

DO YOU HAVE AN 'OLD' CONSERVATORY OR ONE THAT DOES NOT PERFORM AS YOU WOULD WISH?



MANY PEOPLE FIND THEMSELVES IN THIS POSITION AND THERE ARE OF COURSE NUMEROUS OPTIONS TO CONSIDER



REPLACEMENT:

It is important to make a fully objective decision if the existing structure and base are no longer fit for purpose, have deteriorated structurally or the Sun Room is not of the size and style you wish to have on your home.

Many people are successful in selling their existing buildings, even if they are of a very basic structure. A competent DIY person may well be able to resurrect them or they could be used for a basic plant room. Don't consign them to a skip if there is a few hundred pounds you may be able to put in your bank account together with saving the costs of demolition, removal and landfill.

NEW FRAME WORK AND GLAZING:



If your Sun Room is large enough and in the best position on your home together with foundations and supporting walls which have withstood the passage of time, you may consider a new framework and glazing. This will enable you to take advantage of the latest glazing systems, using heat retentive and reflective glass, which can dramatically increase the months of the year when you can comfortably enjoy 'sitting in your garden'.

RE-GLAZING THE THERMAL AND HEAT REFLECTIVE QUALITY OF MODERN GLASS SEALED UNITS HAS ADVANCED SUBSTANTIALLY IF YOUR CONSERVATORY WAS BUILT OVER 10 YEARS AGO. PROVIDING THE MAIN FRAMEWORK IS SOUND, THIS MAY WELL BE A GOOD OPTION. IF HOWEVER YOUR EXISTING ROOF IS LIGHTWEIGHT POLYCARBONATE, BEAR IN MIND THAT GLASS UNITS, EVEN FOR A SMALL CONSERVATORY MAY WELL ADD HALF A TONNE THAT THE ROOF GLAZING BARS AND SIDE ELEVATION NEED TO SUPPORT. IF THERE ARE NO TIE BARS, IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO INTRODUCE THESE. SHOULD YOU WISH TO RE-GLAZE THE ROOF WITH POLYCARBONATE, THERE ARE AN EXCEEDINGLY WIDE RANGE TO CHOOSE FROM BUT IT IS IMPORTANT TO DOUBLE CHECK THAT THE EXISTING ROOF GLAZING BARS AND CAPPING SYSTEM WILL ACCOMMODATE THESE.

LEAD FLASHING:

Building and construction expectations have increased substantially. If the existing flashing where your structure abuts the main building is not a high grade of lead or indeed cavity trays, it may well be a good decision to upgrade this while the works are being carried out.

TILED ROOFS ONTO EXISTING STRUCTURES:

These are generally promoted when asking you if your conservatory is too hot in the 'Summer and cold in the winter'. This may sound like a sound proposition but there are important considerations to make. The addition of a solid roof must come under Building Regulations, unless 75% of that area is glass or translucent. Building Regulation Fees plus Structural Calculations, qualification of foundation depths and lead cavity trays with all the issues and these roofs are usually many thousands of pounds, together with a substantial amount of labour to install them. If this is an option our are considering, it is very important that it is investigated fully and not least of all, you should speak with your local Building Control Department.

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF YOUR EXISTING FOUNDATIONS AND SUPPORTING WALL:

Even if there has been no apparent movement or subsidence, should you contemplate constructing onto these, it is essential that a professional and reliable assessment is made.

CHANGING TO A SUN ROOM YOU CAN USE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR:



Not only should you be ensuring that new glazing is of the highest specification, a substantial degree of heat loss may well be through the floor. It is only more recently that substantial Celotex insulation is being used in good quality conservatory construction works. It may seem rather expensive to break out an existing floor and introduce this but if there is an existing step down to the Sun Room floor, this exercise can be carried out much more economically.

PLANNING PERMISSION:



If you are replacing an existing structure with one of the same general dimensions and design, Planning Approval is generally not required. However, as many people wish to increase the floor area, the good news is that Permitted Development opportunities are currently very generous indeed but you should check how this can be applied to your project to ensure that the rules are interpreted correctly.

BUILDING REGULATIONS:



Many conservatories are exempt from Building Regulations but if you are changing the existing structure by adding a solid roof, opening up to the main home or introducing heating, you will certainly need to check with your local Building Authority. There are also new rules which apply with regards to any construction within 3 metres of a shared foul water system. Of course if you are planning to introduce any new plumbing, including washing machines, sinks or similar IMPROVING INSULATION. Many conservatories constructed 10 years or more ago, they will not have been built taking advantage of modern insulation. Even if the latest thermal glass is introduced, a great deal of heat will be lost through the floor and indeed the cold penetrates from below ground. Whilst you may not wish to go the expense and disruption of breaking out an existing floor, the overall advantages and heating cost considerations should be fully evaluated. If the floor level is below that of the main principal home, you will be able to introduce Celotex or similar very economically.

INTERNAL WALLS:

Many people now having a new Sun Room constructed would wish the internal walls to be plastered, thereby creating a new Sun Room which feels more part of the home.

DRAINAGE:



Many older conservatories were constructed with inadequate drainage. If the water shed from your roof is not ducted into an appropriate downpipe and thereafter a soakaway, subsidence can result and this may well not be covered by your insurance policy. Previous soakaways had to be 3 metres from any foundation but the new requirement is 5 metres. It does of course depend on the sub-soil which may well offer good natural drainage and professional advice should most certainly be taken with regards to this issue.

In conclusion, the full professional assessment should be made regarding your responsibilities in relation to Planning & Building Regulations. If the existing foundations are substantial enough to have additional weight added and not least of all very careful research to ensure any new framework and glazing to appropriately high standards, so that your new investment will substantially withstand the passage of time and perform in every respect as you would wish.

We have been responsible for numerous re-designs, covering all of the issues outlined above and will be pleased to provide appropriate guidance and quotations based on our extensive experience over 40 years. *David R. Jennings*