

Energy saving issues addressed

NEW energy performance certificates will be compulsory as part of buying a house and architect, Paul McAlister gives his advice and answers your questions.

"As an architect I have noticed clients' growing concerns regarding their buildings' energy efficiency. The primary motivation for these concerns are, a wish to preserve our environment, to combat reliance on fossil fuels and decrease our carbon footprints." On the other hand, when presented with the seemingly exponential rise in fuel bills, energy efficiency becomes more than just an abstract idea." In line with these growing concerns, the introduction of compulsory energy performance certificates (EPC's) in Northern Ireland completes the obligation placed by an ED directive on all member states to help improve efficiency.

What are Energy Performance Certificates?

The EPC is similar to the certificates which are currently supplied with household appliances such as refrigerators. It provides each building with two ratings from A (very efficient) to G (very inefficient). The first is based on the performance of the building and its services (i.e. heating and lighting) while the second assesses the building's environmental impact in terms of its carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. The certificate also provides a list of recommendations on how to improve your building's rating tailored to its size, age and location.

Why do I need an EPC?

Energy performance certificates will be a legal requirement for anyone wishing to build, sell or rent a property. Also, the certificate is designed to make it much easier to compare the efficiency of different buildings. High efficiency translates into low running costs so if your property achieves a good rating, this will become a unique selling point, making it much more attractive to potential buyers. The penalty for failing to make an EPC available can be anywhere in the region of £500 - £5,000, depending on the value of the property:

When do they come into effect?

EPC's will be compulsory for all house sales in Northern Ireland from the end of June. They will be required for all new constructions from the end of September and all rentals and non-domestic property sales by the end of the year.



The Barn Studio
64a Drumnacanny Road
Portadown Co Armagh BT635LX

t. 028 3835 5111 f. 028 3835 5112
e. info@pmcarchitects.com
w. www.pmcarchitects.com



apm

RIBA 
Chartered Practice

How do I improve my rating?

One of the most effective means of reducing your growing utility bills is to replace old boilers with new, more efficient ones this can cut heating costs by some 40 per cent. Fitting double or triple glazing can effectively reduce heat loss while cutting down outside noise levels. Fitting insulation or lagging to hot water pipes and tanks, insulating loft spaces, filling gaps in floorboards and insulating any unfilled cavity walls can all contribute to dramatically improving your efficiency and therefore increasing your EPC rating. It will not be possible to achieve an A rated home without employing various sustainable technologies such as **rainwater harvesting** and solar water heating.

An architect will be able to provide you with advice on how to build your home to achieve an A-B rating.

Paul is the founder of Paul McAlister Architects based in a converted Barn near Portadown. The practice has vast experience in designing bespoke homes, developments, renovation projects, and energy conscious design. You can contact the practice by email at info@pmcarchitects.com.



The Barn Studio
64a Drumnacanvy Road
Portadown Co Armagh BT635LX

t. 028 3835 5111 f. 028 3835 5112
e. info@pmcarchitects.com
w. www.pmcarchitects.com



apm

RIBA 
Chartered Practice