

The environment is the first thing we think about



Most people don't think that adding to their home can have an impact on the environment. And once an addition is built, it's difficult to make any changes that will minimise its environmental impact. So we have to think about it from the very beginning, making sure your garden room lasts (almost) forever, not just a few years.

To start, we use hardwood from Forestry Stewardship Council-protected forests in Africa, so we know that it comes from forests that are managed responsibly, logged legally and will be replanted. In fact, we campaigned for years to ensure sources of Sapele hardwood, which we prize for its durability, are covered by the FSC's high standards.

The glass and metal in our buildings are recyclable, but then again, because our buildings last so long, the chances that you'll need to recycle the materials are very slim.

The paint we use on our buildings, which we developed ourselves, are water-based, solvent-free and non-toxic, meaning they won't harm the environment. They already conform to the Volatile Organic Compounds standards (by which these things are measured) for 2010.

It's inevitable that we'll need to use some plastic components in our buildings. But while the most common type of plastic used in other glass buildings is a synthetic rubber, we have chosen to use components made from silicone, which lasts several times as long.

Last, it goes without saying that we use no hazardous materials or asbestos-based components in any part of our buildings.

Turning environmentally-friendly products into a building

When we finish the first stage of design, each new building receives a formal environmental review, during which we decide how to minimise waste, and ensure a building's durability by confirming that joints will be watertight, and that water will drain completely away from flat surfaces and woodwork.

But beyond doing everything we can to minimise the environmental impact of your glass building, we incorporate our beliefs into our everyday practices. We use fuel-efficient, hybrid Toyota Prius cars for our business travel. Timber offcuts, sawdust and shavings from the building process are used for fuel, or converted into compost.

Indeed, over the years we have found that we don't have to sacrifice our commitment to quality to be committed to being environmentally friendly. They often go hand in hand.

