

# BRING IN THE SUN

Garden rooms are great places to enjoy during the warmer seasons and, if well planned, they can also be put to good use during the cooler times of the year

Feature Ifeoluwa Adedeji

A glazed extension can really enrich your home life and add value to your property. With the right design and internal finishes, you could gain enough space to create a large kitchen-diner for entertaining friends and family year round, or simply add a cosy living area to chill out in while enjoying garden views.

There are several design options to choose from, each with their own particularity and suitability. Knowing exactly what the space will be used for and how the natural light moves around the building throughout the day, is essential in order to decide what is best for you, as well as where to place furnishings, lighting and other fittings.

Future-proofing is also an important element of a successful garden room. 'The way we use our homes constantly changes as family life evolves,' says Neil Ginger, CEO at Origin. 'You should plan for all of the potential uses the new space might have and factor this in from the outset.'

## CHOOSING A STYLE

You may need to apply for permission from the local planning department if your plans exceed the property's permitted development (PD) rights, if your home is listed, or if you live in a designated area, such as a Conservation Area, which places further restrictions on PD. Even if the project falls within the scope of PD, there are still some restrictions; for instance, single-storey additions can only extend out by 6m on a terraced or semi-detached property, and 8m on a detached house. In both cases, you can only extend upwards by up to 4m. Visit [planningportal.co.uk](http://planningportal.co.uk) for more ➤



Above: After the owners of this beautiful Grade II-listed thatched cottage failed to get consent for a sympathetic extension, they enlisted Kitchen Architecture to add a minimalist glazed room. Rather than being a pastiche, this striking design shows how the house has evolved over the years



detailed guidance and double check with your local planning authority before proceeding.

Whether or not your new garden room requires consent, it is still important to choose the most appropriate style and design to complement your home, ensuring that the new addition is not only subservient, but enhances the property's character.

### WHICH TYPE OF STRUCTURE?

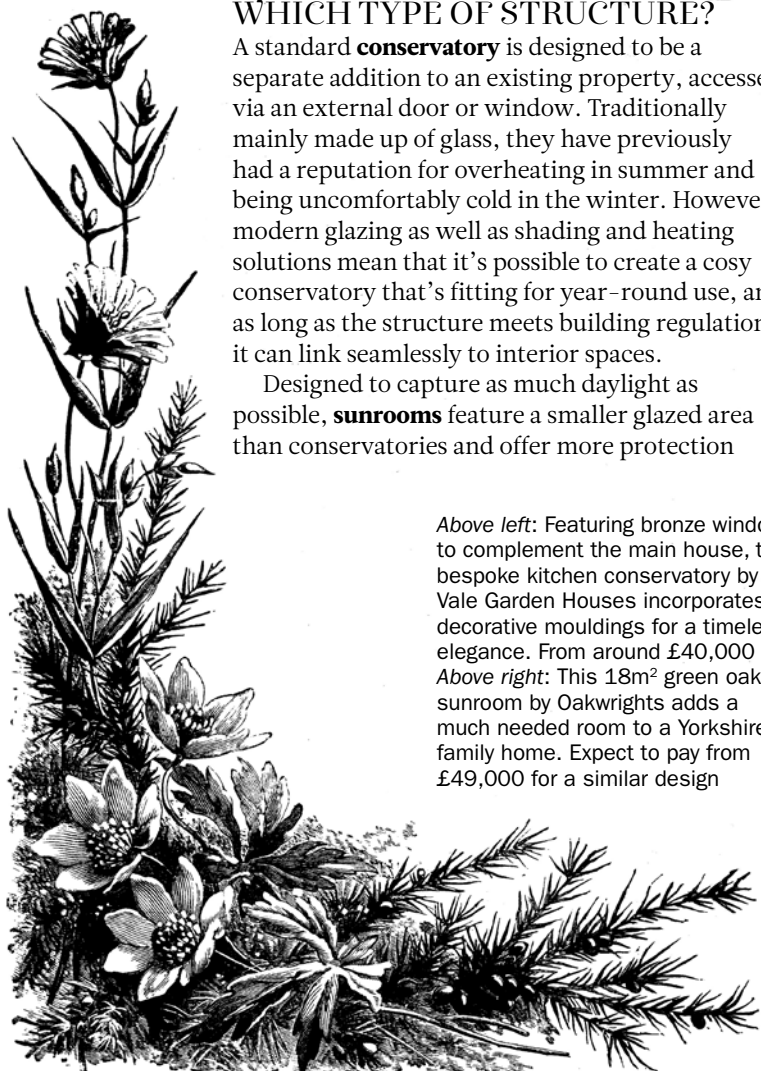
A standard **conservatory** is designed to be a separate addition to an existing property, accessed via an external door or window. Traditionally mainly made up of glass, they have previously had a reputation for overheating in summer and being uncomfortably cold in the winter. However, modern glazing as well as shading and heating solutions mean that it's possible to create a cosy conservatory that's fitting for year-round use, and as long as the structure meets building regulations, it can link seamlessly to interior spaces.

Designed to capture as much daylight as possible, **sunrooms** feature a smaller glazed area than conservatories and offer more protection

from solar glare as they have a solid rather than a glazed roof. They are considered to be a part of the house and not separate from it, joined via internal doors or even open fully to the adjoining space. A small sunroom would be a perfect retreat in a cottage for reading and relaxing in.

Originally designed to grow citrus trees, **orangeries** feature less glazing than traditional conservatories, and they tend to include an impressive glazed roof lantern. Hardwoods such as oak are commonly used to build orangeries because the exposed beams paired with the expanses of glass combine to create a beautiful finish. Today, an orangery is a popular solution for creating a spacious kitchen-diner in a period home.

**Lean-to additions** are ideal for smaller properties. As the name suggests, a lean-to literally looks as if the addition is leaning on one wall of the existing house, with a sloping roof. Consider this solution if you own a Victorian semi-detached or terraced home with a side return that could be exploited. It's perfect for maximising space and can be partly, or fully glazed to appear more like a conservatory.



*Above left:* Featuring bronze windows to complement the main house, this bespoke kitchen conservatory by Vale Garden Houses incorporates decorative mouldings for a timeless elegance. From around £40,000  
*Above right:* This 18m<sup>2</sup> green oak sunroom by Oakwrights adds a much needed room to a Yorkshire family home. Expect to pay from £49,000 for a similar design







## THE RIGHT TEMPERATURE

You might be able to connect your existing heating system to radiators that can be fitted in your new space, but an efficient underfloor heating system will make the space more comfortable in the winter months. 'Underfloor heating is ideal because the base structure of the extension will more often than not be concrete,' says Adam Jannece, managing director of JCJ Construction. 'It also allows you to have floor-to-ceiling glazed expanses without obstruction from traditional radiators.' A single-room underfloor heating system can be either warm-water or electric. The building regulations state that conservatories require their own separate heating system – a stove is a popular solution.

When it comes to keeping a garden room cooler in the warmer seasons, 'air conditioning can help counteract the heat from solar gain if you decide ➤

*Above:* This bespoke three-winged modern orangery from Apropos features triple skylights and bi-fold doors. The roof features self-cleaning glass. Expect to pay from £40,000 for a similar project  
*Below left:* This bespoke aluminium conservatory offers a beautiful contrast to the brickwork of the existing building. Prices for a similar structure would start from around £30,000 at Marston & Langer

*Below middle:* This orangery by David Salisbury spans the width of the property and has resulted in a stunning kitchen/dining/living space that doesn't overpower the existing property. Expect to pay from £35,000  
*Below right:* This oak orangery was designed to create a bright living space off the kitchen. Antique leaded lights in the window and door frames complement the existing property. From £70,000 at Richmond Oak







to have a glass roof; however, this can be a very expensive solution in regard to both the installation and running costs,' adds Adam.

Effective shading is more cost effective and can offer respite from glaring rays. Choose from motorised blinds and curtains, or built-in shades that disappear into panels. If your budget allows, try to specify glass with a low emissivity coating, which can help reduce heat loss, while solar control glass will reduce how much sun enters the space.

## MATERIAL MATTERS

The chunky white PVCu conservatory is a familiar sight in the UK, but such a design is unlikely to enhance the features of a period property. There is a vast array of more suitable materials on offer; think traditional timber, brazen bronze or avant-garde aluminium. 'Oak is very versatile and can be designed to complement all periods and aesthetics of properties,' says Tony Williams, design consultant at Oakwrights. Metals such as aluminium and steel have been used for centuries in fenestration, but new technologies have made

them more efficient and more appealing to homeowners. Ask your contractor or designer whether the profiles or brickwork could match that of the existing property to establish a seamless flow, or perhaps you'd like a distinct break by using different, but complementary, materials.

## EFFICIENT GLAZING

Part L1B of the building regulations states that if you want to add an extension where glazing exceeds 25 per cent of the floor area, then you need to ensure that the existing property is thermally efficient before you can go ahead. The regulations specify minimum U-values of 1.6 W/m<sup>2</sup>K for new windows and rooflights – you can achieve this by installing double-glazed units, while triple glazing can offer between 1.0 W/m<sup>2</sup>K and 0.7 W/m<sup>2</sup>K. For doors, you should aim to achieve a minimum of 1.8 W/m<sup>2</sup>K.

With so much glazing, security could be an issue, but glass in conservatories must be toughened up to a height of 800mm, or up to 1,500mm for glass doors. Any quality glass roof should also feature toughened glass as standard. ●



*Above left:* Bespoke shading from Conservatory Blinds Ltd shields this conservatory from glare and prevents overheating. Prices on application  
*Above right:* This oak garden room by Arboreta features an orangery-style ceiling and French doors. Expect to pay from £96,000 for a similar project plus building work  
*Far left:* Aluminium bi-fold doors from Express Bi-Folding Doors have been added to this glazed extension to give uninterrupted views of the nearby countryside. Built-in drainage makes the doors ideal for this exposed location. From £18,775  
*Left:* This oak conservatory by Julius Bahn features a flat roof with glazed lantern, offering the perfect balance between light and shade, with French doors for timeless style. Expect to pay from £74,000 for a similar design