

BUYERS' GUIDE

ROOF WINDOWS

Want to let in more light and add ventilation to your new extension or loft conversion? Here's all you need to know before you invest

Words: **Yvette Murrell**

Built into the roof of your home, whether a loft conversion or a pitched ceiling as part of a new extension to an existing space, roof windows can provide much-needed natural light and airflow where standard glazing may not be a practical option. Installed in places where the pitch is at an angle of between 15 and 90 degrees, you have several factors to consider when choosing your new designs. These include thinking about what the room will be used for, how large the space is, and which added functions are possible within your budget. For example, you may want obscure glazing for privacy if it is to be fitted in a bathroom – and planning regulations say you must have this type of glass in all side-facing windows from the first floor upwards. Additionally, you may also want electric controls for hard-to-reach windows or those in large spaces.

Buying tips

It is important to be able to visualise how your space will look once the windows are installed before purchasing. If you are working with an architect, they will likely create CAD sketches to demonstrate the final result. Alternatively, many brands now have planning tools online – Velux's Daylight Visualiser app, for example – which can help you determine how much glazing you need. When shopping around, ensure you take daily operation into consideration, too. You may want to be able to open your windows manually, with an electrical system, or have them react automatically to sunlight or rain, meaning they'll close as soon as integrated sensors pick up moisture. Also don't forget about flashing – a type of waterproofing surround – which protects and increases the longevity of your chosen windows and helps insulate the room. This is usually sold separately in kits. Many companies can also include blinds at an extra cost.

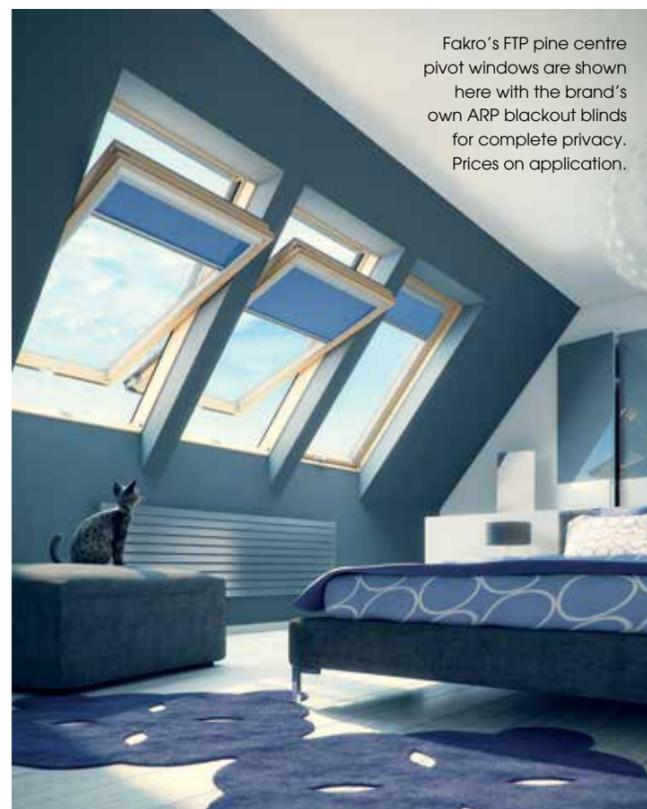
Design decisions

Most pitched roof windows are opened on a centre pivot, but you can have top-hung or fixed designs too. Interior framing is as much to do with aesthetics as it is a practical decision. For

example, white PVC has a minimalist look but is also moisture resistant – ideal for high humidity in kitchens and bathrooms – while pine or oak look cosy but may warp in moist spaces, so are better for dry living areas. Most designs come with aluminium exterior covers as standard.

Pricing

Prices start from around £200 per window. Blinds, flashing kits, and installation will cost extra. **KBB**



Fakro's FTP pine centre pivot windows are shown here with the brand's own ARP blackout blinds for complete privacy. Prices on application.

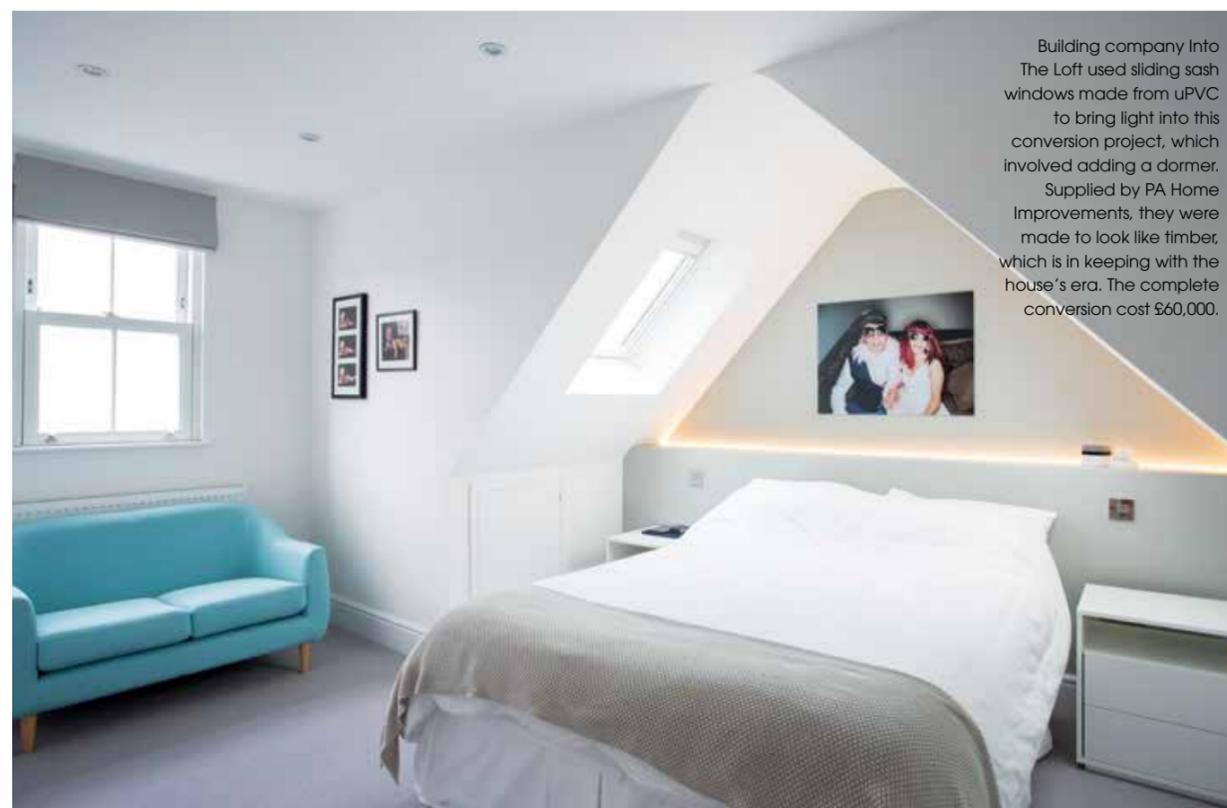


EXPERT ADVICE

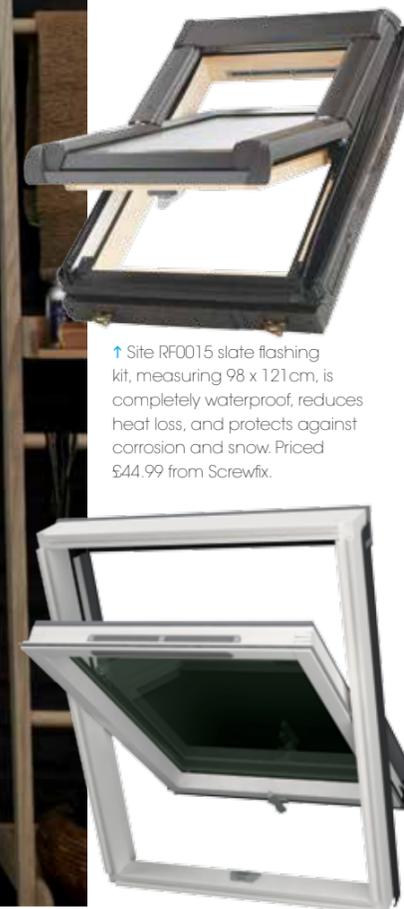
"Before going ahead with the installation of a new roof window, be sure to check with your local authority if planning permission is required for the project. *Lindsay, editor*

Velux centre pivot roof windows are suitable for roof pitches between 15 and 90 degrees and prices start from around £291.

#TRENDING
Roof windows over the bath let in light and add a bright, open feel



Building company Into The Loft used sliding sash windows made from uPVC to bring light into this conversion project, which involved adding a dormer. Supplied by PA Home Improvements, they were made to look like timber, which is in keeping with the house's era. The complete conversion cost £60,000.



↑ Site RF0015 slate flashing kit, measuring 98 x 121 cm, is completely waterproof, reduces heat loss, and protects against corrosion and snow. Priced £44.99 from Screwfix.

NEED TO KNOW

Planning PERMISSION

You don't normally need to apply for planning permission to insert windows into an existing roof, as this falls under permitted development rules. However, there are still limits and conditions for these types of alterations. Side facing ones need to be obscure-glazed and any opening has to be 1.7m above the floor. As always, it is wise to check with your local planning authority.

← Incorporating noise reduction technology and unique comfort glass, which helps prevent heat loss and keeps the warmth in, Dakea's Ultima roof windows come with a 20-year guarantee. Available in natural wood and white, starting from £309 for a 55 x 78cm fitting.



↑ The Keylite pine centre pivot roof window, available from Wickes, features Thermo Plus glazing to keep heat in. It rotates through 180 degrees and can be locked in position for easy cleaning. Priced from £236.99 for a 55 x 78cm design.

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