



Pool Enclosures (C16)

Enclosing your pool?

It makes sense to be able to use your pool whenever you want, day or night and whatever the weather. Covering your pool has financial benefits too; reduced heating and chemical costs and substantial reduction in water lost through evaporation.

Pool enclosures come in a wide variety of types both fixed position, or telescopic versions (which can be opened up or rolled back in fine weather) air inflated domes, large 'conservatories' and log cabins.

Even if you go for an open pool, you may well want to consider enclosing it in the future and you should bear this in mind when deciding on its position in your garden. Enclosing your swimming pool not only enables you to use it for more of the year, but also means that you are more likely to use it earlier and later in the day. Added to the savings in heating and cleaning which a pool enclosure can bring, the prospect becomes very attractive.

Deciding which type of enclosure is best for you will depend on the type of use you make of your pool, your budget and how permanent you want the structure to be. Thousands of owners can attest to the benefits of enclosing their pools. Why not join them?

The different types of enclosures also include architect designed buildings, glazed conservatories, log cabins and specialist aluminium/PVC and polycarbonate/glass enclosures specifically designed for the swimming pool environment.

Aluminium/PVC and polycarbonate/glass enclosures

These enclosures are built in sections spanning the pool and can either be fixed or mobile, allowing sides to be lifted up into the roof and/or sections to roll back enabling bathers to enjoy the sunshine.

Some models can be used in either mode making them an adaptable and cost-effective method of enclosure. Aluminium/PVC frame sections, glazed with high performance polycarbonate/glass panels are mounted on rails allowing them to be rolled back, creating an instant outdoor pool, part enclosed, or fully enclosed pool.

Wall panels which slide up into the roof and doors at the end of the structure make these even more flexible in use.

Log cabins

Log construction is used extensively throughout northern Europe, primarily for its high standard of insulation, attractive appearance and versatility. In the UK, a log enclosure with thick walls for a pool in year-round use will be unlikely to require any additional insulation. This material, being warm to the touch, minimises and the natural acoustic insulation provided by the logs makes these structures very comfortable.

As these buildings are constructed from interlocking logs, they are quickly erected with very little disturbance to your garden. In most cases, you will not even require planning permission, although this should of course be checked with your Local Authority prior to starting work. Any concern over the environmental implications of this method of construction can be allayed as the timber used for log cabins invariably comes from managed Scandinavian forests and more trees are planted than are felled, thereby ensuring that the resource is truly renewable. Log construction lasts indefinitely with only minimal maintenance, giving you years of pleasure. Some of Norway's log buildings are more than 1,000 years old!





Conservatories

With frames available in wood, PVCu and powder coated aluminium, a conservatory offers an elegant and practical solution to pool enclosure needs. A single glazed conservatory can comfortably extend pool use from Easter to Christmas while a double glazed version is suitable for year-round use.

Aluminium frames are particularly versatile being available in over 175 different colour finishes and are virtually maintenance free. Sliding roof panels and hinged windows ensure excellent ventilation on hot summer days, while a double-glazed conservatory even acts like a giant night-storage heater, with the combination of heat from the pool and daytime solar gain removing the need for any additional space heating in most cases.

Traditional built structures

Perhaps the ultimate in pool enclosures is the traditionally built, architect designed structure, either as an extension to your home or as a separate pool hall. Naturally, it is vital to work with both an architect and a pool specialist who understand the special heating, ventilation and dehumidification requirements.

With this type of building, the world is your oyster when it comes to materials and design, giving you the freedom to create your own mini theme-park to your exact specifications.

Timber frame pool buildings

As well as being visually interesting, laminated timber beams and portal frames offer great strength and versatility. Glue laminated timber components have an extremely high strength-to-weight ratio which means that relatively heavy loads can be supported by lightweight structures which do not impose high loads on foundations. Used in conjunction with insulated timber panels they can provide a highly insulated, low maintenance building with the benefit of economic running costs. The naturally attractive appearance of laminated timber can be further enhanced by the application of a good quality micro-porous stain which will ensure that future maintenance is kept to a minimum. Both internally and externally, timber frame panels provide an ideal base for a wide variety of finishes including plaster, tiles, brick or timber. Insulation is provided by 100mm or 150mm fibreglass which, in conjunction with a high-performance vapour barrier, creates an extremely energy efficient building.

The high performance of this type of building means that the ideal air temperature - 2° higher than the temperature of the water - is easily reached and maintained.

Air Inflated Structures

An air inflated structure is a giant PVC 'bubble' inflated by air drawn from outside by a simple, low running cost fan. The dome completely encloses the pool and is secured either by fixed anchors, or by means of water filled tubes which weigh the structure down.

Access is usually by means of a zip door which keeps the air at a suitable pressure and temperature. For added comfort, air-lock or revolving doors can be fitted and a heating element can be included in the fan box.

While many domes are left in place all year round their simple construction means they can be erected in the Spring and collapsed in the Autumn. Alternatively, you may prefer the pleasures of open air bathing during the summer and choose to inflate the dome later in the season. Whichever you choose, there is no doubt that a dome offers value for money and makes a pool much more flexible to use and can greatly increase your enjoyment. A very reliable electricity supply is required for the air pumps to maintain the air pressure inside the dome.

Planning permission and Building Regulations

Having decided what enclosure you want, make sure you check if planning permission is required. Since changes in the planning rules for England in 2008, it has become more straightforward. Your Local Authority can confirm the relevant requirements, which are set out under Class E of the Town and Country (General Permitted development) (Amendment) (No. 2) (England) Order 2008. Since October 2010, the insulation requirements of both the structure and the pool shell have been changed and you should check with your SPATA supplier/installer about any implications and whether they have been met.

For people resident outside England, please check with your own Local Authority for their relevant requirements.