

Window of Opportunity

WINDOWS ARE CENTRAL TO THE LOOK AND FEEL OF YOUR HOME, AND VERY MUCH ITS 'EYES'. FOLLOW OUR GUIDE TO PERIOD STYLING, VINTAGE CHIC, RESTORATION AND REPLACING TO GET THE LOOK THAT'S JUST RIGHT FOR YOU

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Whether you have a period property or a more contemporary home, windows are key to creating a characterful look. But they're also one of the biggest expenses when renovating a property, so it's essential to make the right decisions when restoring or replacing them. Specialist companies can help restore sash windows or create exquisite replicas of period designs. More modern window frames made of metal or UPVC can be given a stylish vintage look with the right accessories and finishes.

There's lots to think about regarding authenticity, design and cost, but if you take your time and make careful decisions you can ensure your windows will look amazing and last for many years to come.

Restoration

If you want to hang onto your existing period windows, it's often possible to have the timber frames restored rather than invest in expensive new replacements. Period windows – particularly those from the Georgian era – have glass with unique ripples and imperfections which give a wonderful sense of character to a room. Specialist restorers can repair sections of timber through the use of traditional

splicing techniques and the application of epoxy resins to create draught-free windows with improved insulation.

Restoration work can usually be carried out on site and costs upwards of £400 for a typical Victorian sash window. Sash cords can also be replaced and the pulley mechanism repaired to create a smooth rise and fall for windows which have become difficult to open.

To Consider

- Repair tends to be less expensive than replacement but do take specialist advice to determine whether your existing windows are suitable for restoration.
- Advances in modern weatherproof paints means that maintenance of period windows is now relatively easy with a repaint only being required once every ten years or so.

Suppliers

- The Sash Window Workshop, sashwindow.com, 01344 868668 – for expert restoration of period windows.
- Ventrolla, ventrolla.co.uk, 0800 378278 – for the repair of sash windows, including a specialist sealing system which claims to virtually eliminate draughts and rattles.
- Sash Window Preservation, sashwindowpreservation.co.uk, 01603 908252 – for period window repair across London and the South East.



Classic windows add charm and character to any space.



These well-kept Edwardian windows give this house real kerb appeal.

Replacement

Weather damage or years of neglect can mean that you have no option but to replace the windows in your home. As sad as it is to get rid of original features, there are many specialist companies which can provide impressive replica Georgian, Edwardian or Victorian-style versions. Ready-made timber windows are the most cost-effective, but if you have unusual-shaped window openings or a particularly quirky building you may need to opt for bespoke, made-to-measure pieces.

UPVC sash windows are a viable alternative to traditional timber and cost significantly less. However, they are likely to have a shorter lifespan than well-maintained wooden sash and they have the potential to devalue a period property. Expect to pay from £1200 for a pair of traditional timber sash windows and from £800 for UPVC.

To Consider

- Building regulations can make it hard to recreate truly accurate period replicas if there is a requirement for sealed unit glazing. Restoration may be a better option in this case.
- There may be structural implications in removing a window frame so make sure you always use a reputable, FENSA-registered contractor when replacing windows.

Suppliers

- Westbury Windows & Joinery, westburyjoinery.com, 01245 326510 – for replica traditional box sash windows.
- The Rose Collection, sashwindowsuk.com, 01234 712657 – for UPVC replacement sash windows.
- The Heritage Window Company, theheritagewindowcompany.co.uk, 0800 8401508 – for the replacement of period metal windows and doors.



This replacement, Georgian-style window, really pops with the black wall and yellow door.



Plastic Windows

If you've inherited UPVC windows in your home, all is not lost in terms of creating a period feel. Internal window frames can be 'aged' with the use of specialist paints to achieve a crackle glaze finish. Or why not replicate historic window features by adding leading strip detailing to create a Gothic look or adhesive glazing bars to give a more traditional appearance? You can also add interest with frosted glass film and window stickers which can lift boring windows and create an individual look.

To Consider

- Don't forget to lightly sand your window frames before applying a UPVC primer and then painting with the finish of your choice.
- If you end up with condensation in one of your UPVC units there's no need to replace the whole window. Specialist contractors such as Crystal Clear Window Works, condensationinwindows.co.uk, can clear condensation with a one-off home visit.

Suppliers

- B&Q, diy.com, 0333 0143098 – for paint products such as Rust-Oleum Crackle which creates an aged appearance.
- Regalead, regalead.co.uk, 0161 946 1164 – for adhesive lead strips which can be applied to any window.
- Brume, brume.co.uk, 01364 73090 – for frosted and decorative window film and stickers.

Plastic windows can be made to look older with clever styling, paintwork and older fittings.

(opposite page) Stained glass window elevates a room.

(this page) Old shutters add instant character.



Shutters

Shutters are becoming increasingly popular as an alternative to curtains or blinds and are a great way to inject some European style into your home. Café style shutters which only cover the lower half of a window are particularly suited to street level rooms because they achieve privacy while still allowing plenty of light to flood in. And full height shutters can create a near blackout effect making them perfect for bedrooms. Vintage and antique shutters can be sourced from salvage yards across the country and new, bespoke shutters can be ordered in a variety of materials from MDF to teak.

To Consider

- Shutters may not work well with UPVC windows because the window handles protrude too far to achieve a close fit. Check first, and if this is the case mount shutters on either side of the window.
- It's best to opt for a professional measuring option when choosing a provider for new shutters. Mistakes can prove expensive.

Suppliers

- English Salvage, englishsalvage.co.uk, 01568 616205 – for reclaimed shutters from a variety of periods and in a range of styles.
- Plantation Shutters, plantation-shutters.co.uk, 020 8871 9222 – for made-to-measure new and reproduction wooden shutters.
- UK Architectural Heritage, uk-heritage.co.uk, 0845 644 9051 – for reclaimed and antique shutters.

Feature Windows

Create a spectacular statement by installing a stained glass window. Popular in Victorian and Edwardian times, particularly in the glazed section of a front door, stained glass is a great way to introduce colour, character and texture. Original pieces are available from salvage yards or eBay, and bespoke designs can be commissioned from stained glass artists such as Helen Whittaker (helenwhittakerart.com).

If you have existing stained glass, which has seen better days, it can be brought back to life by a specialist restorer. *See our piece on page 28*

To Consider

- Replacing a window with stained glass will significantly reduce light levels in a room. This means it lends itself well to a hallway but might not be best suited to a kitchen.
- It may sound obvious, but don't forget that stained glass will obstruct the view!

Suppliers

- Steve Sherriff Stained Glass Specialists, lead-windows.co.uk, 01202 882208 – for the restoration of stained glass and the fitting of new leaded windows.
- Lassco, lassco.co.uk, 01844 277188 – for salvaged stained glass, including some from demolished churches.
- Goddard & Gibbs, goddardandgibbs.co.uk, 01249 44 55 18 – for the conservation and repair of existing stained glass and the commissioning of new pieces. ➔



‘What better way to inject some historic charm into your window treatments than with vintage or antique accessories?’

Curtains

Curtains provide an excellent way to transform your home and create an instant hit of vintage style. Great value vintage fabric can easily be found on etsy and eBay then you can either make the curtains up yourself or employ a local curtain maker to do it for you. It's also worth searching for local 'curtain exchange' outlets where you can pick up great quality second-hand curtains for a very reasonable price. Or try vintage lace for an ethereal, romantic look. See our *Undecorating* feature on page 50 for more ideas.

To Consider

- Try to either match the period of the fabric with your home or go for a complete contrast. For example, vintage curtains from the seventies could work well in a new build property but might appear themed in a bungalow from the same era.
- Don't be afraid to go bold with your curtain choice, especially if the rest of your décor is quite pared back.

Suppliers

- eBay, ebay.co.uk – for a range of great value vintage and antique finds.
- F&P Interiors, fabricsandpapers.com, 01273 495500 – for classic fabric brands such as Morris & Co and Liberty.
- Oxfam, oxfam.org.uk/shop – for an impressive selection of vintage curtains which can be bought online.

Accessories

What better way to inject some historic charm into your window treatments than with vintage accessories? Antique or reproduction window handles, stays and hinges can complete a period interior or add character to a more modern home. Victorian-style wrought iron window latches can even be fitted to UPVC windows to create a period vibe. Reclaimed curtain poles, finials and tie backs in wood, brass and cast iron can be sourced from a variety of reclamation yards across the UK.



To Consider

- Think about how you are going to attach any vintage window accessories to the wall. A Victorian brass tie back, for example, will need screws which will match the finish and style of the piece.
- If you've decided to invest in restoring or replacing sash windows it's also worth sourcing original locks and catches to complete the period look.

Suppliers

- Jim Lawrence, jim-lawrence.co.uk, 01473 826956 – for beautifully crafted, British-made window latches, stays and sash window handles.
- Broughtons, broughtons.com, 0116 234 1888 – for a great range of antique-style window fittings in wrought iron, brass and steel.
- Cox's Architectural, coxsarchitectural.co.uk, 01608 652505 – for a variety of reclaimed curtain poles, finials and tie backs. 📍

Pretty, vintage curtains add old-world charm to this window.