

TRICKLE TREAT

A roof window is often a practical and attractive solution to lighting, ventilation and fire escape or access requirements, for both residential and commercial buildings. Here John Duffin, Managing Director of UK-based Keylite Roof Windows, discusses the considerations for a local authority specifier when looking at the installation of a roof window for either a new build or refurbishment project.

Enabling developers to create additional room in a structure, a roof window presents an invaluable solution for space-saving residential and commercial building designs. Having made the decision to install a roof window, there are several considerations facing the local authority specifier - regulations and advisory notices - that can present something of a minefield. By following the right guidance, and partnering with a local roof window manufacturer, this need not be the case.

The first consideration is the energy performance of all building components, not least the windows which play a core part in the retention or release of energy from any structure. Under the umbrella of the European Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD), the UK's current building regulations; specifically Part F and Part L; set out the requirements for ventilation of windows and the energy performance of each component that contributes to the U-values of the entire building.

Part F of the Building Regulations sets out requirements for background ventilation; which is the flow of external air into a dwelling that must be provided without opening a window and compromising the overall security of the building. In order to ensure compliance with Part F, the specifier must exercise caution in the selection of a roof window that can offer the appropriate level of background ventilation for each room – not all roof windows satisfy this requirement. Of course – any window can fulfil the requirements of this legislation if it is left open, but this is not an option for ensuring the security of the building. A major feature to look for when selecting a roof window design is the presence of a trickle ventilator, as outlined in the Energy Saving Trust's Good Practice Guide 268. Keylite Roof Windows have a ventilation flap which is specifically designed to meet the requirements of Part F. The ergonomically designed control handle provides simple and comfortable opening of both the window and the ventilation flap, with a built-in dust and insect filter that ensures only clean air passes into the room. The Keylite Roof Window design will enable the user to open or close the trickle ventilator, to provide background ventilation, while the roof window itself remains closed and locked at all times.

Using a roof window with a built-in trickle ventilator not only means that the building remains secure, but by keeping the roof window closed it also ensures that the window unit performs to its optimum energy performance level. Part L of the building regulations requires that fuel is conserved in the building by ensuring heat losses are limited. As standard, Keylite offers one of the most thermally efficient roof windows available in the market. The Keylite Thermal range offers a u-value of 1.4w/m²k. As a reputable manufacturer Keylite offers an additional range of different variants within the glazing unit; which include triple-glazing and self-cleaning glass.

Different applications carry different requirements for a roof window. For example, in hospitals the hygienic properties of Keylite Integral Blind Roof Windows, where the blind is located within the double-glazing cavity, provides the solution of a roof window equipped with a blind that is 'maintenance-free'. Also; Keylite Fire Escape/Access Roof Windows open to 45 degrees, in compliance with building regulations and standards, and offer an unobstructed openable area for means of escape from (and access to) a building. Similarly in schools, remote electric operation of roof windows enables the user to open or close all configurations of roof windows at the touch of a button. Meanwhile, rain sensors on roof windows offer social housing developers the ultimate in home technology; with roof windows that automatically shut to prevent internal moisture damage due to rain.

A roof window is an attractive solution for many types of domestic and commercial glazing requirements. By sourcing from a reliable and trusted supplier, local authorities can be assured that they have achieved compliance with the relevant building regulations and guidance notices, while meeting the individual needs of the application for a roof window that is tailored to the requirements.

For further information on roof window ventilation, thermal variants, electric operation, and fire escape/access roof windows visit www.keylite.co.uk or call Keylite on 01283 200150.

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