

four bedroom house

Jim and Edna Smith moved into their Victorian four bedroom home in Heswell, Wirral, over 20 years ago.

While the Smith's home had a traditional radiator heating system fitted throughout, the conservatory at the back of the house didn't benefit from any heating at all and the room was hardly used.

At the end of 2011, the couple made the decision to upgrade their kitchen, knock down the old conservatory and build a significantly larger conservatory in its place, but this time with underfloor heating. The Smith's wanted to ensure the new conservatory would create a warm and comfortable living space that could be used all year round.

Jim explains: "When we decided to invest in home improvements, including a new kitchen, we chose to take our old conservatory down and build a bigger, 35m² one. The old conservatory didn't have any heating so the room was redundant for most of the year. The thinking behind the new conservatory, which is much larger, was to create an extra room for the house that we could use whatever the weather.

"The company that sold us the conservatory suggested we install conventional radiators, but underfloor heating had come highly recommended by a friend of ours who loved his. We were concerned that heating such a large area in this way would prove costly but our heating engineer, who we had used before

and trusted, reassured us that it would be both efficient and cost-effective. The underfloor heating uses hot water at a lower temperature than radiators so we actually save on bills and it's more eco-friendly."

As underfloor heating is a flexible system that can work independently in different rooms, two separate underfloor heating systems were used in the kitchen and conservatory. Both systems work in tandem with the existing heating system and work from the same boiler.

The engineers fitted 18mm panels, with 12mm pipe work in the kitchen, while solid floor underfloor heating panels with piping were laid under the conservatory's screeded floor, which was then covered by tiles.

"The whole point of having a new conservatory built was to create a different type of space in the house; a bigger and brighter room that could be used as a main living area," continues Jim. "We had the heating installed just after Christmas and we use the room all the time so it's been a great investment.

"Even though the rooms join, there are two separate controls for the heating in the kitchen and the conservatory, so we get them both to exactly the temperature we want them be. An added bonus is that the heat is evenly dispersed in both rooms, so no one part is warmer or cooler than another, they just feel 'right' all the time.

"Our conservatory is now an extension of the house and is useable all year around. It's a big conservatory but without radiators, it looks even bigger. The final look of the conservatory was important to us and without bulky radiators, the room looks spacious with cleaner lines. With radiators in a room you're somewhat restricted, but we've been able to put our furniture wherever we like. We've also found that without radiators ticking and clunking the room is quiet, it truly is a haven.

"Of course there was a little disruption in the house when the flooring went down, but this would have happened anyway as we were having walls knocked down and built back up again. If we ask ourselves 'was it worth it?' the answer is always 'absolutely!'"

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jim smith