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Glass and Glazing Federation

# A Consumer Guide to Conservatories & Orangeries

Helping you make the right choices for your home



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# You and your ideal living space

The most versatile living space in the home; that's how a conservatory has been described, perfect for a dining room, play room, studying, reading or for relaxing, chatting with family and friends. A conservatory allows the light and warmth of the sun into your room, giving you the sense of being outdoors yet shielded from the British weather and whatever your reasons for choosing one, the modern conservatory has captured the imagination of the country's homeowners, making it the most popular choice of home extension.

As well as being versatile in use, it also offers many choices of design with a whole range of designs, shapes, styles, materials and glazing effects. But, as with many things, the range of options means that a little careful thought and planning can help you to make the right choice of conservatory that fits in with your home and suits the needs of everyone who will be using it. And of course, a carefully chosen and well built conservatory adds value to any home.

**In the beginning**  
The addition of a conservatory has gained popularity over the last 40 years but the idea goes back several centuries when palaces and other grand houses would have orangeries, winter gardens or glass houses to nurture exotic plants and fruits that were prized novelties at that time. Only recently have modern materials brought such a luxury within the reach of many more homeowners and it has now become one of the most aspirational of all home improvements.



**The right choices**  
Having made the decision the ideal location on your property for your new conservatory, appearance, view and available space are some of the factors you will need to consider together with harnessing the sun's light and warmth qualities. And then there is the question of any approvals such as planning permission, building regulations, listed building consent, conservation areas and builder's consent. A GGF Conservatory Association Member will advise on the implications of any necessary approvals. (Please see page 13 "Why Choose a GGF Member").

There are many conservatories that are designed too large and equally those that are a little too small. A good guide when choosing the size of your conservatory is to measure the actual dimensions of your living room, dining room or kitchen. This will show what furniture can be contained within your new conservatory and more importantly, how you can use your new living space.

You can choose from a wide range of materials, not only in the frames but also in the glazing, the roof and basework construction. Also, think about the mood and texture you want to achieve. Some people like the 'outdoor' feel with tiled floors whilst others prefer an 'indoor' character with carpeting, soft furnishings and wall coverings. Comfort levels and environmental factors should also be checked out; the blend of insulation and ventilation together with the quality of the specification, design of materials and build plus the location of the conservatory itself, all play a part in delivering the perfect solution for you.

Each decision and material used will have varying features and benefits and differing costs too. Although cost is always an important factor don't allow it to be the only factor as you'll only want to invest and build your conservatory once.



SECTION 2

Which design?

The choice of designs is infinite but nearly all are based on a few fundamental styles:

Lean-to Design

This is the simplest Garden Room design, with a mono-pitch (single-sloped) roof and usually the longer wall adjoining the house. It is also a useful style for fitting into the corner of a property.



Victorian Design

This has a pitched (ridged) roof and a multi-faceted end wall creating a rounded effect.



Edwardian Design

Similar to the Victorian above however with a square/rectangular base, this conservatory provides you with greater use of space.



Gable Design

The ridge runs along the roof from the house wall to the front of the conservatory meets the gabled end product at the front, resulting in very clean lines that suit many modern homes.



P-Shape, L-Shape, T-Shape or Linking Model Design

Combine any of the above, the range is massive and the combinations endless.



Custom/Bespoke Designs

You can also choose the bespoke option and create a truly individual design.



Orangery (Classic and Modern)

The classic Orangery uses a parapet wall and solid corner construction. This provides a more traditional design with all the benefits of a modern conservatory.



Modern or Traditional

You have a choice for the lower part of your conservatory.

You can design your conservatory glass to ground, with low insulated solid panels or with a 'dwarf wall' (available in varying heights) usually of material to match the house. The walls should be built to match current building regulation standards and be highly insulated to optimise comfort levels



SECTION 3

What roof types are available?

Continuing advances in the industry means that many options are now available when selecting the best roof for your needs. From Polycarbonate and Glass to Flat Roofs with reduced glass area or even solid roofs providing a traditional appearance.

Which roof?

Conservatories have evolved over the last 40 years, however when choosing transparent panels the two main products used in roofs are polycarbonate and glass. In recent years there has also been a distinct move towards flat roofs with lantern panels (Orangeries) and even solid roofs as viable and affordable options which can be a benefit if utilising the space all year round.

Polycarbonate comes in a choice of colours and thicknesses which will affect light transmission and u-values (thermal performance). Polycarbonate is a lightweight versatile product however it can be noisier than glass during heavy rain or similar.

Glass remains the more popular choice of homeowners with nearly 75% of all conservatories installed being glazed with glass. Self Cleaning glass should be a consideration for ease of maintenance. Additional solar control glasses can also assist in preventing a “hot-house” effect and specially designed roof blinds are also a popular choice.

The elevation on which your conservatory is to be installed will pose differing challenges for the homeowner. Whether it is lack of direct sunlight and light transmission (north facing elevations) or trying to help regulate the temperature of the room and protect your furniture from fading (south facing elevations), homeowners should be looking for advice on their roof products that satisfy:

- UV REDUCTION
- SOLAR HEAR REJECTION
- VISIBLE GLARE REDUCTION
- INSULATION QUALITIES
- VENTILATION REQUIREMENTS
- ALL ROUND COMFORT LEVELS SO THAT A CONSERVATORY CAN BE USED IN ALL SEASONS

Which wallframe glazing?

It would be unusual these days to be offered anything less than double glazing in the frames of your conservatory. Whilst there is no energy rating or requirement for Low Emissivity (Low-E) glass for a conservatory, designing a conservatory comfortable for all year round use, Low-E glass would be a consideration in helping reduce your heat loss. Again Self Cleaning glass can be an additional benefit in keeping the glass in a pristine condition for longer and reducing maintenance.

The orientation of your conservatory may mean that certain specifications of glazing are more appropriate than others because of the impact of solar heat gain from the sun.

All Conservatory Association Members – as a condition of Membership – MUST use safety glazing (laminated or toughened glass – available in clear or Low-E options) throughout the conservatory. Homeowners may wish to consider other glazing options such as obscure glazing (for privacy when close to neighbouring boundaries or similar), laminated glass (for additional security), sound reduction glass (whether it’s rain, music, lawn-mower, traffic or aircraft noise) to enhance the enjoyment of your conservatory) and/or glazing effects such as Georgian Inserts, Leadeds Lights, Sand Blasted Glass and/or Decorative Glass to replicate features within the property.



Which frame materials?

Members can supply conservatories in all framing materials (PVCu, Aluminium and/or Timber) and in a range of colours.

The right foundation

A conservatory is just like any other building extension, so it needs the appropriate foundations.

Whether your conservatory requires, or is exempt of, Building Regulations, the conservatory foundations should be constructed with the regulations in mind. The foundations should be designed to suit the soil conditions of your property so a piled or raft

foundation may be required in place of the traditional foundations and excavated to a depth where the ground will provide an adequate bearing strata.

The base needs to be fully damp proofed, the sub floor and dwarf walls, where designed, insulated and all works undertaken by competent building contractors. Where brick or stone is visible in the base or in dwarf walls, materials should be chosen that match the main building unless you specifically want something different.

The all round comfort level of your conservatory starts in the base, cutting corners could compromise the usability of the overall structure.



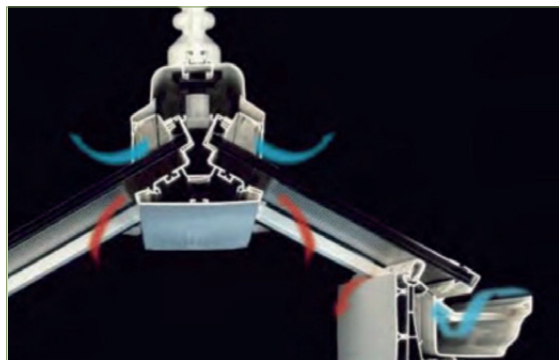
Insulation or Ventilation?

For the ideal conservatory, neither one or the other is more important, it’s about getting the balance right.

Control of the internal environment can be aided by the correct specification of both materials and ventilation (helps to minimise condensation and heat build up).

Because of the efficiency with which a conservatory warms up, some people worry that the heat can become unbearable on hot days. Luckily that’s not a concern today, as modern conservatory designs offer many ways to regulate heat. Many roofs have built-in trickle ventilation and Building Regulations specify a certain area of opening windows per floor area. Technological developments mean that you can even have opening roof vents installed that can be thermostatically controlled with built in rain sensors. Members will advise you on this.

Whilst you do not need every frame to have an opening, neither should you have too few windows in order to save cost. Window openings can be top opening (fanlights), side hung or tilt and turn styles. They are available in many different sizes but matching the design of your property windows is always a good place to start.





## SECTION 4

## Using your conservatory all year round

**Whether it's an additional full time living space or even a quiet room to take a break from a hectic day, proper planning can make this space just right for your needs.**

Winter - While the glass in conservatories is great for making the most of the bright sunshine, measures have to be taken in the winter months to stop the room becoming too cold. Fortunately, it's possible to enjoy your conservatory when it's cold outside either by installing underfloor heating, which is both economical and efficient, or radiators, and by using blinds to prevent heat escaping through the windows.

The sealed unit used in the wallframes today (see Wallframe Glazing) are considerably more efficient than standard air-filled windows of the past. This should allow you to heat your conservatory, keeping it at a regulated temperature without using too much energy and therefore saving you money.

Summer - Because of the efficiency with which a conservatory warms up, some people worry that the heat can become unbearable on hot days. Luckily that's not a concern today, as modern conservatory designs offer many ways to regulate heat. See roof glazing (Which roof?) for ways in which you can reduce the heat build up in your conservatory and home, how to help your furniture and furnishings from fading but allowing you to have a conservatory that you can use all year round.

Roof ventilation is very effective at controlling and maintaining temperatures whilst the installation of blinds can block out the sun as well as keep heat trapped in should you wish to consider these.



## SECTION 5

## Health and Safety

**Needless to say, the safety of the consumer and the site operatives is fundamentally important when any form of construction work is being undertaken. The GGF in conjunction with the Conservatory Association is the organisation that provides standards of "Best Practice" for conservatory manufacturers and installers across the UK.**

Each GGF Member complies with strict "Codes of Practice" for various manufacturing and installation activities. The GGF also operates a scheme named the GLASS Charter. This is a working partnership between the glass industry and the Health and Safety Executive and sets the requirements for safe working. The Glass Charter is recognised as a significant contributor in helping to reduce accidents across the industry and has left the UK glass industry operating more safely, complying with standards that have become the envy of other industries. By using a GGF Member you will benefit from having a safer working environment during the construction of your conservatory.





SECTION 6

About the process

Taking the right steps from the start will help ensure that your Conservatory installation goes smoothly, both with the contractors and the local authorities. Here's some helpful tips on how to make that happen.

How do I get a conservatory?

As you would expect, we recommend you select one of our Members (see below for a comprehensive list of reasons to choose a GGF Conservatory Association Member). In membership we are represented by small, local family companies through to major national brands. Whichever type of company you choose, you can rest assured that the basic process is very similar.

Normally, you would contact a Member and explain your basic requirements over the phone. The Member would then arrange a mutually convenient time to come and discuss your requirements at your home, and at the same time undertake some basic measurements and check that the proposed site for the conservatory is suitable.

Then a fully detailed quotation is prepared along with a contract.

Many Members use the GGF's model terms and conditions of contract for their own contracts. The GGF's model terms and conditions of contract are in line with the Consumers Rights Act 2015.

Once the contract is signed, a surveyor will be sent to undertake a more detailed appraisal of your property; the host wall to which the conservatory is attached and the garden area on which the conservatory will be sited (checking for drains, tree roots, local ground conditions etc.). The survey is then used to manufacture the roof and frames and the bricklayer uses the survey documents to build the foundations and base. Conservatory Association Members will keep you informed of progress every step of the way.

Conservatory legislation

A GGF Conservatory Association member will be happy to assist you in ascertaining if planning permission is required. If it is they will normally obtain planning permission on your behalf (some official fees will be payable, these charges vary from Council to Council).

Building Regulations should also be considered and will cover areas such as electrical work, safety and structural stability. Conservatories are exempt of Building Regulations (England and Wales), if they are:

- Built onto domestic dwellings
- Where the existing walls, doors and windows in the part of the dwelling which separates the conservatory are retained or, if removed, replaced by walls, windows and doors which meet the energy efficiency requirements
- Under 30m<sup>2</sup> in floor area
- Built at ground level
- Glazed in compliance with safety glazing requirements of approved document n of the building regulations and bs 6262 part 4 2005
- Where the heating system of the dwelling is not extended into the conservatory

In Northern Ireland and Scotland equivalent provisions apply. In addition for Scotland, conservatories under 8m<sup>2</sup> are not subject to building standards and those over 50m<sup>2</sup> are subject to building standards and although all elements should be built to the same maximum U-value standards as other new build, glazing and frames used in the construction of walls and roof are unlimited in area but must have an area-weighted average U-value of 2.0W/ m<sup>2</sup>K or less and a maximum individual element of 3.3 W/m<sup>2</sup>K or less.

Why you should use a GGF Member

The Glass and Glazing Federation (GGF) is the main representative trade body and technical authority in the glass, glazing and fenestration industry. The Conservatory Association (CA) is a specialist group within the Glass and Glazing Federation (GGF). The GGF and the CA are actively consulted by, and work with, Government departments on all relevant consultations and changes to the Building Regulations.

When you use a GGF Conservatory Association Member, you will be dealing with a reputable and financially sound company that will provide high quality professional workmanship and peace of mind that your job has been done right, is legal and is protected.

The benefits of dealing with a GGF Member are:

- You will be using an established company that has been trading for over 3 years and has passed the GGF's stringent vetting processes.
- The company you are using has its conduct and operations governed by the Consumer Code of Best Practice which has been approved by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute since 2015.
- The products you will be buying will be compliant with the relevant industry standards and legislation.
- Any (unlikely) dispute you might have with a GGF Member, can be resolved by using the GGF Conciliation Service at no cost. You can find out more about this service by visiting [www.ggf.org.uk/technical-information/conciliation-service/](http://www.ggf.org.uk/technical-information/conciliation-service/)
- Your deposit could be protected up to £12,500 or 50% of the job cost (whichever is lesser). This deposit protection is completely FREE under the GGF Deposit Indemnity Fund - but ensure the GGF Member you are using is also in the GGF Deposit Indemnity Fund.

Most GGF Member companies are in the Deposit Indemnity Fund but please double check the company you are using is in the GGF Deposit Indemnity Fund on the GGF's impartial consumer advice website [MyGlazing.com](http://MyGlazing.com).

Check if the company you are using is in the GGF Fund by visiting [www.myglazing.com/member-companies-in-the-ggf-deposit-indemnity-fund/](http://www.myglazing.com/member-companies-in-the-ggf-deposit-indemnity-fund/)

- All GGF Members operate to the GGF technical publication 'A Guide to Good Practice in the Specification and Installation of Conservatories within the United Kingdom'

Next Steps

- Find GGF Member Companies near you, by using the search directory on [www.MyGlazing.com](http://www.MyGlazing.com)
- Check the glazing companies you are contacting actually provide the products and services you require
- Consider what you want in terms of style and design, and also the age, type and location of your home
- Ask the GGF Member companies on whether you need planning permission for your conservatory or orangery. You can find out more about planning consent on MyGlazing.com [www.myglazing.com/top-glazing-tips/replacing-windows-doors-planning-permission/](http://www.myglazing.com/top-glazing-tips/replacing-windows-doors-planning-permission/)
- Get multiple quotes (we recommend you get at least 3 quotes)
- Verify GGF Membership – ask the companies to show their GGF Membership Certificate
- Read the contract and make sure you are fully aware of the terms and conditions
- Ask the companies you might use for details of their warranties/guarantees. The industry norm is 10 years' guarantee on products
- Ask the companies you may use to verify their cancellation period (they should be in the contract). Most GGF Member companies offer a 7-day cancellation period for made-to-measure work from the date you sign the contract, but best to double check

For more advice and information please visit [www.MyGlazing.com](http://www.MyGlazing.com)

[myglazing.com](http://myglazing.com)

SECTION 7

Recyclability of a typical conservatory

When the time comes for removal or replacement, the products used in your conservatory have great recyclability (95 to 100%).

Recycling Values

Aluminium.

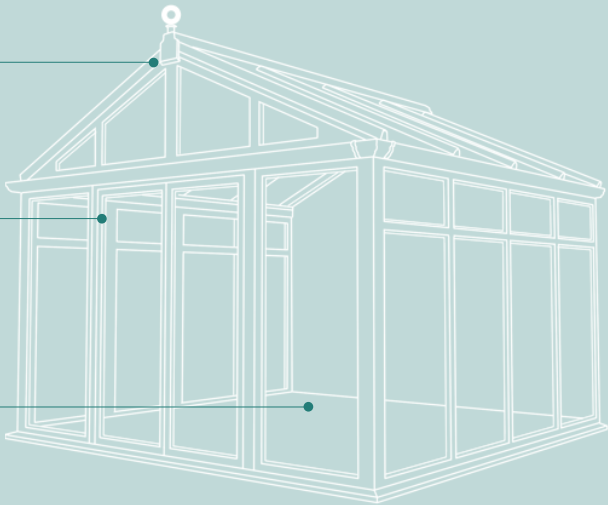
This can be the conservatory itself or its structural elements. It is recyclable with up to 95% being re-used.

PVCu.

Profiles in the side frames are 100% recyclable and can be re-used numerous times. Timber can be fully recycled and must be responsibly sourced.

Glass.

100% recyclable - time after time.



Green credentials.

The materials typically used to build your conservatory feature a large percentage of recycled material. In addition, the key materials used within your conservatory are all recyclable at the end of their life. Old conservatories being replaced will have most of their material recycled. Conservatory Association Members will responsibly dispose of any redundant materials.



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- Stormclad
- Thames Valley Windows
- Ultraframe UK
- VEKA
- Window Service Centre



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