



Replacement Conservatory Roofs

It is important to note that many existing conservatories will have been built as structures exempt from Building Regulations and therefore will not have been inspected by Building Control when erected. (See also our separate guidance on Conservatories and Porches).

There has been a recent trend for replacing existing conservatory roofs with a variety of insulated, non-translucent, roof structures in order to improve the thermal performance of the conservatory. These include traditional cut timber roofs (with tiled or slated covering) and metal manufactured roofing systems. The following is intended as a guide to the Building Control process in such cases.

Q. Is my conservatory suitable for a replacement roof?

A. Prior to making a Building Control application, serious consideration and investigations should be made to establish if fitting a replacement roof is a viable option. The existing structure including foundations should be assessed by a suitably qualified professional such as a structural engineer to establish suitability for additional loadings. Consider whether any necessary upgrading of existing structural elements, or foundations, will prove to be prohibitive in terms of cost and disruption.

Q. Do I need a Building Control application for replacing my conservatory roof?

A. If the replacement roof has less than three quarters of its area translucent, a Building Control application must be made to the Council prior to commencement.

Q. What type of Building Control application is required?

A. The work may be carried out under a Building Notice or a Full Plans application. In either case we will require the following with your application:

- Details of the type of replacement roof to be fitted, including information on structure, covering and insulation, all of which must comply with the current Building Regulations.
- A structural engineer's report is likely to be required to confirm that the existing conservatory structure is capable of supporting the new roof loads
- A correct fee based on the estimated cost of the works

Q. What will Building Control be looking for on site?

A. This will include the following:

Structure: a visual inspection of the existing structure of the conservatory will be required. The existing foundations will need to be exposed to determine if these are adequate to carry the new loads from the replacement roof. These observations may be compared to the information given in your structural engineer's report.

Weather resistance: adequate flashing will be required where the new roof abuts the existing wall of the house; cavity trays will be required if the external skin of this cavity wall is built in brick.

Heat loss: if the existing conservatory is not already separated from the house by double glazed draught sealed doors these should be fitted. Alternatively heat-loss calculations may be required, the result of which may require some upgrading of the insulation to the house. Adequate insulation must be provided to the replacement roof itself in any case.

Q. Will I receive a certificate when the works are complete?

A. Providing all necessary paperwork has been provided and the works on site are deemed compliant with the Building Regulations, the Council will issue a Building Control Completion Certificate for the works as described in your application.

Q. Does this mean I will have a Building Control certificate for a sun-room?

A. No. The certificate will cover the works to the roof only. If you wish to convert your conservatory to a sun-room this is likely to involve up-grading the floor, walls and windows/glazed doors to meet the current standards as set out in the Building Regulations. **When undertaking work, that alters the thermal characteristics of a building or part of a building, the designer has a responsibility to ensure that sufficient measures are put in place to mitigate the risk of condensation damaging the building or adversely affecting the health of its occupants.**

Q. What if I decide to have the works carried out without involving Building Control?

A. You will have carried out illegal works, thus leaving yourself and the installer liable to prosecution by the Council. Having unauthorised works carried out to your home may prejudice the sale or remortgaging of your property and will generally result in the works having to be regularised by Building Control. This can prove to be a disruptive and costly process.

Further information can be obtained from your Building Control Officer. All views expressed in this document are those of BCNI and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Finance and Personnel or any other Local Authority. In the event of any dispute arising, reference should be made to the relevant Statutory Document, which contains a full statement of the Law.