

Circulation: 77,771

Rate card: £328

shopping guide

The structure

In the past few years there has been a trend towards extending homes with conservatory-style extensions. This design opens up the kitchen and dining room, creating a spacious, light-filled room. This works well for most homes, as the structural details of the exterior can be tailored to suit the style of the house. An 'add on' conservatory that is less than 30 square metres and has a permanent closing door between the extension and the main part of the house is unlikely to need planning permission. However, if you want to extend your home with a structure open to the rest of the house, it will have to meet building regulations. Here's what to consider...

Planning permission For general advice contact the Building Control department of your local authority, or the Department For Communities and Local Government. If you are using a conservatory designer or an architect, they will be aware of current legislation, and will apply for the permissions. You will need planning permission if your home is in a conservation area, national park, or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. If you have already extended, or the conservatory will be above ground floor level, or the volume of living space is to be increased by more than 70 cubic metres, or 15%, you will also need planning permission.

Building regulations Smaller conservatories will be exempt from building regulations – providing that there is a permanent closing door between the conservatory and the rest of the house, the structure is less than 30 square metres, on the ground floor, has safety glazing, a 75% glazed roof and at least 50% glazed walls. Larger extensions will have to adhere to building regulations. From June an Energy Performance Certificate will be a requirement of a Home Information Pack, so it's essential that glazing meets the regulations.

Position Most homes have little room for manoeuvre with the position of the conservatory. Although south and west facing is generally considered desirable, such rooms will get warm in full sunlight. Remember that a conservatory will help insulate the house at the point where there's a shared wall. If the immediate area next to the house is shaded, consider having a link corridor leading to a main conservatory. Equally, consider the simple idea of joining two separate buildings with a glazed link. Be prepared to approach more than one designer or company, and as always, recommendations from friends or neighbours with similar houses and extensions in the area are always worth pursuing.

Before you buy...
think about what you want, such as the size, style, shape and your budget – but also be open to suggestions

See page 161 for phone numbers and websites

Style It's always advisable to make sure that your builder will be matching any brickwork to the house, likewise with render or stonework used for the structural walls. Window shapes can mimic existing windows at the back of the house, along with any stained glass or decorative details. Bespoke conservatory makers will be able to create a structure that can either blend seamlessly with your home, or which can be a complete contrast. There is a strong trend for ultra-modern designs that are almost entirely glass, such as those made by Trombé (see next page). And designs from DIY stores offer good value for money.

Cost Bespoke conservatories can vary hugely in price. Many bespoke companies quote 'from around £25,000', but it's possible for large-scale designs to cost in the region of £75,000 plus. Put into perspective, though, such an addition will add value to your home, as well as transforming the way the living area can be used. Conservatory extensions are difficult to price, as elements of the job, such as the groundworks, will depend upon the site. In most cases you'll be using the services of an architect, as well as a conservatory designer, and the project is likely to include the installation of heating and even a new kitchen. ➤



- 1 Traditional style conservatory, from around £30,000, Vale Garden Houses.
- 2 This orangery complements the Tudor architecture. From £40,000, Oak Leaf Conservatories.
- 3 Choose simple modern lines, from

- around £25,000, David Salisbury.
- 4 This design adds a contemporary look, from around £25,000, Apropos.
- 5 A modern way to link two parts of a home, from around £18,000, Town & Country.