

# Three times the comfort

Phase 2

With growing pressure on self-builders to meet stringent energy reduction targets, it's easy to opt for the most expensive energy saving products. Here, Black Millwork's Gary Hutton explains how a more considered approach to the fenestration options available will result in a more cost-effective and thermally efficient structure

There has been an influx of legislation swamping the building industry and completely reshaping the way buildings are designed. From the Code for Sustainable Homes and the BRE's Green Guide, to BPERC ratings to the new energy performance requirements within Part L and F of the Building Regulations, legislation for building products and designs is extensive. With the focus of specification switching to a more environmentally friendly approach, particularly in relation to a product's environmental impact, correctly specifying fenestration can seem like a daunting task.

However, before rushing in to purchase the most expensive and sophisticated of products because they boast the most superior environmental properties, it is best to take a few minutes to consider what options are available to the self-builder and whether these best suit the character, style and location of the property.

## Triple glazing

Take, for example, triple glazing – a popular specification choice in Scandinavia where it is designed for builds in exposed locations or extreme weather conditions, where maximum thermal efficiency is required. There are many

benefits to installing triple glazing, not least for the increased thermal efficiencies, but also for providing improved acoustic performance, making it suitable for properties near main roads or other areas where noise reduction is a consideration. But triple glazing can come at a price, so it is worth analysing whether it is appropriate to install on every aspect of the house. Location should be taken into account when looking at installing triple glazing as it is usually best suited to harsher than normal conditions – such as coastal properties or those exposed to high winds and severe weather. In addition, those properties situated next to busy motorways that may require superior acoustic performance.

Therefore it is important to consider the direction a building is facing. The windows of an exposed, north facing property could well benefit from the additional warmth offered by triple glazing, but they may not be necessary on the south facing side. Therefore a hybrid approach would be best that mixes standard double glazing – which is perfectly adequate at meeting Building Standards – with triple glazing for the more exposed facades. Triple glazing is certainly an effective additional tool for self-builders seeking maximum durability and thermal efficiency and once decided upon, there are an array of styles

available to cater for any period property or desired look. Until recently, triple glazed windows were produced as an enlarged version of double glazed windows and as a result the frames were often too deep to be accommodated within current wall thicknesses and could be expensive to produce. Recent developments in triple glazing windows have resulted in slimmer profile frames and flush sash design that are pleasing in appearance and deliver enhanced performance at an affordable price. From H Frame, tilt and turn, flush casement windows to patio doors, inward and outward opening hinged French doors, timber and aluminium clad sliding doors and bi-fold patio doors. Furthermore, Black Millwork can offer triple glazing for traditional sliding sash windows.

Compliance with the Code, Building Regulations and standards will always dominate the way in which houses are designed and built, but careful consideration of the options available and whether these best suit the character, style and location of the property will benefit the self-builder in the long run ■

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Phase 3

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