

Secondary glazing, not second best

If your single glazed windows are characterful and perfectly serviceable then adding secondary glazing might be a better option than replacement.

Secondary glazing has numerous benefits:

- Reduces draughts, condensation, and heat loss through windows (by up to 63%)¹
- Sound insulation can be better than double glazing (if panes are 10cm or more apart)
- Outward appearance of windows unchanged, home security may be enhanced

Secondary glazing can be temporary or integrated more permanently. Temporary DIY options include lightweight acrylic panes mounted using magnetic strips. Plastic films that can be stuck to the window pane or frame are lower cost options.

Integrated options include heavier glazed units which can be hinged or sliding, allowing you to open your windows. At the top end, custom made timber frame units and those highly rated by the BFRC² will be more durable and their airtight seals will further reduce heat losses. For the best visual match, align the glazing bars with those on the original window.

Existing windows should be repaired first when fitting secondary glazing and all units should remain closed in winter to discourage condensation on the primary window pane.

For more tips on making an older home more energy efficient, visit www.superhomes.org.uk



Hinged secondary glazing - bar aligned with original windows for a good match
Photo courtesy of www.superhomes.org.uk

Notes for Editors:

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1. Dr Paul Baker's 2010 Historic Scotland Report on the '[Thermal Performance of Traditional Windows](#)' (p13-14) found a 63% reduction in heat loss from single glazed windows where a secondary glazing system had been added.

2. British Fenestration Rating Council (BFRC)

Some secondary glazing units have received performance labels using Window Energy Ratings, the system run by the [British Fenestration Rating Council \(BFRC\)](#), an independent government-supported body, administered by the Glass & Glazing Federation (GGF). This allows them to be easily compared.

3. Secondary glazing in conservation areas and listed buildings

In 2010 English Heritage produced its '[Secondary glazing for Windows](#)' guidance document on 'the principles, risks, materials and methods for upgrading the thermal performance of windows by the addition of secondary glazing.' The advice is relevant to all older homes although English Heritage's own focus is on ensuring the conservation of historic and traditionally constructed buildings. '[Warmer Bath – A guide to improving the energy efficiency of traditional homes in the city of Bath](#)' from the Bath Preservation Trust also has a useful section on secondary glazing (p28).

4. SuperHomes

SuperHomes are older homes that have been refurbished by their owners to the highest standards of energy efficiency. This means greater comfort, significantly lower running costs and a reduction in carbon emissions of at least 60%. SuperHome Open Days let visitors see for themselves both the challenges and benefits associated with making an older home energy efficient. Over 70,000 people have already visited a SuperHome. Currently there are 184 registered SuperHomes and 85% of the population in England and Wales live within 30 miles of one. SuperHomes is now run by the National Energy Foundation.

5. Partners

SuperHomes enjoys the support of the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, WWF, Energy Saving Trust, Megaman and SIG.

6. The Big Picture

The UK government set a target of a 60% carbon reduction by 2050 in 2005 (this was subsequently increased to 80%). The UK's 25 million homes currently account for at least 27% of UK carbon emissions. It is estimated that as many as 80% of all homes that will be in standing in 2050 have already been built. This means that retrofitting existing homes is a priority if the government's target is to be met. The Government's Green Deal launched in January 2013 and offers loans for energy efficiency improvements.