1 BOLD AND BEAUTIFUL
This period property was renovated and extended using oversized double-height glazing and glass sliding doors, from £1,200 per sqm with minimal frames. IQ Glass (01494 722 880; iqglassuk.com)

2 TRADITIONAL VIEW
Built to replace a glass conservatory, this brick extension by Ade Architecture features a large structural glass roof light, and a four-metre high metal and glass screen. (020 7993 8542; ade-architecture.co.uk)

3 STYLE AND FUNCTION
A Grade-II listed property has been updated and extended to create a bright living space and a better connection to the rear garden, with fixed glazed units fitted into the gabled-front extension. If Do (020 3645 6789; ifdo.co)

BUYER'S GUIDE

MODERN GLAZING

From floor-to-ceiling windows to top-down roof lights, glazed extensions have come far since traditional conservatories, and are now designed for year-round use

Not only can a well-illuminated space make a serious statement, increase light and space and make your property feel more open, it isn't difficult to achieve a modern look, too. A contemporary glazed structure can sit well in a period property, while the inclusion of high-tech frameless glazing and gas-filled panels can be key to helping you create your own space that has plenty of wow factor.

Planning and design
If you're building an extension of more than one storey, you'll need to ensure that units on the side elevations feature obscured glazing and don't overlook neighbouring properties. 'Consider how much privacy a glass extension affords you,' says Lizzie Webster of Fraher Architects (020 8291 6947; fraher.co). 'Do you want to make it feel enclosed at night? Often glass boxes can feel cold after dark, so the design could accommodate pockets for hidden blinds, for example.'

Clear definitions
When you start work on the design of your glazed extension, consider how the rooms will be used and the ways the natural light moves around throughout the day, plus how you may need to position kitchen units due to lack of traditional wall space, should this be the purpose of the zone. This way, you can also decide whether to opt for a simple set of French doors, starting at £764 at Wickes (0330 123 4123; wickes.co.uk), that lead out onto the garden space, or bi-fold doors, which when fully opened will provide a seamless line with your outdoor area. These cost around £1,200 at Origin (0808 149 2593; origin-global.com).

You could also consider the installation of entire elevations of fixed glazing, or clerestory units and roof lights. Fixed, frameless roof lights vary in price depending on the thickness of glass and the type of support required but start at around £2,000 per sqm, while electronically operated versions cost around £5,500 per sqm from IQ Glass (01494 722 880; iqglassuk.com). Juliet balconies on upper floors can also mirror the same window design as the ground floor, bringing uniformity to your scheme.

Work with your designer to make sure you capture as much light as possible, as this will help save on electricity during the day and create a good feeling of space. Passive solar gain through glazing is ideal during the winter months; however, incorporating entire elevations of glass units can make the extension more susceptible to overheating. Consider projecting eaves or deep window reveals to maximise the low-altitude sunshine in the winter, as well as provide some effective shading from the high-altitude heat and brightness in the summer.

Following the rules
Part L1B of Building Regulations outlines the minimum levels in thermal performance required from the entire property based on the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating. Therefore, if you want to construct an extension where glazing exceeds 25 per cent of the floor area, then

you may need to update the insulation and thermal efficiency of the existing property before you can proceed. The installation of renewable technology such as a biomass boiler or solar panels will also win you some extra points. Building Regulations specify minimum U-values of 1.6 W/m2K for windows and roof lights, which are easily achievable using double-glazed units, while triple glazing can offer between 1.0 W/m2K and 0.6 W/m2K. For doors you should aim to achieve a minimum of 1.8 W/m2K.

High technology

You can up the attractiveness and efficiency of your glazing by increasing the specifications. High-tech additions to the panes, such as gas fillings that have a low thermal conductivity, will reduce the U-values, and by combining these with triple glazing you'll create a noise-reducing pane. Low-emissivity coatings can help reduce heat loss, while solar-control glass will decrease how much sun enters into the space. You can also use high-clarity glass with a low iron content, which is what gives glass a turquoise tint. Made from silica, this glazing offers a higher degree of transparency and light transmission, ideal for spaces that receive less light, such as north-facing rooms. **GD**

4 MODERN TWIST
Clad in fibre cement and wrapped in glass, the design of this extension enhances views of a small courtyard space to one side, while the oversized sliding doors provide a seamless link to the main garden. Fraher (020 8291 6947; fraher.co)

5 CLEAR VISION
Illumination floods into this rear extension through roof lights and folding sliding doors. The glazed elements of the project cost £22,000. Build Team (020 7495 6561; buildteam.com)

CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE

❖ Low-maintenance coatings can be applied to glazing to create an extra smooth surface, for easy hose-down cleaning at a reduced frequency.

❖ You should start cleaning from the top of the building and continue downwards. This will reduce the risk of leaving residue and cleaning solution on your glass.

❖ Avoid using abrasive solutions or materials to clean the glass, as these can cause scratches.

❖ Check the warranty of your glazing – most suppliers will offer a minimum of 10 years, and some will offer up to 20.

❖ Ensure your installer is registered with a competent persons scheme such as BSI, CERTASS or FENSA.

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