

Are You Competitive in Conservatories?



Double R Glass & Roofing Systems MD, Ian Sims, looks at some of the current trends in conservatories and examines how installers can get ahead in this competitive sector.

With a high proportion of our ageing population now looking to improve their homes – and with the money available to do it, writes Ian Sims of Double R, conservatories will always be a popular choice when it comes to bigger ticket items.

Our experience as a supply only conservatory roof specialist confirms that demand is on the up, but not for conservatories in the traditional sense. Conservatories are being bought today in place of or sometimes as part of an extension to the home. Consumers are looking for more space within the existing home, rather than a glass room that's kept separate from the rest of the house because it's too cold in winter and too warm in the summer. That is why the demand for solid roofs continues to outperform traditional glass and polycarbonate roofs.

We recently reported a 30% hike in sales in our solid roofs and I don't think we're alone.

The solid option

I don't think any of us need to be sold on the benefits of a solid roof and homeowners have clearly caught on too. Creating a living space you can use all year round, tiling options to match your existing roof tiles and a long-lasting lifespan to withstand all that our British weather has to throw at them, are all reasons the solid roof has become the most popular choice.

Roof lanterns

It's not just solid roofs that are on the up though. The other clear trend we're seeing is for roof lanterns. This is another sign of the preference homeowners are showing towards adding new space that is more integral to the rest of the house. They want the light and space you get from a conservatory, yet don't want it being closed off as a separate room, which inevitably happens when conservatories get too hot or too cold. Consumers want open plan, light space and lanterns make this a reality.

Product and service

Double R is a conservatory roof specialist – so we sell all types of conservatory roofs in all shapes and sizes, including Wendland

and Eurocell, as well as the Guardian Warm Roof Solid Roof solution. We have also just launched the R-Light Lantern. However, while having the right mix of products in place is important, it's having the service there to back it up that makes the difference.

We appreciate that installers rely on word of mouth so we work in partnership with all our conservatory customers, big and small, to make sure we're delivering exactly what they need to maintain their reputation. We have the expertise to support our customers in all kinds of projects, including with the more technical aspects such as Building Regs.

Our conservatory team have been put to the test over the years with requests for all kinds of shape and style of conservatory, in all sorts of locations too.

Peace of mind

In an increasingly crowded market, it's this level of service and a partnership approach that differentiates us from our competitors and allows our customers to differentiate themselves from their competitors too. **i**

Picture: Double R's R-Light Lantern and the Pippard 10 solid roof.

Whammies In Threes For Skypod



A triple whammy of new features bring Skypod bang up-to-date

Eurocell has enhanced Skypod collection with a number of new features which both improve aesthetics and performance of the popular lantern roofs.

Firstly, the lanterns have a new, more discreet internal boss giving a better aesthetic finish.

This improved aesthetic is complemented by smaller secure-fix external rafter caps, further adding to the aesthetic. Finally, adding to its existing thermally broken ridge, Skypod has a new thermally broken ring beam to create a virtually condensation free finish.

Variants

Skypod comes in three iterations: Standard, Square (SkypodSQ) and Acute. Skypod Standard has a fixed 20° roof pitch.

Also, with a 20° roof pitch, SkypodSQ presents balanced sight lines and because of its four-hip design, lets in more natural light than conventional designs of equivalent surface area. SkypodSQ can be fitted quickly and accurately because there are no mitring or awkward angles to cut – just assemble and screw into place using the pre-drilled screw holes.

Skypod Acute features a steeper pitch – a full 150° more than the other designs, its 350° pitch is visually very different to the standard 200, making it suitable for more commercial applications such as schools, colleges, hospitals and offices. [f](#)

Picture: A typical Skypod.

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Solid Roofs & Lanterns



Timber – The Natural Choice for Solid Roofs

You probably won't be surprised if I say that **solid roofs are one of the fastest growing home improvement products on the market today**, writes Dave Jackson of Icotherm.

It's the perfect option for homeowners choosing to improve, not move and transform inefficient conservatories into a room that they can actually use. In order to do that, they're opting for solid roofs, which all carry the promise of turning conservatories into a space you can use all year round – but how many actually do?

It's no accident that most of the UK's housing stock has a timber roof construction. Timber is the natural choice for warmth, strength and longevity. With the right design and manufacturing, it's the perfect option for conservatory refurbishments too. It isn't just timber's performance benefits that make it an ideal choice for roofs, it's also a really versatile material. On-site adjustments are inevitable during retrofit projects – the house wall is never quite square and the frames aren't always dead-on level. Timber roofs allow for on-site adjustment without compromising the insulation or the installation. With Icotherm's timber pod system, these little on-site adjustments won't reduce the performance value of the roof. Timber is easy to manipulate to fit perfectly on to old, not-quite-square, not-quite-level conservatory frames. The insulation can be adjusted to fit the frame adjustment too, so it's a perfect fit for frame and insulation, with no gaps and no cold bridges.

Thermal efficiency

Properly insulated and ventilated timber roofs have less potential for cold spots and a warmer roof that's fully ventilated means that condensation can't develop. The key is to make sure that you're never left with any gaps or spaces that have the potential to cause cold spots and affect the thermal efficiency of the conservatory you're refurbishing. **i**

Picture: A bespoke Icotherm solid conservatory roof installed.