

DIY your guide to a basic site survey

While it's important to remember that DIY site survey for your planned conservatory can never and should never replace a full professional service prior to build, going through a few simple steps can help you in choosing the right conservatory specification, getting more accurate quotes prior, and avoiding some of the pitfalls that can be discovered during DIY builds. Here's a quick guide to some simple steps you can go through.

Get the right equipment

Ensure you have the basic equipment for checking the site, and recording the details. You may need: Clipboard with A4 graph paper; Camera; Spirit Level; String line and plumb bob; Ladder; Tape measure.

Note: Try to measure in Millimetres (mm), not inches or feet.

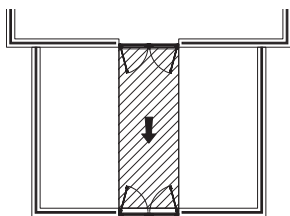
Check for needed Planning Permission / Building Regulations

Make yourself aware of national and local laws covering Planning Permission and Building Regulations to ensure you know any restrictions that may be imposed upon your planned conservatory design. A good place to start is online at www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission/commonprojects/conservatories/

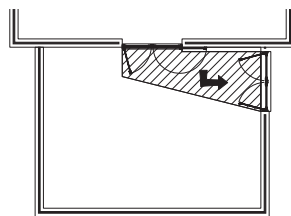
Create a rough lay-out on site

Use sticks, or anything else suitable, laid out on site to create the rough size and position of conservatory you are planning, to be sure the size and shape are suitable for you.

Use this as an opportunity to consider the best door position and for what effect the position of doors, steps etc may have on your plans. By positioning the doors on the front facet you are creating a corridor effect from the house doors to the conservatory doors. Realistically, no furniture can be placed in this 'corridor' and the usable area within the conservatory is effectively reduced.



Route to garden requires passage through ideal location for furniture.



This would be the shortest route to the garden, allowing better use of more space.

The position of external steps, if needed, will also affect your design. Be aware of whether you are laying out internal or external size (i.e. allowing for wall/frame thickness).

Check for height restrictions

Measure the maximum ridge height (where the very top external edge of your conservatory will meet the house) to be sure there are no restrictions (upper windows etc).

If you are fitting a conservatory to an existing bungalow soffit, you will need to know the depth of soffit, height of fascia board and height to underside of soffit from damp proof course, so that your conservatory can be designed to suit them (seek advice from your supplier).

Check the ground condition

Be aware of any slopes or drop downs that would need to be accommodated.

Check the ground and house wall for obstructions

Check for anything that may affect the conservatory or base, such as Manholes, Soil Pipes, Downpipes, Taps, Boiler Expansion Pipes, Air Bricks, Cables, Outside Lights etc.

Determine what can be relocated, and what must be designed around.

Determine foundation or base requirements

You may be installing onto an existing foundation, a patio, a lawn or other surface. This will affect your choice of base building method. Research the different types of base construction open to you to determine what is best suited to your situation.

Check internal floor height

Check internal floor height as it relates to the external line of your damp proof course, as this may affect base and step requirements.

Check house wall for plumb

Use a plumb line fixed at ridge height to determine the overhang of your house wall. You can adjust your conservatory size accordingly, and ensure to obtain sufficient material to pack the gap created if your house is not at 90 degrees to the base. This may affect your requirements for cavity trays or flashing.

Check access

Ensure you have suitable access to the site for delivery of materials, a skip for waste etc.

Measure, Measure, Measure

Double check all measurements for your final specification are correct, now that you've made the appropriate allowances.