

PROJECT OF THE MONTH

Warehouse conversion

by Stylus Architects

The owners of this property, originally a Victorian postal warehouse and sorting room, tasked Stylus Architects with converting it into a modern family dwelling that pays homage to its historic roots. The aim was to retain as much of the architectural charm of the building as possible while incorporating modern, contrasting elements. The project required a full-scale demolition of everything except the external walls, but the industrial feel of the remaining brick adds character.

The design makes the most of the double height of the former warehouse by incorporating a mezzanine that cantilevers over the kitchen area, accessed by a new staircase and bridge. The elevated space looks out over the kitchen as well as the glazed extension, which houses a dining area, and a new sedum green roof. Horizontal slot windows have been installed either side of the built-in joinery on the mezzanine in addition to the rooflights above, flooding plenty of light into the space and making it feel bright and airy. The bedrooms are situated around the perimeter of the ground floor, where the sorting rooms once were, with the bathroom and utility room located below the mezzanine.

For more information call 020 8392 1478 or visit stylusarchitects.co.uk



Cost of climbing the property ladder

First-time buyers in England face an average cost of £247,147 in order to secure their first home, according to research by GetAgent (www.getagent.co.uk). Second steppers can expect to pay an estimated £45,881 on top. The third rung is on average an additional £33,035, while the largest gap is found when taking the fourth step, equating to an increase of £184,137 over the cost of your third home. However, downsizers typically pocket £256,630 when buying a smaller house.

90%

is the potential CO2 emissions saving that can be made by repairing old wooden window frames rather than replacing the unit with a modern alternative, according to a study conducted by research and consultancy agency CE Delft (www.cedelft.eu). Researcher Maarten Bruinsma says: "In terms of environmental impact, repairing damaged window frames scores two to five times better than replacing them with new products."

Passive standard for Scottish new builds

In response to a private member's bill proposed by labour MSP Alex Rowley, the Scottish Parliament has voted in favour of adopting Passivhaus or a Scottish equivalent standard for all new housing in the country to help tackle wider climate challenges. The proposals are expected to be adopted within the next two years as part of the wider Domestic Building Environmental Standards (Scotland) Bill. The move is likely to put pressure on other UK governments to follow suit.

What's on?

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LONDON

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FREE, ST NEOTS

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nsbrc.co.uk

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CHRIS SNOOK



Cost of typical renovation and repair jobs revealed

Research by insurers Alan Boswell (www.alanboswell.com) and tool suppliers Zoro (www.zoro.co.uk) has revealed the average cost of common home upgrades – helping renovators to budget more effectively. Replacing poor or old wiring came out on top as the costliest task, at around £3,000-£6,500, followed by fixing paint peeling as a result of moisture, which is estimated to cost homeowners between £2,200-£5,000. To repair brickwork defects and resulting draughts, you can expect to pay anywhere from £1,900-£5,000; and to fix a broken boiler can cost as little as £500 or as much as £3,000. Getting rid of mould from poor ventilation will set you back around £800-£1,000, while replacing missing roof slates commonly costs between £120 and £220.

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need to know

Creating thermally efficient homes

In recent times, the news has been filled with stories on the cost of heating our homes and advice for making them more energy efficient, as we all try to find ways to reduce our soaring energy bills. If you are building a new home, or in the planning stages, it's likely that you'll want to ensure it's as thermally efficient as possible, as it's easier to do this during the build process than to retrofit eco measures later on.

To aid in this quest, the government is set to publish its plans for the new Future Homes Standard Building Regulations, which are proposed to come into effect in 2025. This will lay out updated energy efficiency rules, with the aim of making all new homes carbon neutral. However, there is a distinct disconnect between this aim and other recent changes to elements of the Building Regulations. The three main regulations concerning thermal efficiency are:

- Part L, which covers the conservation of fuel and power. This is the section which states the U-value specifications for walling, windows, doors etc. In general, the lower the U-value of a product, the more thermally efficient it is.
- Part F, which looks at building ventilation and creating a healthy internal air quality. This is critical to prevent dampness and mould in homes, particularly in rooms which create a lot of steam such as wet rooms and kitchens.
- Part O, a new reg covering overheating and steps to mitigate excessive solar gain. Solar gain is when a room's temperature increases when it's in direct sunlight; a problem you may have encountered in old, poorly-constructed conservatories, for instance.

In a perfect world, the three parts would work together to create thermally efficient homes that don't overheat or suffer from condensation issues. However, if the government continues to set lower U-value targets, as per Part L, homes will eventually retain so much warmth that they will overheat, contradicting Part O. To counteract this, we will need to open doors and windows to keep cool, exceeding the demands of Part F and Part L in terms of controlled air leakage.

Many manufacturers will also struggle to even meet the new targets if they continue to be lowered. This could lead to the UK adopting a European-style design where windows tend to be smaller. As a nation, we generally prefer large expanses of glass that let in lots of natural light.

The government hasn't yet released the full details of the Future Homes Standard, but it has made updates to Part L, making windows and doors regulations more stringent. For those who are currently building a home, all you need to worry about is meeting the standard in effect at the point you gain Building Regs approval. However, if your project isn't planned to start until 2025, you will need to be aware of the new ones when installing windows and doors.

Once the government releases the full details of the Future Homes Standard, we'll continue to advise self builders on how to create a dream home that is thermally efficient without compromising on aesthetics.



VICTORIA BROCKLESBY

is the co-founder of Origin, which she set up at 22 with her cousin, Neil Ginger. Since 2002, Origin has grown from a small family business into one of the UK's leading manufacturers of aluminium bifolds, sliders, internal doors and windows. www.origin-global.com