



SARAH LONSDALE HOW TO BE GREEN AND STAY SANE

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Want to trim your bills, update your home and do your bit for the planet? Sarah tests the latest 'eco' products and sorts the fads from the finds. This week: a Victorian house enters a new era

Number 19 Sterndale Road, Hammersmith, is an unlikely place for a revolution. A terrace built more than 100 years ago, there are hundreds of thousands of homes like it in the Victorian suburbs that encircle our cities: elegant bay sash windows, split-mezzanine landings, airy reception rooms, ghostly bills: a design classic built in the days of coal fires and long Johns.

But the changes taking place behind the London stock brick walls of this Victorian terrace are revolutionary. Just off fashionable Brook Green with its coffee bars and boutiques, this is prime London residential territory with six-bedroom family houses selling for £1.5 million-£1.9 million.

They have fuel bills to match, too. Typical combined gas and electricity bills for houses in band E (on the Energy Performance Certificate rating) in this street are nearly £4,000 per year. This is where we get back to the revolution: until recently, the annual fuel bills of 19 Sterndale

Road were £3,810 and the house, like most period homes in England, was in band E. Today, those fuel bills are down by over £2,600 to just over £1,000 per year and the house has shot up to band B, with better energy efficiency than most new homes; its carbon emissions are now 78 per cent lower than they were.

But alongside mahogany banisters and solid wood floors are hi-tech energy-saving systems built into the house:

Internal Celotex insulation on the walls, Isonat high-density hemp fibre insulation between all the internal walls, Optiroc thermally efficient clay balls under the lower ground floor, a Tadpole fitted to the boiler, which makes the heating system more efficient, recycled glass kitchen worktops and a shallow bath, which saves 30 litres per bath. Based on four people taking five baths each a week, that's a saving of more than 30,000 litres of water a year.

Project manager Andy

Tooky, of Buily Garner, said it took £50,000 to raise it from an E to a B rating. "Interestingly though, it only cost £15,000 to raise it from an E to a C rating, with 60 per cent carbon emission reductions. The main bulk of the cost was in the renewable energy add-ons like solar panels, which lifted it into a B rating." The house shows how owners can "retro-green" existing homes. It is an example of what can be done under the Government's new Household Energy Management Strategy announced this

WHAT DID THE TRICK

Products used in the Sterndale Road makeover:

Boiler Tadpole £268.10 for supply and fit, from tadpoleenergy.com

'Lowline' bath £311, from inspired-bathrooms.co.uk

Optiroc lightweight expanded clay aggregate about £5.50 per 15kg bag, from most builders' merchants

Isonat £11.50 per square metre from www.naturalinsulations.co.uk

Celotex £21 per square metre from most builders' merchants

Recycled glass work surface from £350-£400 per linear metre from resilica.com



month. The scheme, which will involve a new pay-as-you-save financing plan, to allow home owners to spread the cost of their upgrades over 25 years, aims to retro-green seven million homes in the next 10 years.

The scheme has carrots, and, in the future, sticks. The carrots are lower bills, easy-to-manage costs and a new consideration for homebuyers; carbon appeal. A study by the Energy Saving Trust, which surveyed 2090 home owners, found that 53 per cent of householders would be willing to pay extra - up to £3,350 more - for a home with greener features. More than three quarters agreed that having a "poor" rating on their Energy Performance Certificate could lead to buyers haggling on the asking price.

The World Wildlife Fund UK, current chair of the lobby group Existing Homes Alliance, is part of a growing consensus of green lobbyists wanting to make it compulsory for buyers of F and G-rated homes to improve them before they can resell. Other measures being discussed include either council tax rebates for those in high-rated properties, or higher council tax bills for those in lower-rated ones.

Dr Brenda Boardman, of the Oxford Environmental Change Institute, is one of the first policy advisers to call for mandatory improvements to poor-scoring homes before owners can resell. "We've got an enormous task to reduce carbon emissions from our homes by 2020. Home owners will have really felt the need to find ways of reducing fuel bills after this winter," she says.

Pedro Guertler, of the Association for the Conservation of Energy, says that as a nation of DIYers and home improvers, we will be more than up to the task.

