

British engineers slam home wind turbines as 'eco-bling'

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Installers for Namaste Solar connect solar panels to the roof of a home on in 2009 in Boulder, Colorado. In Great Britain, installing wind turbines and solar panels in people's homes is "eco-bling" that will not help meet Britain's targets on cutting carbon emissions, engineers warned Wednesday.

Installing wind turbines and solar panels in people's homes is "eco-bling" that will not help meet Britain's targets on cutting carbon emissions, engineers warned Wednesday.

In a new report by the Royal Academy of Engineering (RAE), Professor Doug King said it was better to adapt buildings to make them more energy efficient than try to offset energy use with "on-site renewable energy generation."

The leader of Britain's main opposition Conservative party, David

Cameron, is among those who have installed [wind turbines](#), fixing one onto the roof of his home in the plush west London district of Notting Hill.

"Eco-bling is a term I coined to describe unnecessary renewable energy visibly attached to the outside of poorly designed buildings," King told the Daily Mail newspaper ahead of the report's publication.

"It achieves little or nothing. If you build a building that is just as energy-hungry as every other building, and you put a few wind turbines and [solar panels](#) on the outside that addresses a few percent of that building's [energy consumption](#), you have not achieved anything.

"It's just about trying to say to the general public that 'I'm being good, I'm putting renewable energy on my building'."

In existing buildings, which account for the vast majority of those in use in 2050, King suggested low cost alternatives such as installing thermostats on central heating systems or using low-energy [light bulbs](#).

The report said it was also vital to engineer buildings to minimise energy demands in the first place, including using masonry to store heat or ensuring a good use of natural light in homes and offices.

"Before renewable energy generation is even considered it is vital to ensure that buildings are as energy efficient as possible, otherwise the potential benefits are simply wasted in offsetting unnecessary consumption," it said.

However, it warned a lack of skills in understanding [energy use](#) in buildings meant the construction industry would struggle to meet government targets to make all new buildings "zero carbon" by 2020.

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