



BUYER'S GUIDE

STRUCTURAL GLAZING

1 GREEN GLASS
Designed and built by Egg Homes, the glazing of this house provides exceptional natural light. A balcony offers panoramic views, while triple-glazed panels improve energy-efficiency. Prices start from around £445,950. (01539 760 577; egghomes.uk)

2 OLD AND NEW
The two-storey glass extension for this Grade I-listed house, by Belsize Architects, created a new kitchen and extra living space flooded with light. A similar project would cost around £100,000. (020 7482 4420; belsizearchitects.com)



With careful planning, using glass for walls, floors and roofs will improve the flow of light and feeling of space

Building structural glass into your renovation or new-build project is a sure way to give it a bright, modern feel. As well as creating a stylish, contemporary space, the extra exposure to natural light has a positive effect on well-being and can improve your sleep patterns, too. To reap all the benefits that structural glazing can bring to your scheme, you should consult with a structural engineer and an architect who have experience working with glass and are familiar with the latest advances in smart glazing. New technology is making it increasingly possible to create spaces with large expanses of glass that are structurally secure, thermally efficient and aesthetically striking.

Your chosen professional should be able to use the attributes of different types of glass to help solve possible planning issues, says Shahriar Nasser, director at Belsize Architects. 'Obscure glazing panels can be used to create privacy if your terrace overlooks a neighbour's garden,' he says, 'while insulated glass walls can be utilised

where there is a requirement to create a barrier to prevent the spread of fire.'

Think about access

One of your first considerations should be accessing your site. Before you've settled on your design, think about how your glazing will be transported. Rear extensions are a favourite location for large glazed panels, but if your house is part of a terrace or down a narrow driveway, your access route will limit your design options. 'Structural glass is available in sizes up to 6x3m per pane,' says Rebecca Clayton at IQ Glass. 'But if this is going to be installed to the rear of a property, you will have to ensure that a piece of glass that big can be safely lifted into position.'

Consider your style

A glass box extension at the rear of a property will give it a distinctly contemporary edge, but this type of glazing can also be an unobtrusive way to link a garden room to the main body of a house. If your property is listed or in a conservation area, extending >

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with structural glazing in a box style will ensure the original features of the home can still be seen, so that your space celebrates both old and new. Vast, seamless panels of glass are ideal for a modern look, while smaller, Crittall-style frames feel homely and intimate. Bear in mind that it's easier to integrate opening sections into framed panels, so this may influence your decision.

Borrow light

Poorly lit stairwells, basements or box rooms will all benefit considerably from light brought in through structural glazing. 'You can fill the smallest gaps within a wall system with structural glass to let light into difficult spaces,' explains Clayton. 'Incorporate it into slivers of walls, ceilings and floors, and align glazing across multiple storeys, to allow light to travel through to the darker spots at the centre of your home.' Make sure you look past the wow factor before choosing internal glazing though. While it will make spaces brighter, it offers much less privacy and needs regular cleaning.

Fixed glazing

Fixed structural glazing requires little or no framing, so it can be used to create an uninterrupted view of your outside space – spectacular if you overlook a beach or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Allowing parts of the glazing to open will make the project more expensive and break up the view, but it does mean that you can let fresh air in when you need it. Or, consider an air ventilation system, which automatically refreshes the air in your home.

In the shade

Think about how you want to shade your glazing early in the build. If you're going to use external blinds, consider them at the planning stage. 'An external louvre system will block sunlight and shade the elevation of glass, reducing glare and solar gain,' explains Clayton. 'Louvres are automated, and can be manually controlled or set on a timer to turn on during the day. In colder months, you can angle them to allow sunlight to hit the glass face, helping increase the temperature inside.' **GD**



3 ABOVE AND BEYOND

The modular skylight system from Velux draws plenty of natural light into this kitchen extension. The project cost £85,000. (01592 778 225; velux.co.uk)

4 THE BIG PICTURE

IQ Glass installed floor-to-ceiling glass panels in this coastal new-build to maximise light intake and provide spectacular views. The glazing cost £51,079. (01494 722 880; iqglassuk.com)



SMART GLAZING CHOICES

■ The latest intelligent glazing can regulate the temperature of a room, by reflecting heat in hot weather and absorbing it at cooler times of the year.

■ Smart glazing can reduce the amount of glare and UV

rays coming in from the sun, which eliminates the need for window dressings and provides extra sun protection.

■ Shop around to find a model that suits your needs – some glazing acts as a sound

insulator, which is useful in built-up areas; others come with a self-cleaning function and there are programmable types that alternate between clear and translucent glass with a simple flick of a switch.