

The sash renaissance

It's one of those products they got right the first time – a timeless, a stylish, quintessentially English design that immediately evokes the elegance of centuries past. Now we are seeing a renaissance of the sash window and its a style that Olney fabricator Roseview is passionate about. For forty years, the secret to Roseview's success has been its scholarly knowledge of sash window history, and respect for classic design

The very first sash windows appeared in the early sixteenth century, born as much out of necessity as style – streets were narrow, and windows that opened outwards reduced the available space even further.

The product's iconic vertical-sliding mechanism, therefore, came about as a space-saving measure – but it was one that presented a number of design obstacles that needed to be overcome.

Once opened, the sliding sash had to be kept up. Initially, this was achieved with crude wooden pegs or wedges. By the seventeenth century, these had been replaced with more sophisticated weights and pulleys.

But if the earliest sash windows were very practical, it wasn't long before they were eagerly seized on as both a fashion statement and status symbol. At the time, glass was an incredibly valuable commodity, sometimes more expensive than gold, and windows became a way of showing your wealth.

In the beginning, technological limitations meant sash windows could only feature very small glass panes and had to have thick glazing bars. But as time went on, and both glass-making and joinery techniques improved, the panes became larger, and the supporting bars became slimmer and more elegant.

By the Edwardian period, when sash windows were widespread, they were often huge, stretching from floor to ceiling. The iconic sash horn was introduced to cope with these much heavier panes.

In the mid-twentieth century, however, tastes and priorities changed. For a time, sash windows fell out of fashion – and as focus shifted to mass-produced white PVC-U, far cheaper, easier to manufacture and simpler to maintain than timber, almost three-quarters of the UK's sash windows were lost.

But the 1980s brought the beginnings of a sash window renaissance – thanks in no small part to Roseview. While PVC-U had quickly become the norm in the new build sector, that still left thousands of historic buildings with ageing original timber sash windows that needed replacing.

Conventional white plastic windows couldn't cut it on the most historically sensitive projects – which led to the collaboration between Roseview, PVC-U systems company Rehau and London's Peabody Trust that resulted in the UK's, if not the world's, first PVC-U sash window.

Heavily involved at the time was Willie Kerr, then a technical engineer, now Roseview's managing director. "That first PVC-U sash window product was really ground-breaking," Kerr says. "We worked incredibly closely with the Peabody Trust to emulate the kind of

timber sash windows found in several London boroughs down to the finest details.

"It had the slim meeting rail, deep bottom rail, Georgian bars and even an authentic-looking putty line effect – a remarkable achievement, especially bearing in mind this was back in 1985.

"That was a seminal moment for us because it laid the foundation of the design philosophy we've carried forward ever since. Today, we approach every sash window we produce with the same detail-is-all attitude we applied to that very first prototype.

"Where some companies are satisfied with something that looks close enough to a vintage timber original, we strive for something that's identical – right down to the run-through sash horns, the putty lines, the full mechanical joints and so on.

"That's meant we've had to take risks, and, on many occasions, go it alone. When our systems companies innovated as far as they were willing to go, but we wanted to push the envelope even further, we started manufacturing ourselves. We produce windows that are based on Eurocell and Rehau profiles, but totally our own."

Today, the Eurocell-based, specification-friendly Charisma Rose, the conservation-sensitive Rehau-based Heritage Rose, and the G-Award-winning Ultimate Rose are considered the pinnacle of vintage-look PVC-U – but where some fabricators would be thoroughly satisfied with those achievements, Roseview's focus is on pushing boundaries even further.

Sales director Richard Burrells says: "We're in business to make sash windows – the highest performing, most authentic sash windows available anywhere in the UK, backed by the best customer service in our industry. And that means that in 2018, just like every other year, our aim will be making Britain's best PVC-U sash window products even better." □



Willie Kerr

www.roseview.co.uk

Three decades on...

Halo fabricator Masterframe is celebrating 30 years in business with a significant investment in new welding technology. The Essex-based firm specialises in PVC-U windows in authentic sash styles and won a 2017 National Fenestration award for being 'Timber Alternative Window Company' of the year, using Masterframe-bespoke Halo profile to produce box sash systems.

2018 sees Masterframe celebrate 30 years in business and bring a new welding solution to the market.

Masterframe replicates the look of mortise and tenon joints found in original timber box sash windows using a welded construction. The company patented this technique in 2005, where butt joints are vertical rather than horizontal, to offer an alternative to timber windows that combines authentic style with modern technology and performance.

Carol Slade, sales and operations director says: "This method of construction gives the perfect look whilst ensuring that the profiles are perfectly sealed with no open chambers. Initially we began producing the corners for our windows by hand, before commissioning a welder that could achieve it in 2016 and registering the Timberweld trademark. Now, in the same year we celebrate 30 years in business, we're thrilled to have invested in a bespoke four-head welder for even greater productivity, accuracy and consistency. It is the most complicated piece of equipment we have ever purchased and it took around a week to commission and programme the software to run the welder, connect the machine to our existing SV 430 corner cleaner and train our operatives.



"Our customers benefit from sash windows with perfectly sealed corners that are manufactured using a state-of-the-art welding machine and the patented Timberweld method of corner construction. As we hold the Timberweld licence for vertical sliders, we know that no other VS manufacturer would be able to offer customers this exceptional finish." □

www.masterframe.co.uk

A member of the Steel Window Association has manufactured and installed bespoke double glazed W20 frames for the refurbishment of a former brewery building in South London, with the replacement fenestration fulfilling various technical as well as planning requirements.

West Leigh carried out the £130K contract on the Plough Brewery, Wandsworth Road, for Marston Properties working closely with specialist restoration architect, McDaniel Woolf in order to satisfy the local conservation officers.

West Leigh produced a total of 80 made-to-measure windows, up to 2200 mm tall with a semi-circular heads feature, mimicking the appearance of those believed to have originally been installed when the brewery was built back in 1868.

To achieve improved energy performance and to cut traffic noise from the Wandsworth Road, 4-6-4 sealed units were fitted, featuring a soft coat Low-E inner leaf and Krypton filling. This offered a centre pane U-value of 1.2 W/m² K and full compliance with building regulation requirements. The frames were powder coated RAL 7021 black grey. □



www.steelwindow-association.co.uk