

Grand Designs: March 2008

Circulation: 33,00

Rate card: £187.50

Toolbox Something for the weekend Conservatories

below Frost Conservatories has created a more traditional addition, the windows are made to match the house and the dark wood frame means the structure is

more about integration than making a strong design statement below right Conservatories come in all sizes, a curved roof can be a strong look in a small space

SUPPLIERS

Apropos

(0845 434 8901; apropos-conservatories.com)

AEM Architects

(020 7796 1999; a-em.com)

Bartholomew Conservatories

(01428 742 800; bartholomew-conservatories.co.uk)

Cowie & Roberts

(01544 350 373; cowieandroberts.com)

DSdHA Architects

(020 7703 3555; dsdha.co.uk)

Frost Conservatories

(01767 640 808; frostconservatories.co.uk)

Heritage Conservatories

(01480 437 774; heritageconservatories.com)

Pilkington

(01744 692 000; pilkington.com)

Richmond Oak

(01908 511 434; oakconservatories.co.uk)

Saint Gobain Glass UK

(01977 666 100; saint-gobain-glass.com)

Trombé

(020 7684 1065; trombe.co.uk)

Underfloor Heating DIY

(0114 247 7772; underfloorheatingdiy.co.uk)



Heating and ventilation

Traditionally, conservatories overheat in the summer and are difficult to keep warm in the winter. The best way to release heat from a glass box is by venting at the top, in the roof. Blinds are one common way of cutting down on overheating, although they can be unsightly. 'I think it's mad to spend a lot of time and energy getting a clean line and then destroy it with blinds,' says Ogilvie. 'We design every building with our heat specification spot on, so we don't need them.' He points his unsure clients toward Saint Gobain's Cool-Lite layer built into glass, which reduces solar gain by up to 70 per cent. 'With modern products, a conservatory's temperature can be pretty well

regulated.' The most efficient way to heat your conservatory is to have a solid floor with underfloor heating – either an electric or hot water system – which has the advantage of absorbing solar radiation during the day, to re-emit it after dark.

Choice of materials

PVC is both good and bad: it's cheap and easy to install, hard-wearing, but inflexible, non-recyclable and – many think – ugly. Aluminium, once prone to condensation, now comes with thermal breaks and can provide a sleek, contemporary profile due to its relative strength. Apropos' Parker says: 'Aluminium is instantly modern. It can be powder coated, and has a very small profile, leaving

the glass to take centre stage. As soon as you start building a wood structure, your design errs towards being more traditional.' Yet despite a certain prejudice, timber framing is becoming more popular. 'It always adds a bit of warmth,' says Ogilvie. 'We only use hardwoods; oak has a terrific look, and a contemporary oak structure can create linkage to an existing building. Our most popular hardwood is utile, reddish in colour and very stable, similar to orocco.'

For an ultra-modern, frameless look, direct bonded glass will give a superminimal finish. 'It works well for panels,' says Ogilvie, 'but in my opinion can look odd as a whole room.' Whatever style and design you go for, start planning now and your new addition could be up for when the sunshine arrives. ★

