



"Make us 1 of your 3 Quotes"

Buyer's Guide

The no-nonsense guide from Realistic to help you get the right Conservatory, Glazed & Solid Roof extension for your home.



"Indispensable advice when buying a new Conservatory"

Planning Permission: Unravel the planning process

Material Differences: Find out what's best for your property

Plus: Designs, styles & ventilation



Welcome.

Our guide will help you buy the conservatory, glazed solid roof extension or orangery of your dreams. We aim to make this a pleasurable experience for you, and to give you the straight advice you need to safely steer through the decision-making and buying process.

Our buyer's guide has been compiled using our company's extensive knowledge and the expertise of Ultraframe, the market leaders in the industry for over 30 years.

This guide will take you through the many products available; give you an understanding of what to consider before you make your purchase; help you to know what to look for and what to ask; and how to make sure you get the room you need, want and that is right for your particular property. -

Ryan Barrett, owner of Realistic.



First class reputation

Realistic are an accredited Ultraframe Approved Installers in association with Which?Trusted Traders. As a company we work closely with Ultraframe to provide our customers with their high-quality products and services at competitive prices.

Since forming in 2009, we have worked hard to build a first-class reputation for surveying, recommending and installing conservatories across the South West of England. As a family company, we are renowned for our straightforward approach, no-nonsense advice and for the excellence of our installations.

We put our customers at the heart of our business and we work hard to ensure their satisfaction from start to finish.

For a no-obligation design consultation with an experienced consultant in the comfort of your home or at one of our showrooms in Saltash, Cornwall or Wellington, Somerset, we'll arrange a chat at a time and date to suit you. In the meantime, visit our website at www.realistic.uk.com or call us on 01752 841008 or 01823 765767

Loggia UltraRoof380 LivinROOF realROOF



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“The key to getting the glazed extension of your dreams is down to detailed planning and finding a company that will work with you”

Ryan Barrett, Realistic

Materials

Let's look at the different materials on offer and some of the terminology you are likely to come across.

The main materials used for building glazed extensions are PVCu and aluminium. Both offer similar options in terms of glazing, security and the styles available.

The best approach to finding the right material for you is prepare an outline plan of what you would like your room to look like; what you want to use it for; where it might fit on your home and then take your ideas to a good supplier who will be able to help you find the right product to suit your requirements and, most importantly, your budget.

One major point to consider is how the double glazing industry is structured. Most glazed extension companies started as window and door companies that then expanded to offer 'roofs' – put a roof over normal windows and doors and you have a glazed extension. Or do you? Many companies would have you believe that you can put a roof on PVCu windows and doors and 'hey presto!' you have a conservatory. This, however, is not the case. PVCu windows are made to sit under house lintels and are not load bearing. If you don't get this essential part of the project right, you will run the risk of future leaks, bowing windows and doors that do not close properly.

Roofs are supplied by separate manufacturers to sit on top of different windows and doors frames. This should offer you a perfectly good solution, but it is always worth understanding exactly what products you are buying, where they are being made and what standards they conform to.



The PVCu story

PVCu (un-plasticised polyvinyl chloride) has dominated the UK window and door market for the last 35 years and for the last 25 years it has grown to dominate the conservatory market as well. PVCu is a great building material - lightweight, highly thermally efficient, easy to maintain and cheaper than alternatives to produce.

PVCu frames have little integral strength and need to be reinforced to offer the stability needed. This reinforcement involves steel or aluminium sections being integrated into the frame. Today's PVCu frames are designed to look less bulky and offer clients a choice between modern bevelled frames and traditional sculptured edges. They are not as bulky as in years gone by.

Be warned, however. There are companies that sell conservatories made out of non-reinforced window PVCu profile, and not specifically designed steel reinforced conservatory profile. As previously mentioned, windows in your house sit under some sort of lintel, they are not manufactured to be load bearing. Conservatories and solid roof can weigh up to 37kg per square metre, leaving the frame underneath bearing the whole weight.

Aluminium

Aluminium is inherently stronger and makes an ideal material for glazed extensions, especially those that are particularly large or where they may be exposed to severe weather conditions.

Aluminium glazed extensions have a powder-coated paint finish which is a particularly durable and easy to maintain finish for both the internal and external surfaces of any conservatory or orangery. Another feature that makes aluminium very popular is that it can be extruded with very fine details so that traditional features can be built into the designs to give a more authentic appearance, which is particularly important to many UK homeowners.

Modern 'New Generation' aluminium is extremely thermally efficient as it features a 'thermal break' which effectively separates the exterior and interior surfaces to stop heat and cold crossing from outside to inside.



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Styles & Designs

The structural strength of aluminium also makes it the perfect choice for some of the more contemporary styles that are emerging, especially those that span more than a single storey.

Colours

Colour is becoming increasingly important for homeowners who want to create a distinctive look for their homes. Today you can opt to have your glazed extension in a wide range of colours. Some PVCu and aluminium systems offer the option of one colour for the internal frames and another for the external. Some systems have a 'woodgrain' effect to mimic the look of timber, although we would recommend you check the warranty for these finishes particularly carefully.

If you do decide to opt for coloured windows or doors then just remember that they can't easily be repainted and a bad colour choice can actually put off future potential buyers.



Styles & Designs

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The right type of design, for you.

Conservatories come in many different shapes, sizes and prices. The best one for you depends on how much space you have available, and the use of your new conservatory (not to mention your own preference). To help you make an informed decision, you'll see, below, some of the UK's most popular types of design.



Gable



Georgian



Lean to



Livin Roof



Orangery



'P' Shape



'T' Shape



Veranda



Victorian

Cornice Options



1 Tier



2 Tier



3 Tier



Classic



The rules to follow

Will you need planning permission, building regulation or a build over agreement? These are important questions that will need answering at the outset.

Where you site your new room and its size are very important elements of the overall planning process. Some sites will only have one place for you to build, others more and some sites will require surface and underground drains or sewers to be moved or existing house roofs to be altered. This is where dealing with a trusted supplier will save you time and money.

Planning permission

The good news is you may not need planning permission as you can perform certain types of work without needing to apply. These are called "permitted development rights". They derive from a general planning permission granted not by the local authority but by Parliament.

When your glazed extension falls within these categories then there is a good chance that you will not need planning permission. It is still a good idea to talk with a reputable supplier, who will be in a position to advise you, and take on the planning application work for you if required.



No more than half the area of land around the original house would be covered by additions or other buildings.

It's not facing or obstructing a public highway.

It's not going to be higher than the highest part of the existing roof.



Single-storey rear extension must not extend beyond the rear wall of the original house by more than three metres if an attached house or by four metres if a detached house.

The maximum height of a single-storey rear extension is four metres.

It does not include verandas, balconies or raised platforms.

Be aware that different rules apply when working on listed buildings, properties in areas of outstanding natural beauty and in heritage sites.

Always ensure you see the final written planning permission before you allow work to begin.

The rules to follow

Will you need planning permission, building regulation or a build over agreement? These are important questions that will need answering at the outset.

Building regulation

The Building Regulations are minimum standards for design, construction and alterations to virtually every building. They are developed by the Government and approved by Parliament.

The Building Regulations also contain a list of requirements that are designed to ensure minimum standards for health, safety, welfare, convenience, energy efficiency, sustainability and to prevent misuse, abuse or contamination of water supplies.

These regulations set national standards for building work, whether it be on a major new development or an extension or alterations to your home. They cover all aspects of construction, including foundations, damp-proofing, overall stability of the building, insulation, ventilation, heating, fire protection and means of escape in case of fire. They also ensure that adequate facilities for people with disabilities

are provided in certain types of building.

Building Regulations are regularly being updated, and consist of parts A-P. Below is a brief explanation of each.

This is another area to take into consideration when extending. Again, the good news for most is that glazed extensions will actually be exempt from Building Regulations if certain 'Exemption Criteria' are met with regards to its design.

If you design to have your new room open plan to the rest of the house then you will also need to comply with building regulations. Again, the best source of advice is a reputable supplier who has experience and knowledge in this area.

You can find out more information about planning and new building regulations online at the government's planning portal www.planningportal.co.uk

It has a 70% plus transparent or translucent roof.

It has been built with 50% plus glazed wall areas.

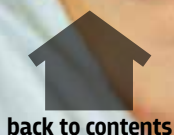
It has been built at ground level and is less than 30 square metres in floor area.

The structure must also be separated from the main house by a compliant external door.

It has a heating system that is independent with separate controls.

The installation of window glazing and electrical works comply with current building regulations.

Note: Glazed solid roof extensions DO require building regulation approval.



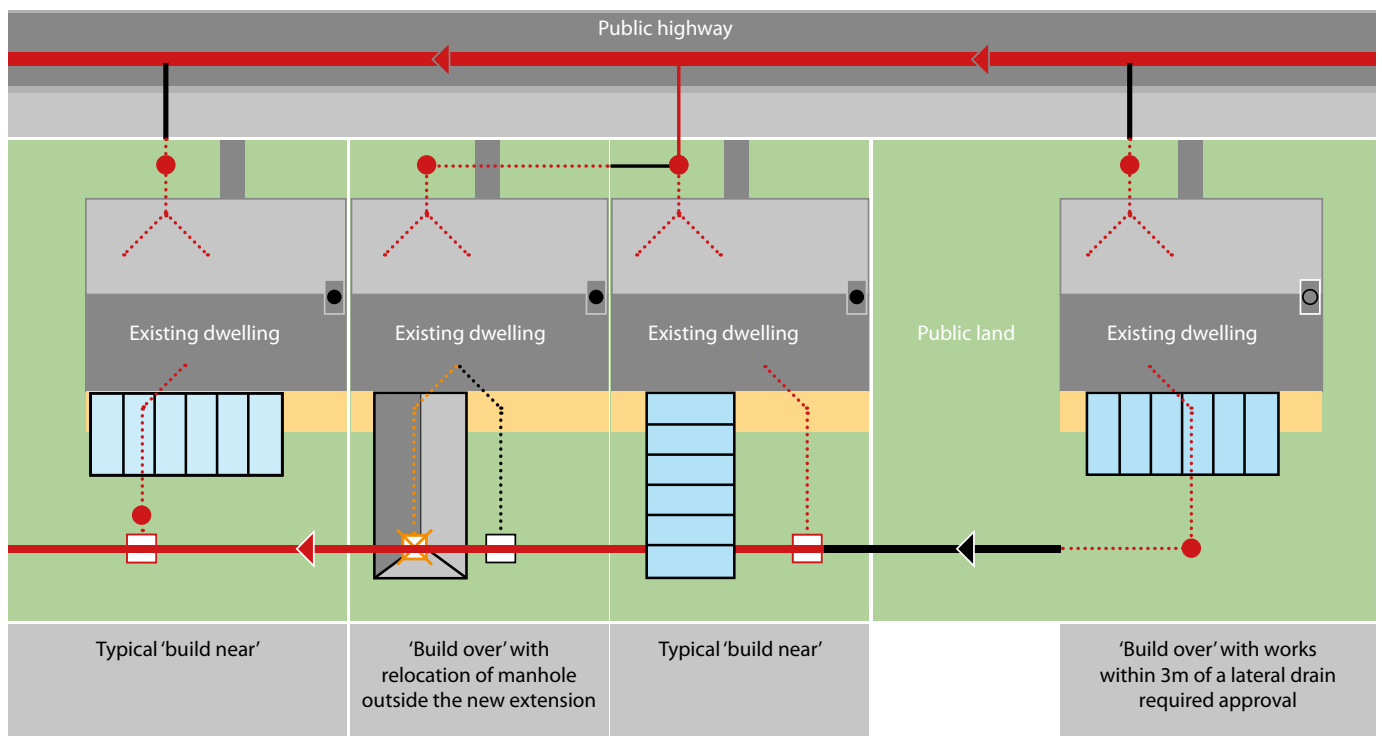
Build over agreements

I have included this section as there is much confusion as to when a build over agreement has to be applied for as it now a building regulations requirement.

All sewer pipes are public sewers except where only one property is served by the existing pipe, which is known as a drain. Drains are privately owned and maintained to the property boundary by you. Once it crosses the property boundary this pipe becomes the water board's responsibility and is known as a public lateral drain.

The water authority needs to be able to make sure that your new building work isn't going to cause damage to the sewer or restrict their ability to do remedial work. Their way of doing this is to ensure everyone building within 3m of a public sewer has their application submitted and approved by them prior to the work commencing.

Again, the best source of advice is a reputable supplier who will have completed previous build over agreements.



- Key
- Public sewer
 - Lateral drain (public)
 - Private drain
 - Public manhole
 - Private rodding eye/manhole
 - Abandoned private drain
 - Removed public manhole
 - Diverted private drain
 - New public manhole

A build over agreement is the water board's seal of approval for the building work you plan to have carried out over or near a public sewer owned by them .

It gives assurance that you have given the sewer the correct clearance from your new foundations.

It ensures that sufficient access to the sewer is maintained so they can clean or repair it if necessary.

It gives certainty of these facts to anyone looking to buy your property, should you come to sell.



Building work

It's not often as straight forward as you think.

Base works will vary from property to property and there is no set requirement when building a base for conservatories because they do not come under building regulations except in special circumstances. This is why it is crucially important for you to choose a reputable company, who are not looking to take the easy route and make short cuts when preparing your base.

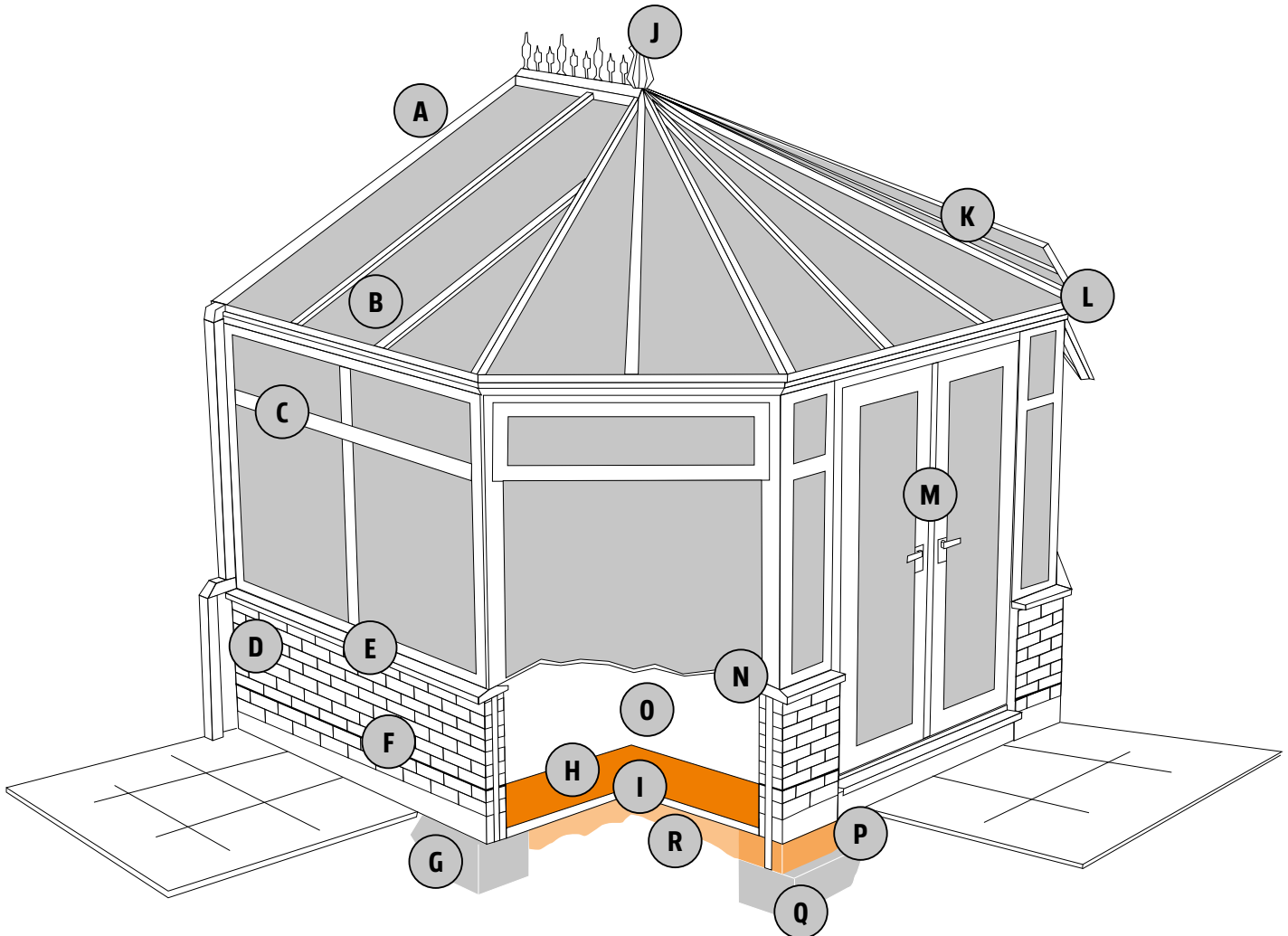
Strong, properly constructed foundations may cost more initially, but they are going to save you all manner of future headaches. Glazed extensions (except those with solid roofs) are not usually subject to planning control, so you are going to be totally reliant on the ethics of the company undertaken your building work.

It's an important point to raise that the majority of conservatory companies will manufacture the conservatory roof and frames before the base is built; they then make the unit fit on top of the base. This leads to shorter installation times and lower prices but not attention to detail. Reputable companies will want to build your base first and then send out a surveyor to measure the base. This ensures that when your conservatory roof and frames are ordered, they match the exact base dimension. .



Building work

Our illustration here shows a type of conservatory structure and how it could be made. Ensure your quotation details how each element of your glazed extension will be built - including how any existing and new drains will be dealt with. As the build progresses, inspect the site regularly to ensure you see what you expect. If you are unsure about anything at any time, ask to speak to the person in charge of your project.



- A Roof structure**
Ultraframe Classic Roof structural aluminium construction providing superior strength and thermal efficiency in conjunction with PVC-U internal finish. External powder coated colour finish options are available to match internal PVC-U colour cladding finish. Structurally checked against your Postcode to comply with locational wind and snow loadings. British Board of Agrément passed with a minimum of a 25 year life expectancy
- B Roof glazing**
Light weight Polycarbonate, Double-glazed glass sealed units, with reflective glass options - Solid Roof
- C Glazed side frames**
Comprising double-glazed sealed units for thermal efficiency with either fixed or opening windows. Decorative glass designs for opening windows and fanlights. option of full length side frames - if preferred
- D Dwarf wall option**
Double skinned with cavity insulation
- E External cills**
Mounted on external wall to support glazed side frames
- F Range of external wall finishings**
Recommend good building practice to conform to building regulations where applicable
- G Trench fill**
Optional for wall base
- H Floor insulation**
100mm polystyrene sheets. Recommend good building practice to conform to building regulations where applicable
- I Damp proof membrane**
Recommend good building practice to conform to building regulations where applicable

- J Cresting & final**
Six Authentic period Victorian or Edwardian designs available
- K Roof Ventilation**
Ultraframe patented in-built Eaves flow side frame and ridge flow ventilation Optional roof manual and electric roof vents
- L Guttering**
Attractive Marley clip to ring beam system with down-pipe. Four decorative aluminium Cornice guttering coloured options available
- M French doors, patio doors or single doors**
High security as standard complying with the recognised Police standard Secured By Design. Double glazed sealed units fitted with toughened safety glass.
- N Internal cill**
Traditional timber, tilted or alternative modern materials to bridge the cavity and provide a clean finish over the top of the internal wall
- O Concrete floor**
100mm minimum float or screed finish suitable for tiling or carpeting. Recommend good building practice to conform to building regulations where applicable
- P Concrete blockwork**
Below ground level. Optional above ground for render finish
- Q Concrete footings**
Excavated to a depth appropriate to your soil conditions. Recommend good building practice to conform to building regulations where applicable
- R Compacted aggregate**



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Know your glass

Not only is the structure important, but an understanding of the glass that's going to be used is equally so.

Safety Zone

British Standards clearly states the 'critical locations' where safety glass must be used in our homes. Apart from the roof of your glass extension, these areas are glazed doors, glazed side panels to doors and windows within 800mm of the internal floor level. There are three types of safety glass that can be used in these vulnerable areas.



Laminated glass which is actually two pieces of glass bonded together with a plastic layer between the two. This type of glass cracks on heavy impact but the pieces of glass stay in position and reduce the risk of injury.

Toughened glass which is much stronger than ordinary glass and falls into small granular pieces that are unlikely to cause serious harm when broken.

Wired safety glass has a wire mesh embedded within, meaning that it behaves like laminated glass should it be broken.

Security Zone

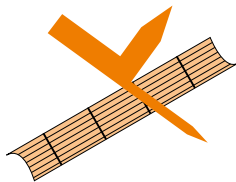
As well as protecting those who are meant to be in your home, the use of laminated glass can also help to protect your home from unwanted visitors.

Experienced companies will be able to advise you on the best arrangement for your home. This type of advice is invaluable and is one of the reasons why buying on price alone is rarely a good idea.

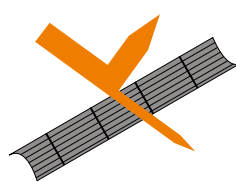
Finishing touches

Obscure glass can be used if you wish to retain more privacy from your neighbours. There are many differing options available if you would like to add decorative lead, stained glass or bevelled glass. Speak to your designer who will be able to advise you further.

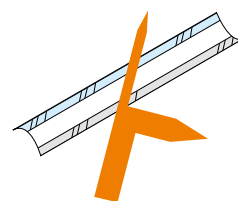
How protective glazing works



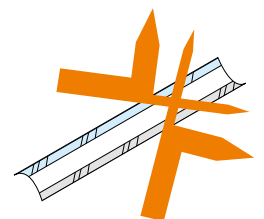
Anti-solar tinted glazing
(polycarbonate or glass)



Solar shielding glazing
(polycarbonate)



Reflective glazing
(glass)



Anti-solar tinted & reflective glass
(glass)

The roof debate...

You've chosen your design, but the details are just as important.

One of the major issues to consider on a conservatory is the roof type. There has been a great deal of industry debate over the best material for a conservatory - either glass, or polycarbonate. For homeowners, the issue centres on the role the roof plays in ensuring the glass extension stays cool in the summer and warm in the winter.

Polycarbonate roofs are not as strong as solid or glass roofs so far more care needs to be taken if you are ever working above them in the future. Don't ever be tempted to stand on the panels as they are simply not designed to take this sort of weight. People such as window cleaners working around your home need to be made aware of this! Cleaning can be done using roof cleaning equipment or by appointing a specialist cleaning company. Polycarbonate roofs are noisy due to the nature of their structure. This amplifies the noise into the room and can be irritating to some people.

Reflective glass coatings act to reflect internal heat back into the building to reduce energy consumption and are particularly useful in north facing areas of the country or where less solar heat is likely to be available.

Anti-solar tinted and solar shielding work the other way round by reducing the impact of the sun on the structure. You might consider tinting if you intend to use the glass extension as an office, for example. These roofing options will always work best when combined with correctly specified ventilation. Whatever your location, there will be a glazing solution to help ensure you remain comfortable in your conservatory all year round - whatever the external conditions.

Trying to economise on this part of any glass extension will always be a false economy in the long run.

In the know on glazing...

Polycarbonate

A light material that is cheaper than glass and so in the past was popular as a conservatory roof glazing material. It is available in a range of thicknesses and can be coloured to offer anti-glare and sun-shielding properties.

Glass

Double-glazed glass units for roofs should be made up of two sheets of toughened or laminated glass. They can offer insulation of varying degrees depending on the exact make-up of the sealed units. Opt for the highest thermal efficiency your budget allows. A range of tints and coatings can be added to conserve heat or deflect it as well as clean the roof. Although glass is a more expensive option and is trickier to handle and install, many people prefer it over polycarbonate - and it is much, much quieter!



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Conservatories

From 'Hot Houses' to grow your plants to a must have extension for the modern home and family.

Originally, conservatories were used as 'hot houses' for people to grow their plants. Over time they became a place to sit and enjoy the feeling of being outside whilst inside. In the 1980s, conservatories were single-glazed glass rooms attached to the house. They were limited to use due to being dependent on weather conditions; when the sun shone they became unbearably hot and on cold days, they were freezing. They also suffered with condensation.

The 1990s saw the single-glazed aluminium conservatory being phased out with the emergence of PVCu double glazed models which were warmer and allowed for better usage. New roofing systems had to be developed to allow for the additional weight of double glazing sealed units in the roof. Around the same time, very light weight Polycarbonate products started to appear.

Modern conservatories are a long way away from their 1980s and 90s predecessors. They may look alike but that's where the similarities end. In this section we are going to show you how you can start off with some basics and gradually work up to more technical considerations.

Double glazed conservatories are the most popular choice of glazed extension, given that in the majority of cases they can be designed and built without the need of Building Regulation Approval or Planning Permission.

Unfortunately, too many conservatory buyers are poorly informed and focus on basic size and design style rather than the eventual usage of the room. Do not make this mistake!



Measure out the size of the space you require on the inside of the house not the outside, this will give you a true feel for the size of the room.

Remember that the inside floor area will differ from the outside floor area if you are building using any type of walling.

Mark out the new room using bamboo and string lines in your garden.



Conservatory fundamentals

Space, ventilation and heating



Have individual room thermostats - otherwise the cooler glazed area that needs more heat than the rest of your home will disrupt the heating in the rest of the house.

Ventilation

As hot air rises, it is sensible to cross ventilate, by having windows that open on every side of your conservatory. Casement windows traditionally open from the top or the side. Tilt and Turn windows tilt into the room from the top or can open up into the room, the same as a door.

Ultraframe's trickle ventilation system in the roof ridge allows air to escape, minimising the possibility of condensation forming. Eavesflow ventilation is another option with an internal on/off slider to control air flow via the side frame on the roof structure.

Roof vents can be designed to open manually or electrically. Manual options include a hook and pole or a winding handle mounted on a nearby wall, whilst electric vents can be controlled by a wall switch or a hand-held remote control.

A reverse action ceiling fan can be a huge help in re-directing cool air in the summer and warm air trapped in the roof area in the winter.

You can of course opt for an air conditioning system for your conservatory but they can be costly to run, potentially noisy and will require far more maintenance than simpler mechanical systems.

The installation of roof vents requires glazing panes to be sealed and joined, by use of muntin bars. Seals have been known break down due to expansion and leak. Continual panes of glass in the roof are the best way to prevent water ingress.



Heating

The most popular way to heat the new room is to install wall mounted radiators that connect with your existing central (this may require Building Regulatory approval).

Alternative heating systems available include electric underfloor heating (though expensive to run), and wall mounted Gel filled electric heaters, which are becoming increasingly popular as you can choose to heat the room as and when you require.

Properly heating your conservatory is absolutely essential if you want to be able to use it in the colder months. Working with a competent, experienced company will usually ensure you get the right advice.

The correct combination of insulation, opening vents, heating and solar reflective glass will ensure your conservatory can be used throughout the year without compromise.

Building regulations classify conservatories as non-habitual rooms, meaning they are not designed for winter use. To have a conservatory built on your property under permitted development rights, you must have an external door which provides a thermal barrier between the internal house and the external conservatory.

Should you take out the door you need to have building regulations approval; your conservatory will be evaluated against your property's Energy Efficiency Certificate (EPC) and as long as the conservatory is not making the EPC lower, then it will pass building regulation standard.





Ultraframe

Ultraframe, have been at the forefront of conservatory technology & design through constant evolutionary development for over 30 years. The roofs are independently third party tested by Wintech and the British Board of Agrément (BBA).

Ultraframe are currently the only conservatory roofing system with BBA accreditation, and a minimum 25 years life expectancy.

With their extensive roofing knowledge they advise the industry on technically innovative construction methods for building conservatories and home extensions. They provide comprehensive information about designing conservatories and offer conservatory advice to homeowners who wish to add an Ultraframe conservatory to their home, using one of their BBA approved Ultra Installers.

Personal Expectations

For many people, buying a glazed extension is a one-off opportunity to transform their home and how they use it, so it pays to understand the key issues that will help you make informed decisions along the way.

Buying a glazed extension should be given as much consideration as adding a brick-built extension to your home. Planned properly, it will last you for years to come, provide you pleasure every time you enter it, and add value to your property. Get it wrong, and it could be too hot, too cold, too small, gloomy and unbalanced with the house. The bottom line is that you have wasted your money on a room that you cannot or do not want to use.

Sounds dramatic? That's because for some it can be. With a glazed extension you really will get what you pay for. Cheap, poor quality materials will only give you a glazed extension that looks good for a very short time - in some cases only until it next rains or the sun shines! You probably wouldn't build an extension without some level of professional advice, but this is exactly what many homeowners do, and then end up with something that couldn't be further removed from their dream room.

Start by asking yourself: What do I want to use the new structure for? Are you looking for extra living space, a playroom for growing children, a kitchen,

home office, dining room or a studio? All uses are possible as long as you understand how to make the glazed extension work for the type of room you want it to be.

Knowing what you want to use your glazed extension for will almost certainly have a bearing on how it will be constructed; a sun room for use in the summer months will not be the same specification as a room that is designed for year-round living.



Personal planning

Good quality planning, design and construction will ensure you have a room that is neither too hot nor too cold; can be used exactly as intended without compromise and stays looking as good as the day it was finished for many years to come.

Sadly, all too often homeowners are left with glass extensions that are poorly constructed, leading to damp and water penetration; that become unbearably hot as soon as the sun appears; and has them running for the peace of another room whenever it starts to rain.

Avoiding these problems is actually quite simple and comes down to research and working with a reputable company that really does want to deliver a conservatory or orangery you can enjoy and inhabit.

Finding a reputable supplier is probably one of the most important parts of any research you do into your proposed purchase. Don't be tempted by those companies that sell on price alone as you could end up being disappointed with your purchase in the long term. Look for a company that is well established.





“We seldom sell polycarbonate roofs, the majority of clients look to have self-cleaning solar reflective glass when opting for a traditional conservatory. They will gain more all year round usage, with better thermal efficiency properties, have clearer vision with advanced light quality and it’s less noisy. Glass may cost more but it will last longer, therefore making it more economically efficient in the long run”

Ryan Barrett, Realistic

Solid Roof

Combining traditional glazing to provide light, superb insulation warmth. You get the best living space and the best of both worlds!

It's not surprising that solid roof is the fastest growing sector in our industry with existing conservatory customers looking to upgrade their old glass roof or new customers looking at the technology improvements for new build developments. Solid roof combines traditional glazing to provide light with super insulating to provide warmth. Basically, you're getting the best of both worlds!

Solid roof offers much more thermal efficiency and you needn't worry about losing light as the latest products combine high performing glazing where you most need it and the latest insulation materials to keep you warm.

Be warned, however ... avoid the dangers of failing to plan properly when opting for a solid roof for your conservatory.

As previously mentioned, conservatories with glazed solid extensions will require Building Regulation Approval regardless of size or whether the room is separated by an external door. A reputable company will be able to coordinate Building Regulations on your behalf the same as they will if you require planning permission. Planning permission law applies to glazed solid roof in the same way that it applies to a conservatory.

One of the conditions attached to permitted development is that "the materials used in any exterior work (other than materials used in the construction of a conservatory) shall be of a comparable appearance to those used in the construction of the exterior of the dwelling house". For example the development permitted by Class A states that "a pitched roof on an extension should be clad in tiles that give a similar visual appearance to those used on the existing house roof".

It is wise therefore, before ordering a new solid roof for your existing conservatory, or indeed buying a new conservatory with a solid roof, to first obtain all necessary Building Regulatory Approvals in writing from your local authority.



A photograph of a modern interior space. On the left, a brown leather tufted armchair sits against a red wall. A large floor-to-ceiling window with a white frame dominates the right side, offering a view of green trees and a blue sky with clouds. The ceiling is white and features a track lighting system with several spotlights. A skylight is visible in the upper left corner.

SolidROOF

“Solid Roof replacements are not classified as conservatories but extensions. Subsequently they will need to be passed by Building Regulation Control and possible local planning authorities.”

Ryan Barrett, Realistic

The New Contenders: UltraRoof

With so many options available to you, we'll help you through and together we'll get the right living space for you



UltraRoof 380's lightweight system creates a beautiful vaulted plastered ceiling inside and on the outside a stunning lightweight tiled finish available in three colours. This allows for the installation of multiple glass panels or Velux Windows. This roof will fit onto pre-existing conservatory frames subject to the correct criteria. The lightweight steel roof with incredible built-in strength makes it ideal for use with bi-folding doors, which in the use of conservatories would generally need to incorporate specially constructed reinforced frames.



UltraRoof380



The New Contenders: LivinROOF

With so many options available to you, we'll help you through and together we'll get the right living space for you

LivinROOF
by ultraframe

LivinROOF is another lightweight roofing system, constructed with composite external aluminium panel, internal 115mm Kingspan and a skimmed plasterboard finish. This roof bucks the trend and goes for an industrial look, the urban grey panel finish has proven to be very popular. The roof versatility enables you to have the combination of aluminium or glazed roof panelling which also includes glazed shapes.



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LivinROOF



“Whether you choose PVCu or aluminium you need to ensure you allow for suitable insulation, ventilation, shading and heating if you want to use the room all year round.”

Ryan Barrett, Realistic

LivinROOM Orangeries

LivinRoom is an optional upgrade to Ultraframe's classic conservatory roof. This internal steel ladder system has been specifically developed to provide the luxurious internal design of an Orangery.

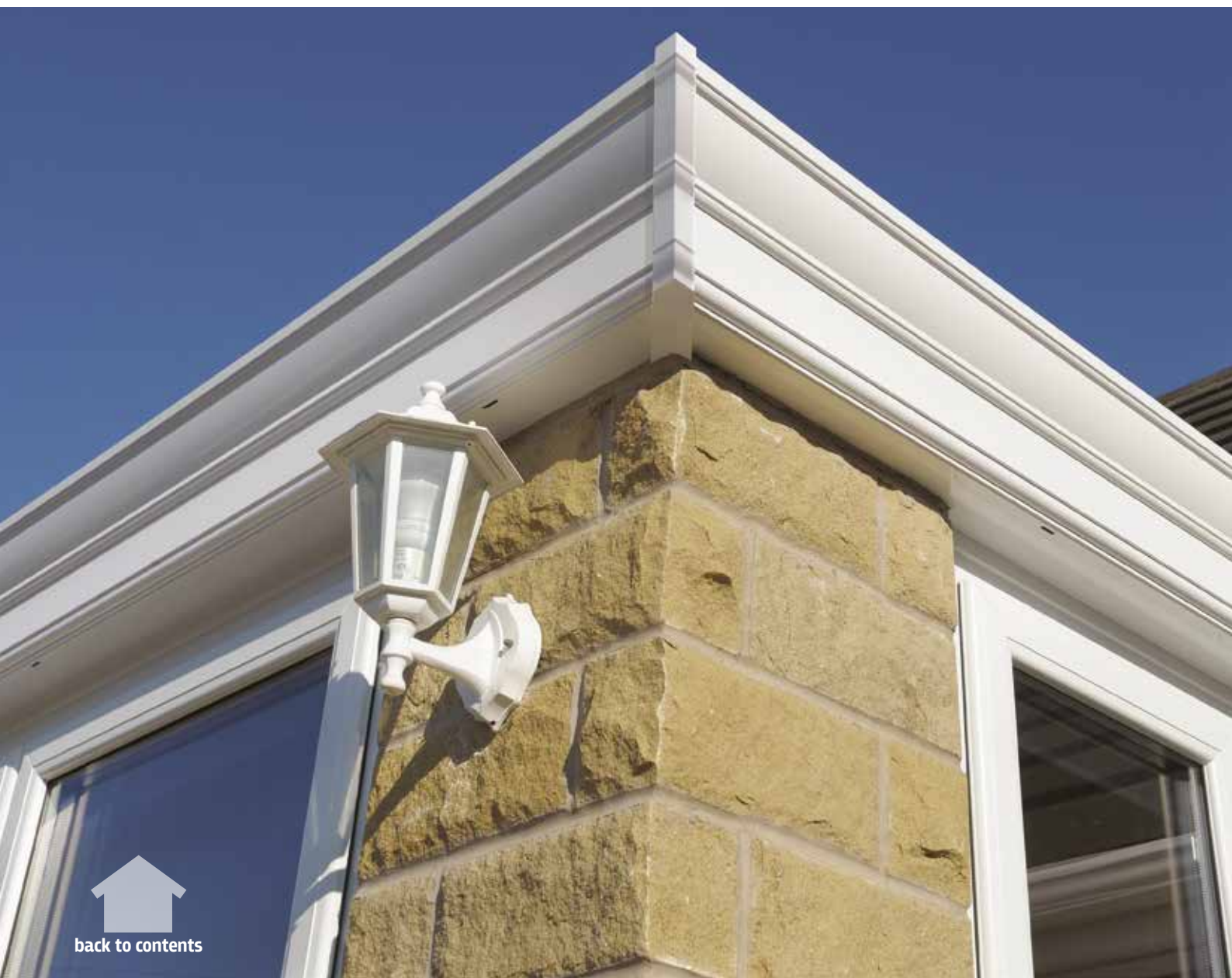
By creating a perimeter you reduce the amount of glass area in the roof. This provides shading, better thermal efficiency and greatly enhances the look of the room.

You can choose the width of the LivinRoom from anything between 300mm and 1200mm. A steel ladder cavity is insulated with cavity wool and then plaster boarded and skimmed smooth ready for painting.

LivinRoom can be used on Victorian, Georgian, Lean-to and Gables and is also suitable for use with box gutters, meaning there is almost no limit to the design you can have. To further enhance the usability of LivinRoom, down lighters and speakers can be built in to the perimeter roof, so you can truly stamp your mark on this living space. A further option is a choice of three external cornice aluminium gutters which adds to the overall external look.

Installing LivinRoom onto your roof is still classified as a conservatory and does not affect current planning or building regulation requirements.

The full LivinRoom brochure is available at [Realistic](#).



LivinROOM



The New Contenders: LOGGIA[®]

Loggia (pronounced 'low-gee-a') is a roofed gallery used as an open air room. However, in this concept it is a stylish room, which provides exceptional insulation, structural strength and all year round usability.

This design style has been achieved by Ultraframe developing a column which provides four times more strength than the equivalent traditional building materials, and is five times more thermally efficient than double glazing. The columns are easily fixed into the base by steel straps, and joined to doors and frames.

The columns are designed to seamlessly fix to the conservatory roof and LivinRoom. Internally, they are foil-backed plaster boarded and skimmed smooth, ready for painting.

The columns are available in four standard powder-coated colours: white, cream, Chartwell green and urban grey. Columns can sit on dwarf walls or go straight down and sit on the base. Alternatively, they can sit on a sill or you can opt for column plinth caps.

Installing Loggia is still classified as a conservatory and does not affect current planning or building regulation requirements.

There is no limit to the amount of Loggia columns that you can add, and when you do you'll ultimately increase thermally efficiency and achieve insulation U-values which comply with building regulation for open plan living. Loggia can be used in conjunction with all Ultraframe roof products.

The full Loggia brochure is available from Realistic.



Loggia



Take the time to find the right supplier

This is a investment for you and your family, don't take any shorts cuts.

Building a conservatory or glazed extension is not only a major investment, it also involves significant structural changes to your home. The potential fallout from choosing the wrong company to undertake this building work is considerable. So, where do you start looking when you need to find an honest and reputable company that you can trust to give you the advice you need with craftsmanship and a back-up team of service engineers to match?

Finding the right supplier is often the hardest part of any home improvement project. Here is our advice for finding someone you can rely on, plus some guidance on what you should be checking up on when you first start to talk to them.

Word of mouth is brilliant! One of the best places to start your hunt for the best company is with work colleagues, friends and family. Ask the people you know if they can make any recommendations either following work that they have had done themselves, or perhaps if they know someone that has had work done recently.

By working from local reputation and recommendations you will get a clearer idea about the company from the start. Companies with a good reputation are also likely to have been in business longer and this is a good indicator that you will probably be more secure with them and any deposit paid be at least risk.

Be wary of the phone directory, direct mail leaflets that drop on your doormat and local newspaper advertising. Unfortunately, these services do not regulate who can advertise with them so you will need to be a little more careful when dealing with companies that you haven't heard of before. Once you have started to talk to companies and checked their websites for testimonials, you should ask the following sort of questions.

Are they members of any trade associations?

For example are they FENSA-registered installers, as FENSA regularly carries out independent inspections to ensure their members supply products that comply with the Building Regulations. Are they Ultraframe approved, Which? Trusted Traders or members of the Glass and Glazing Federation? It is not possible to be members of these highly reputable organisations without having gone through a rigorous assessment process in each case.



Will they be able to take care of the planning and building regulation side of things?

Again it is quite possible that you will not need planning permission or to build to Building Regulations. However, a reputable company will be able to competently take care of this for you.

Remember: If your supplier does undertake this on your behalf then ensure you see the relevant paperwork yourself before any work commences.



How long have they been established in the area?

The longer the better, but check that they have always traded under the same name, as some companies will go bust and, like the proverbial 'phoenix', reappear with a very similar name and continue trading. Deposits are lost and guarantees become void in this process and it is invariably you, the customer, who loses out.



Ask to see references or testimonials.

If possible ring the referees up and ask them if they were happy with the work that was done. Most importantly, ask how problems were resolved. It is unrealistic to expect every installation to be trouble-free, but it is how a company deals with problems that do sometimes occur that is the most important issue.



It's all the detail

We know you've heard it before, but it's so important.

Do you have to pay a deposit?

Companies will vary on what they expect you to pay up front, you shouldn't be expected to pay the full amount in advance. Most companies will have further stage payment requirements for you to meet as the build moves forward.

What guarantee is offered?

FENSA-registered companies must provide independent insurance-backed guarantees but these only cover you if the company goes out of business. What is more important is how they handle their after sales support generally. Again, check with the reference if the company managed 'under guarantee' call-backs efficiently and without hassle.



Registered Company

Does the company carry public liability insurance?

Building a glass extension is a major home improvement project so you need the peace of mind of knowing your supplier is fully insured should something go wrong on-site. Smaller, one-man operations may offer you a cheaper structure but not have this valuable protection.

Finance options.

There are a number of ways you can pay for a glass extension. Consider any finance options you are offered carefully as personal loan or mortgage charges may be lower. Taking independent advice may help you to find the best option.

Finally, and most importantly...

Read the details of any contract very carefully and ask for a fully itemised list of the proposed works. Ask for full detailed drawings and only when you are totally satisfied with everything should you sign off the work to be undertaken.



Beware: 'Phoenix Factor' - Even with all of the 'consumer protection' available today, there are still companies that are seemingly able and happy to rip their customers off, cease trading and then re-emerge under a new name, leaving their liabilities behind them, so check company histories carefully.



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Installation & beyond

By planning ahead you can ensure the build project proceeds as quickly and efficiently as possible. We also look further down the line than just the installation stage, ensuring you remain happy with your glass extension long after it is completed.

Getting ready

As with most things, getting prepared ahead of your installation date is key to its success. Even if you are fortunate enough that all of your installation takes place in the middle of a dry summer, when conditions for building work are more favourable, you should realistically expect some disruption.

Ahead of the installation you should check with your supplier what access they will need for bringing materials and equipment to site. If you are located on a busy road then there may be better times of the day for deliveries to unload. As the build project is likely to take several weeks it is probably impossible for you to be there the whole time. Planning and working out when access to the inside of your home is needed will help to ensure the project runs as smoothly and efficiently as possible.

Clear the build site carefully and keep the area around the site as clear as possible, too.

If you have overhead or adjacent telephone or electricity cables you may need to get them moved or protected in order for the work to take place, and for the cables to be maintained in the future. Your supplier will be able to advise you on this.

If you have a pet that is likely to be upset by all the disruption then ask someone to look after it for a few days. If not then take the time to introduce it to the workmen so that neither party has any unpleasant surprises!



On the day

Be hospitable to the workmen and it will reap rewards. Offer them drinks or the facilities to make their own and show them which toilet you wish them to use.

Check with them what work they are expecting to do and ensure it matches your own expectations. If something doesn't seem right or if you have any queries then take it up with the customer services team at the company immediately so that it can be rectified early on.

Inspect the work at the end of each day and make a note of anything that needs attention so that you can discuss it with the installers the next day - they really won't thank you for pointing something out right at the end of the project that they could have put right much earlier!



A bit more info for you...

We think we've pretty much covered everything, but then there's always something else to let you know. Have a look at the next couple of pages for the finishing touches, they may well save you time and money!

When the job is done

At the end of the installation look around it carefully and ensure that you understand how all the windows, doors and roof vents work as well as how the heating and ventilation systems operate.

Check that any 'making good' of the surrounding area that you agreed to have done has been completed satisfactorily and ensure that you have all the window and door keys safely in your possession before the installers leave.

Finally, if you are happy with the work then it is only fair to pay up promptly.

After sales service

It is sometimes necessary to ask for minor adjustments to be made to the doors, windows and roof of your glass extension and, provided you have a guarantee that covers remedial work, then your supplier should be more than happy to come back and carry this out. Some companies may even offer a check-up after a few months as a matter of routine.

To keep everything working properly, your supplier will advise the best maintenance routine for you. You should ensure this maintenance is carried out otherwise your guarantee may become invalid which could mean you have to pay for costly repairs that could easily have been avoided.

Buying a conservatory or orangery represents a considerable investment and making mistakes in the specification can be costly. But how do you assess one quotation for a glass extension against another when there are so many variables?



The answer is that there is simply no shortcut to carefully researching what you are offered. Always try to get at least two quotations and remember that the cheapest is not necessarily always the best investment for you in the long run. Here is our essential checklist of what to remember when you are buying a new conservatory or orangery for your home, plus our top tips for buying a double glazed glass extension you'll be happy to live with for years to come.



Security is key

Don't overlook the locking options available on the structures you look at. What is standard for one company might be an optional extra for another. Most modern replacement windows and doors in conservatories and orangeries feature multi-point locking 'as standard'. This is a locking system that secures at more than just one point in the window or door frame. Some will also offer a night vent position which gives you a lockable, partially open position - remember though that any window left open, even if only slightly, is still a security risk.

A bit more info for you...

Contracts & Guarantees

Ask for, and carefully scrutinise the contract for your glass extension to ensure it includes everything you asked for. The benefit of buying from a well-established company is that they are more likely to be reputable and give you the service and finish you want. Guarantees should also be carefully reviewed – ones that you have to pay extra for may only cover you if the company goes bust. Always ask for guarantee details in writing and check what it covers very carefully.

Great Offers

Don't be tempted to buy on a 50% off special price on the day offer. Remember: if a price seems too good to be true, it usually is.

Deposits

Be immediately wary of any company that asks for more than a third of the cost up front, unless your order is particularly large, or you are purchasing supply only.

Delivery & Installation

Be absolutely clear with your chosen supplier about the expected delivery and installation date and include it in your contract with them. It's also worth checking how long they expect the installation to take. Good companies will usually keep you posted and confirm their arrival a few days before the due date. Ensure you're prepared for them.



Finally, more ways to get the right double glazed glass extension for your home...

Glass roofs

Consider the glass for the roof of your double glazed structure very carefully – get it wrong and you might find the room unbearable to use. Look for a supplier that is happy to give you a choice of glass or polycarbonate, or even a solid roof.

Don't rush

Take the time to look at all the available materials – PVCu and aluminium – before you make your final decision. Look at the finishing and on-going maintenance carefully, as quality differs a lot between materials and systems.

Check and check again

Ensure you check whether or not you will need planning permission and/or Building Regulation approval. Only let an experienced supplier apply on your behalf, and ensure you see the paperwork before the work starts.





Why Realistic?

Here at Realistic we have all the know-how to help you find the perfect glazed extension for your home. Garden room, sitting room, playroom, dining room, home office or perhaps even a personal gym - the uses are many and varied for the conservatories and orangeries we build for our customers. Realistic has become a byword for conservatories that are thoughtfully designed, well built and expertly project-managed to ensure your installation runs smoothly from start to finish. We have showrooms in Exeter, Plymouth and Saltash.

Our main showroom, in Saltash, has an inspirational range of fully-built conservatories and orangeries for you to walk around and our consultants have the knowledge and passion to ensure that we can bring your dream to life. All of our staff – sales and installers – are employed by us; they are not on commission and they're not sub-contractors.





Realistic

"Make us 1 of your 3 Quotes"



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