

LUMEN

ROOFLIGHT

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Light at the end of the tunnel

Paul Trace from Lumen discusses the importance of choosing the right materials on your new build or renovation project from the start.

Whether you are building your own home from scratch or tackling a renovation project, the early planning stages will prove crucial.

From the outset you will need to make bold decisions that will define the look and feel of your new home. It is important that you commit and adhere to your original plans throughout the duration of the build, as any deviation will have an impact on the end result.

You may, for example, decide that your home needs to be as environmentally friendly as possible, or that it is important to use only the highest quality materials throughout the build.

If budget were no object then these choices would be made much easier. The unfortunate reality is that practically every new build or renovation project is subject to tight budgetary constraints. This only makes the initial stages even more vital, as careful planning upfront, (particularly when it comes to choosing the right materials), can lead to cost savings in the long run.

One of the most important considerations at the early design stage of any project should be the amount of natural light entering the building. When considering light sources, the obvious place to start is

with the windows, and people often go to great lengths to ensure that the correct type, number and style are chosen for their property. This is perfectly justifiable as windows can often form anywhere between 20%-50% of the overall surface area of your property and have a huge impact on both the internal and external aesthetics of the property.

However, windows are not the only source of natural light into a building, and it is important to consider the benefits provided by other options such as rooflights.

The location of your property will have a huge influence on your decision making process. The direction that your property faces and its proximity to other buildings, trees, or other obstacles, may impede sunlight coming in through low level windows and diminish the amount of natural light your house will be exposed to. In any case, a rooflight placed up high effectively delivers an even distribution of light to low-level structures and reaches areas that windows simply cant reach. Ultimately, a rooflight can offer much more natural light than a similar sized window, simply because of their location.

The advantages of natural light are many, and range from energy and cost efficiencies through to health benefits. The most modern rooflights benefit from the highest class 4 energy efficiency ratings and can reduce energy consumption in a building by up to 20%, leading to significant savings each year on lighting and heating bills.

It is worth checking with the manufacturer to determine exactly how each product performs under test conditions, as there are many variables within the test that will differentiate between an average performing rooflight and an excellent one.

The environmental performance of a rooflight is also an important consideration, and there are of course strict legislative criteria that windows and rooflights must adhere to. However, there are some

products that perform well above the minimum recommended environmental standards that could bring about even greater benefits in terms of thermal performance. So deciding on the right materials, of which the choice is plentiful, will be key.

Steel is the obvious choice for period properties and barn conversions, but they are now also being more frequently used in sleek new contemporary houses. Timber is a long-time favourite on homes of any style, but getting onto the roof to maintain the timber can be an awkward task. PVCu is also an option, but it will not provide the slim frames that metal is capable of, nor the natural look of wood. It is, also however the least environmentally friendly product to use despite an increase in post consumer recycling.

Whatever your choice of material it is important that your rooflights closely complement that of your windows and the overall style of the building. It is also important that you take control of these decisions as all too often your builder or architect will try to influence decisions about the best materials for your home.

What you need to remember, at every stage of the project, is that this is your home, and the reason why you have taken it upon yourself to tackle a self build or renovation project is because it gives you the opportunity to create a home that is perfect for you. This may mean insisting on the products and materials that will contribute to the overall look and feel that you are trying to create.

Case study – Showing true steel

When Mr & Mrs Hollett set out to refurbish their house and adjacent barn in Treburley, Cornwall, they had very clear ideas of the high standard in which it was to be completed.

The project involved the refurbishment of their house and a complete renovation of the barn connected to the main property. Despite their

relatively modest budget, the Hollett's were determined not to compromise on the quality of any aspect of the build.

After spending much time and effort researching the most suitable products to match their high specifications they opted for Lumen Conservation rooflights.

Mr Hollett said: *"The plan was to extend our kitchen and lounge area as this is where we tend to spend the majority of our time. We wanted the area we had available to feel as spacious as possible, this would involve creating a light and airy space with as much natural light as possible. The natural choice for creating this ambience was to opt for rooflights, and after careful consideration, we chose the Lumen conservation rooflight. Despite the fact our home is not a Listed property, we felt that it was the best fit for the look we were trying to create."*

Although conservation rooflights authentically replicate a traditional Victorian design for installation in period properties, their low profile design and fine lines of steel have infinite design possibilities with modern day architecture. The Lumen Conservation rooflight is different from other modern-day rooflights. It has been especially designed and crafted to ensure it remains unobtrusive and sympathetic to the external architecture of the building.

Mr Hollett continued: *"The visual impact on the exterior of the building was a major factor in our decision to choose the conservation product. It was important for us that there is a minimum amount of framework visible. Steel conservation rooflights are ideal as they provide slender unobtrusive sections."*

Lumen rooflights also benefit from a high specification of glazing including Pilkington Activ self-cleaning glass. The choice of mechanisms for the interior aspect of the rooflight means that the

Lumen Conservation rooflight will compliment both traditional and contemporary interiors.

"At first we came up against some resistance from our builder, who tried to convince us to install a cheaper, yet inferior alternative to Lumen, said Mr Hollett. "We simply were not interested, as we understood the value of paying a little more in the short-term for much greater cost and energy efficiencies in the long run.

"Opting for the Lumen product not only gave us the quality look and feel we were so desperate to achieve, but has also improved the value of our home."

For further information on the Lumen conservation rooflight and benefits to your home contact Nick Crooks on 0845 050 8746 or visit www.lumenrooflight.co.uk

About Lumen

The Lumen range of rooflights includes designs for conservation and contemporary projects for both pitched and flat roof applications. Lumen rooflights are manufactured to an industry leading standard and incorporate a wide range of Pilkington glazing, including self clean Activ. Manufactured in the UK to ISO9001:2008 and available in a range of standard or bespoke sizes.