



Climate change: How timber frame homes can make a positive contribution

The UK has been shaken recently by the severity and frequency of flooding and freak weather events and, as a result, the debate on the effects of climate change has been given added urgency.

A consensus is emerging that severe weather patterns will become the norm, with summer days hotter than ever and mild winters characterized by rain and dampness, though sudden cold snaps should not be ruled out.

As the building industry struggles to adapt to changing conditions, it is becoming clear that timber frame construction of houses is one of the key requirements for a changing built environment.

Timber frame is not new. One of the oldest buildings in the UK is a timber panelled church dating from the 11th century. Timber, properly treated and maintained, has a track record of coping with the most extreme natural conditions, from hot, tropical environments to the deep cold winters of the northern hemisphere.

The key contribution of timber frame homes to the climate change challenge is the remarkable thermal efficiency they offer. Because they offer precision construction and excellent insulation qualities, they require far less fuel to heat and stay warmer longer once they are heated.

Wood is also an organic material, creating none of the carbon footprint of energy-intensive brick and block manufacture. It is renewable and non-toxic and timber frame manufacturers source their raw material from sustainable forests.

As the UK Timber Frame Association points out, a typical 100 square metre two storey detached timber frame house built to the latest building regulations contains up to six cubic metres more wood than the equivalent masonry house. This means that every timber frame home built saves about four tonnes of carbon dioxide – the equivalent of driving for 14,000 miles.

More than 300 million tonnes of carbon dioxide would have been saved if every home built since 1945 had been timber frame.

Scotframe, a company proud not only of its product, but also of the fact that it is making a positive contribution to the challenge of climate change, aims always to be at the forefront of product quality and innovation in timber frame.

It operates across the UK and Ireland from its bases in Inverurie near Aberdeen, Cumbernauld near Glasgow, and Hillsborough in Northern Ireland, and employs over 200 people. Current turnover is in excess of £35m.

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