment to the environment and reduce your carbon footprint.

A study by Imperial College, London, found that due to advances in design, manufacture and coatings, some timber windows can have a lifespan of 40-60 years, with improved maintenance that can extend to 80 years, like many



Victorian and Edwardian windows that are still evident in many buildings today. Due to this extended life of windows, case studies in the report show that timber-framed windows cost 15-25 per cent less than uPVC units, taking the whole life of the products into account.

It's not just by replacing windows that houses can increase the energy efficiency of windows, draught proofing original timber sash windows can reduce air infiltration by around 86 per cent, a service that Biker Bespoke Joinery also provide. More simple cost effective measures such as using blinds or curtains can help reduce heat loss through single glazing by around 40 per cent.

For further information on the services and products of Biker Bespoke Joinery or for a free brochure please contact:
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