

Building Control Solutions

Homeowner Guide 8

Conservatories and Porches



Conservatories and Porches, do they require permission?

Do you need building regulation approval?

NO - if the conservatory or porch is:

1. A single storey structure built at ground level
2. Is less than 30m² in floor area
3. Is separated from the dwelling, by the retention of the existing walls, doors and windows, or if removed; replaced with walls, doors and windows that meet the energy efficiency requirements
4. Where the heating system of the existing dwelling is not extended into the conservatory or porch
5. If the glazing to external walls is
 - (i) Toughened glass to BS 6206
 - Or (ii) Laminated glass to BS 6206 Or (iii) Plastic
 - Or (iv) Ordinary glass of equal thickness and size to the following table:

Thickness	Size
6mm	Max 250mm wide and... up to 0.5m ² in area
8mm	Up to 1.10m ² in area
10mm	Up to 2.25m ² in area
12mm	Up to 4.50m ² in area
15mm	Any size

NO - your attention is drawn to the requirements of the Party Wall Act 1996 which may affect your submitted proposals. You must notify all affected neighbours, if work which you are intending to carry out falls within the Act.

This may include:

- Work on an existing wall shared with another property
- Building on the boundary with a neighbouring property
- Excavating near a neighbouring property. Our Homeowner Guide 13 is available from our website.

YES - if the conservatory or porch does not meet the following requirements.

	Yes	No
Will it be less than 30m ² in floor area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will it be separated from other rooms by external quality Doors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will its glazing be as stated in items 4 and 5 opposite?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will it be at ground level?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please note although the porch/ conservatory may be exempt, you may require Building Regulation Approval for any electrical works.

If you have answered yes to all four questions, your conservatory / porch will be exempt.

Do you require a written reply from us?

There is a charge for this service.

Please Remember

The owner / builder must ensure that the erection of the conservatory or porch does not cause any danger to health and safety. For instance, its positioning must not affect the fire safety precautions of the existing house by jeopardising an escape window.

Key features of conservatories

Key features of conservatories Conservatories are in the main constructed of either UPVC or timber. The key features of each are outlined below.

uPVC construction

All uPVC frames should have a thickness of at least 55mm, with frames that are to support a glass roof rather than a polycarbonate one requiring thicker frames in the order of 80mm in thickness. Look to see if the frame profiles carry British Standards marks:

BSEN 12608 (Previously BS 7413) – means that the materials are of high standard, impact resistant, corners have great strength and are colour fast.

BS 7412 – must meet tolerance requirements in construction, the standard also covers safety, security and weather-tightness.

Wooden construction

In the main most wooden conservatories are constructed of hardwood which can last for many years properly treated. Hardwood has little to do with the density of the timber. It is produced from deciduous trees that range from the English oak to West African varieties such as sapele. Always check the timber has come from sustainable sources. You should be aware the name hardwood does not mean it will be suitable for outdoor use.

Timber conservatories will generally require some treatment to help them maintain their appearance and quality. This can include periodic oiling, staining and painting.

Glazing options

Glass

You should specify that the glass is toughened or laminated to ensure the safety of anyone who might trip and fall against it. Toughened glass breaks into small pieces with no sharp edges, whilst laminated glass comprises two panes of glass with a plastic coating film between them to ensure the glass will not shatter on breaking.

It is best to ensure the glass is fitted into frames that have internal beading so that it can't be removed externally by an intruder. If frames are externally fitted check they have either internal wedge gaskets or double-sided tape to hold the external bead in place.

Polycarbonate sheet

16 mm Polycarbonate – A popular glazing material for conservatory roofs. A typical 'U' value is 2.3, which is actually better than most normal double-glazed units. 25 mm and 35 mm Polycarbonate – These options have been introduced relatively recently, as consumers become more concerned with higher thermal insulation levels.

Foundation and floor construction

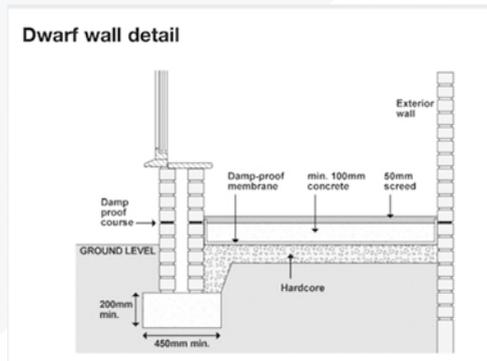
There are a number of ways to construct the foundations and floor slab ranging from simple 'strip' foundations, to reinforced concrete slabs with an edge beam.

Two examples are given here of possible approaches to placing your foundations and floor. Key factors to consider which may well affect the final decision on foundation type are the makeup of the ground you are building on and how close any drains or large bushes or trees are to the extension.

For the floor it is important you do, where possible, incorporate thermal insulation within the floor and around its perimeters. Not only will this improve the thermal efficiency of the floor it will also make it a much more comfortable environment to walk on.

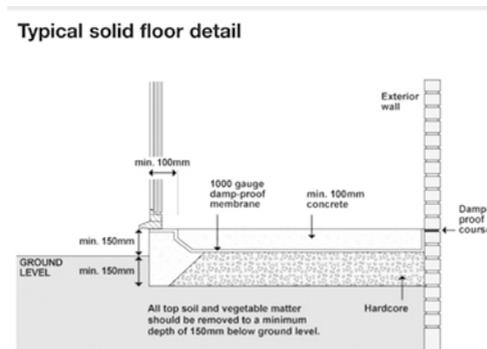
Concrete strip foundation

This system is used when the ground conditions are firm with no previous ground disturbance.



Concrete raft with edge beam

Often used if there is any doubt about the ground condition and to avoid digging deep foundations. The concrete perimeter edge beam is generally reinforced with steel bars and linked to steel mesh laid in the floor slab.



Greenhouses

Greenhouses, irrespective of their size are exempt from the Building Regulations. This exemption does not apply to greenhouses used for retailing, packaging or exhibiting. However, the erection of the greenhouse must not cause a new or greater contravention of the Building Regulations.

Providing guidance

Please consult our Building Control Solutions team prior to making an application. Our Service is there to help if you are in any doubts over requirements or require further information. Advice is available from our business support team. This is one of a number of Homeowner Guides to help you through the Building Control process. Copies are available either through our website or by contacting our business support team.

Need help?

Our Building Control Surveyors are happy to give guidance and answer questions, however trivial you think they are. They would rather tell 20 people the same thing, than risk one person being injured as a result of unauthorised building works.

How much will it cost to make an application?

A separate guidance leaflet on Building Control Charges is available and can either be obtained from our website or from our business support team. Our on-line quote request is also available on our website.

Visit our website

For a wealth of information including application forms, guidance on charges and latest news in the world of Building Control, why not visit our website at: www.bcsolutions.org.uk

Party Wall etc. Act1996

Advice should be taken from a suitably qualified surveyor or legal expert on the possible implications of the above Act. Our Homeowner Guide 13 will give you an outline of the Act.

Other Approvals

In addition to Building Regulation approval, you may also require Planning Permission in certain circumstances. Please contact the relevant authority's Development Control Team for further advice.

If your proposal involves building close or over a public sewer, you will require consent from Thames Water Utilities, who can be contacted on 0845 850 2777.



Tel: 0300 790 0580
www.bcsolutions.org.uk

www.rbwm.gov.uk



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