



Our Self-Build Column

Passivhaus- Is Truth Stranger than Fiction?

From notions of windows welded shut and huge build costs, there are many Passivhaus myths circulating so we wanted to separate fact from fiction.

Passivhaus buildings are boxy: When the standard was first introduced many of the original buildings were angular and rather similar in style. However, today the style gap between Passivhaus and non-Passivhaus is far narrower and it's likely that you would struggle to spot the difference. At Beattie Passive we can incorporate any size, shape or design of building into a Passivhaus home, from a traditional cottage to a contemporary beach front villa.



It's too difficult to design: Passivhaus design is not complicated but it's important to work with an experienced Passivhaus company that use Passivhaus certified products. With the knowledge and experience that we have gathered, we design Passivhaus very simply and efficiently.

It costs so much more than traditional build: Some parts are more expensive that's true but on average, building Passive will only cost around 5% more than a traditional build. However, you will save around 90% on average with energy savings, meaning Passivhaus owners are saving money each year.

Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery (MVHR) costs more to run than what it saves: As long as your home meets Passivhaus standards and the airtightness of the building reaches a certain level (approx. 1.5 air changes per hour), it's been proven that the amount of energy saved and the cost of that energy saving is far greater than the cost of running the MVHR. Furthermore, MVHR can help with allergies, asthma, and even strong cooking smells.

You can't use renewable energy: You certainly can and it will probably help you cut costs even further. With solar panels, you could deliver half, if not all, of your hot water requirements for the year. Anything you don't use you can sell back to the grid.

You can never open a window: You can open all the windows in a Passivhaus, but you may not need to. As your home will have a MVHR system you will have continuous fresh air circulated around your home, so there is less need to open windows to remove stale air.



You can't have a Wood burner: Given its popularity, most people will be delighted to know that you can indeed have a Wood burner. You can have one in every room if you'd like. With Passivhaus, you certainly don't need one and you may get too hot when the fire is burning as the house is so well insulated. But if it's your dream to have a wood burner, Beattie Passive are happy to incorporate that into the design. And if you get too hot, you can always open the windows...

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