

The Changing Face Of Conservatories

Ian Lewis at trade fabricator Modplan discusses the advancement of the conservatory roofing market and how Modplan is helping its customers surpass consumer expectations.

During the early 2000s, conservatories were booming across the UK as homeowners sought to add valuable living space, writes Ian Lewis.

These structures provided a versatile solution, yet over time, their popularity declined due to shifting property trends and increased environmental awareness. Often characterised by their poor thermal inefficiency, the traditional conservatory was no longer meeting modern demands.

Concerns about year-round usability and energy consumption have subsequently

driven a new era of roofing innovation that addresses these issues. This shift has created new opportunities, particularly for solid conservatory roofs.

Why so popular?

I am the field sales manager at Modplan, so I get to see and hear about these trends close up to my installer customers. To understand why solid conservatory roofs have become so popular, it's important to take a step back. Most homeowners didn't install their conservatory. It came with the house they bought. At some point, they'll want to change the way it looks or tackle the fact it isn't a year-round room. A solid conservatory roof offers the answer.

Leka Warm Roof

Recognising the demand for energy-efficient and durable roofing solutions, we were the first fabricator to introduce the Leka Warm Roof system, a solid replacement conservatory roof that delivers impressive thermal efficiency benefits without additional weight. The Leka Warm Roof offers U-values as low as 0.10 W/m²K thanks to its GRP construction. It offers huge retro-fit advantages because it's one of the most lightweight solid roof options on the market today and comparable in weight to a glass roof system, meaning that existing structures typically don't need additional reinforcement. It also means less reinforcement on new builds too. This makes them much more straightforward to install than competitor systems.





Orangery Roof

Similarly impressive is the Leka Orangery Roof. As well as offering a retrofit solution it is ideal for homeowners looking to build a light-filled home extension. The system uses four simple-to-install ladder kits and like the Leka Warm Roof there are no aluminium or timber components, reducing weight and increasing thermal efficiency. The glass lantern creates the modern, aspirational finish homeowners are seeking, yet its lightweight construction means installation is rapid.

We also manufacture the popular Leka Xi system which is an alternative to a traditional brick or block-built extension.

Canopy

Completing the lineup is the Leka Carport and Canopy which provides a durable, lightweight and quick-fitting canopy system alternative.

Other roofs

Alongside our Leka products, we manufacture an extensive roof offer which is designed to offer solutions for all projects. For example, we're able to offer the aspirational expanses of glass that are popular – in fact, up to 4,000mm spans of roof glass. This negates the need for problematic muntin bars and allows us to create much larger designs. The results offer an incredible wow factor that our installing customers can use to gain a competitive advantage.

Wendland

For the traditional conservatory solution, we have the Wendland Glazed Roof System, which provides superb levels of performance and helps to create a low maintenance extension.

And for creating glamorous light-filled extensions, the Wendland Lantern is the answer.

Ultraframe

The Ultraframe Loggia offers the ideal compromise between a traditional brick-built extension and a fully glazed conservatory, so is perfect for creating a valuable all-year-round living space. And our classic Vertex Roof System offers a lightweight and durable aluminium structure with its one-piece peripheral main beam.

The LivinRoof is designed to give a conservatory a more permanent feel and features a plastered perimeter ceiling. And Loggia conservatories are an ideal compromise between a traditional brick-built extension and a fully glazed conservatory.

Customer service

We back up the quality of our manufacturing with the quality of our customer service and support. It is all designed to add value and make a positive difference to installers' businesses.

In an era where environmental concerns and property trends are reshaping home improvement, our roofing solutions offer installers a valued proposition, ensuring that today's conservatories remain a valuable addition to any home. **i**



Pictures: Examples of Modplan's solid conservatory roofs, lanterns, extension solutions and a traditional conservatory roof.

www.modplan.co.uk

Look Beyond The Lantern

If you're an installer looking to make more money from rooflights, then I would advise you to look beyond the lantern, writes Karl Grandfield, the sales manager at Whitesales.

Installers love lanterns but there are other options available for those wow factor jobs, writes Karl Grandfield.

You obviously need a quality, easy to assemble lantern in your range because lanterns still account for a large proportion of the residential rooflight market.

However, there is no doubt you can create real stand-out projects for your business and generate growth if you have a more comprehensive offering which also includes flat glass rooflights and linked glazing. That opens up all those projects where the customer wants something different or more contemporary – or where the design of their house or extension doesn't lend itself to a lantern.

Flats in Fashion

Our Flats in Fashion marketing campaign was designed to highlight the surge in interest in our



em.glaze Premium and em.glaze Economy flat rooflights as a direct alternative to lanterns. We are also encouraging customers to look at our em.glaze linked glass as a way into all those projects and 'wow' installations where it's all about opening up the sky and maximising natural light.

Increase margins

Crucially, you could actually increase your margins by offering a flat rooflight over a lantern. In a side by side comparison for a 2m x 1m opening, our em.glaze Economy flat rooflight can work out as much as 35% cheaper than a lantern – yet arguably it still has a higher perceived value to the homeowner – so it's a win-win.

Economy for 2024

We've optimised the design and glass specification of the em.glaze Economy for 2024 so that it now represents what we believe is the best value proposition in the flat roof light market. It has all the inherent quality, weather and thermal performance that you would associate with a Whitesales product and has an 84mm frit as standard to enhance the aesthetic and hide the frame, as well as being flush glazed so there is no risk of water pooling around the edge. It also comes with a choice of manual or electric opening which means it's an easy way of achieving free areas for natural ventilation.

As well as the cost saving, you also save valuable time on site



with a flat rooflight because you just need to position and secure it onto a pre-assembled, fully Part L compliant timber upstand, rather than having to get to site and then assemble a lantern kit. With the Whitesales em.glaze Economy, you can even get 11 stock sizes delivered direct to site within 24 hours to make life even easier.

Side returns

If you confine your rooflight offering to lanterns, then it's obvious you're also missing out on projects where a flat roof with rectangular openings is not the answer. Most typically, this is the side return type extensions with gently sloping roofs that we see particularly in London and larger extensions where the

priority is to bring in natural light. Here, the solution is a contemporary looking continuous rooflight – either situated across a whole roof or just across a section to open up a spectacular view of the sky. Traditionally, these kinds of continuous rooflights have largely been bespoke. If you opt for a modular system like our em.glaze linked system you get a simpler, more flexible solution which gives you much more consistent margins.

Specs

Whitesales em.glaze linked glass sections are available in bespoke sizes from 2000mm to 6000mm wide and from 800mm x 2000mm long, which can be linked together with no

external capping. They come in secure, thermally broken welded frames with self-supporting joints and can be wall abutted if required for side returns. We recommend an install pitch of between 5° and 15° but we can always advise on steeper inclines if required. We can also provide all the help and advice you need on specifying and installing the products and opening up a potential new revenue stream for your business. [i](#)

Pictures: To make the most of your offering you should add flat rooflights and side returns to your portfolio – and Whitesales can help.

www.whitesales.co.uk