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The Good Carport Guide



Your guide to choosing the perfect carport solution



Buying a carport is a big investment, and with so many different options on the market today, it can seem a very daunting task.

To help you make an informed decision and choose the perfect carport to suit your needs exactly, we have put together this comprehensive guide that will take you through all the different options available to you and provide advice to help you identify what to look for when choosing your carport, including the various features or benefits you should choose to have, or choose to avoid!

We hope you find it useful!



When looking for a carport, the first thing you will probably notice is the wide range of construction materials that these structures can be made from including timber, steel, aluminium, PVC and Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP).

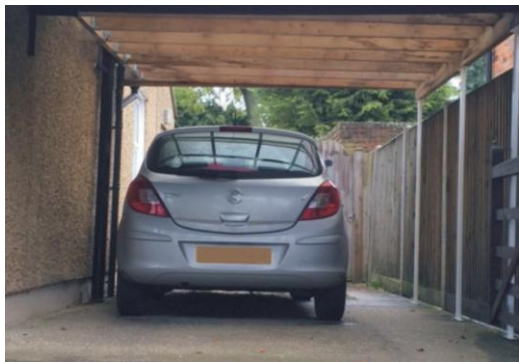
Styles also range from cantilever, lean-to and freestanding. With such a lot to choose from, making a decision about which carport is right for you can be difficult, and ultimately expensive if you choose the wrong one.

The good, the bad, and the ugly carports available on the market:



The Good

A good carport will maintain its appearance for many years after installation – requiring only minimal routine maintenance to keep it looking good. Your property's value is vitally important and a carport should improve this value by blending in well with your building's style. It should be securely fixed and constructed from a robust and durable material to ensure the carport lasts well.



The Bad

Watch out for carports that will not enhance the look of your building, or offer adequate cover for your vehicle. Ensure the materials are durable, offer value for money, and make sure the carport is suitable for the wind and snow loadings at your specific location in the UK. A bad carport could bring the value of your property down if it looks unattractive and if poor quality materials are used it may only last a short while- costing you more money in the long run.



The Ugly

When looking for a carport, try to avoid going for the cheapest option as after a short while it could end up looking like this one! The design of this carport looks cheap and flimsy and the materials used have not lasted well, or been maintained correctly. As you can see the appearance of your carport really does affect the general look of your property and so it is important to research the material and design to ensure that it adds value, now and in the future as well.

Carports in Detail

Roofing Panels

It is important that the materials you choose for your carport are going to perform over time with the climatic conditions that we experience in UK. At present the most popular roofing materials used for carports are GRP, Polycarbonate and glass.



GRP

Glass Reinforced Plastic is commonly known as GRP or sometimes as FRP (Fibre Reinforced Plastic). It is a composite laminate of glass fibres in a polyester resin matrix.

Advantages:

- Versatile
- Similar appearance to Glass
- Can be translucent or opaque, plus multiple colours available too
- Can be covered with a UV stabilized layer to provide UV protection

Disadvantages:

- Sunlight can cause clear GRP roofs to discolour and coloured panels to fade and deteriorate
- Lower impact resistance than Polycarbonate
- Shorter life span than some other options – approx 10 years
- The surface of this material is often rough therefore difficult to clean and needs more maintenance than other roofing materials.

Glass

Advantages:

- Good acoustic properties – less noise in heavy rainfall
- Clean polished finish

Disadvantages:

- Expensive to buy
- Safety risk if the panels are not high quality toughened panels
- Little or no UV protection
- Expensive to install



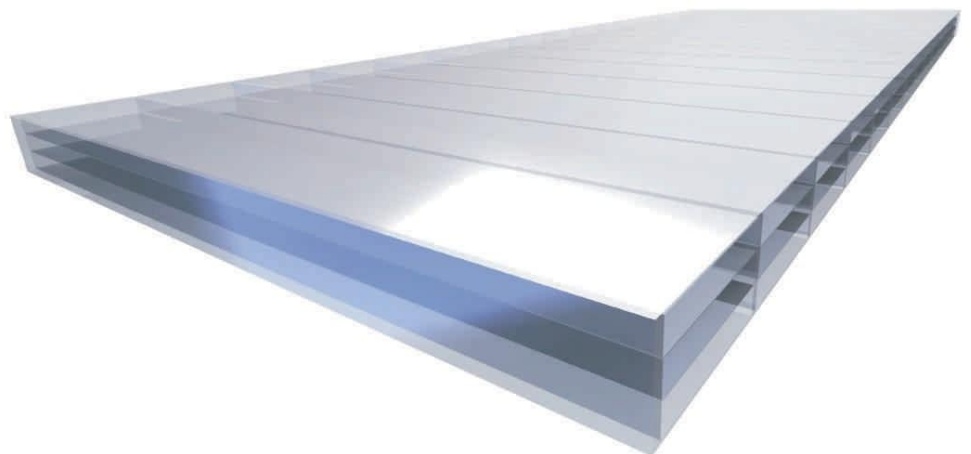
Polycarbonate

Advantages:

- Has a very high impact resistance, making it virtually unbreakable
- Versatile
- Can be translucent, opal or tinted
- It has upto a 25 year life expectancy
- Many varieties are co-extruded (manufactured) with a UV filter
- It's cost effective
- Excellent structural performance
- Maintains strength and clean look over time
- Self-extinguishing when source of the flame is removed and will not promote fire or assist the spread of fire
- Effective resistance to weather
- Low heat transmission keeps area underneath cool in hot sunny weather.

Disadvantages:

- We can't think of any.



Framework

The framework chosen for a carport will affect both the look and the durability of the structure. There are many materials to choose from and it is important to choose one which will fit with your building and look attractive, and also provide a strong, safe and durable structure.



PVC

PVC is used by a large amount of glazing companies because it is mass produced and so it is relatively cheap. It is also reasonably maintenance free and looks good for a period of time. However it needs maintaining, it expands and contracts depending on its exposure to sunlight and it can create leaks in your roof if not professionally installed.



Steel

Steel is a very strong material that creates very robust structures although it can be expensive and needs treating, with powder coating and galvanising to stop the structure rusting. It also needs regular inspections and maintenance to prolong its life and it will rust easily if not maintained correctly. Steel has a high carbon footprint due to the energy used to produce it however it is 100% recyclable.



Aluminium

Aluminium is a very durable metal, which is also strong and lightweight; it is also 100% recyclable. It is a very cost effective construction material as it has a 25 year life expectancy and is resistant to corrosion in most environments. It only requires minimal maintenance and will stay in good condition for many years. This material is perfect for carports and is easy to install.



Timber

As it is a natural product and renewable source, timber the most environmentally friendly product. Timber carports are relatively good value however if untreated they can rot and there is a risk of warping, splitting or bending if not treated or installed correctly. Glue – laminated timber offers greater tensile strength relative to steel and is corrosion resistant, however this is a much more expensive option than aluminium.

At a Glance Comparison

Material	Low Cost	Durability	Strength	Corrosion & Rot Resistant	Value for Money	Colour Options	Life Expectancy	Low Maintenance?
PVC	****	**	***	*****	**	****	*	****
Steel	*	****	*****	**	***	*****	****	**
Aluminium	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****
Timber	**	***	****	**	**	***	****	**

- * Very Poor
- ** Poor
- *** Satisfactory
- **** Good
- ***** Excellent

Carport Designs

Once you have decided on the right materials for your carport, it is time to consider the style of carport you require.

Wall Mounted/Lean-to

A wall mounted carport is the most cost effective and popular option. These can also allow you to position the carport to provide uninterrupted cover from your vehicle to your door if you wish.



Cantilever

A cantilever structure is designed so that the structure is supported from one side, and no other support is required. This means the area is more open, with no posts, however make sure to check all necessary wind and snow loading calculations have been performed to ensure the carport is structurally sound. We recommend that you seek professional advice from an independent structural engineer.



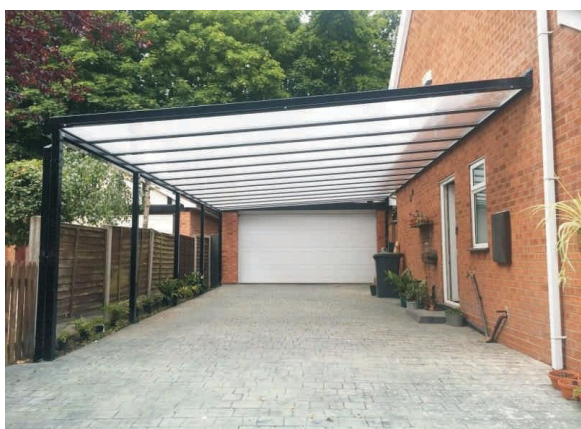
Free standing

Free standing carports offer flexibility as they do not need to be fixed to a supporting wall, however because they have more posts they can be expensive and so they are not the most cost effective option.



When choosing your carport, the style of the structure is very important. It needs to fit with your current home environment, or contrast with it in a complementary fashion. If you have an older house, or one built in a period style then a modern canopy may not fit well. Alternatively a modern house may not look right if a more traditionally style carport is added to it. It is always best to research which styles look best with your property.

Modern Clean Look:



Ornate Finish:



Colours

Some carports are available in a choice of colours, if you want your carport to blend in well with your building choosing a colour which matches your windows, fascias, wall colour or other external features, can help the carport look as though it was built with the house.

If you would like this look, then check with your carport supplier before purchasing to see if they can colour the carport to your desired colour.



Other Important Elements To Consider:

Guttering and Downpipes

We recommend choosing a carport that includes guttering and downpipes; this will ensure rainwater is directed to a specific location rather than running off the roof haphazardly and causing puddles around your carport.



Hailstone resistance

Although they don't happen every day, hailstone storms can cause considerable damage so it is best to make sure the carport you are considering is resistant to hailstones. The roof is the most likely part to be damaged by hailstones so we recommend choosing a roofing material that has high impact resistance, such as polycarbonate.



Wind and Snow Loadings

It is very important that you choose a carport design that has been calculated to conform to the correct wind and snow loadings for your area.

Building Regulations & Planning Permission

Building a new attached carport (open on at least two sides) would not normally require building regulations approval if it is less than 30 square metres in floor area however we would recommend speaking to your local building control officer(s) to confirm the exact requirements for your property.

Similarly carports under 35m² do not usually require planning permission, however this is dependent on your property's exact location. It is advisable to contact your local planning authority to check the specific planning requirements for your building.



Cost

The cost of a carport can influence your choice; however it is not always best to go for the cheapest option unless you are satisfied that the carport is good quality and will last long enough to give you value for money. Choosing a slightly more expensive option that has been constructed from superior materials is often more cost effective in the long term.

Guarantee

As a carport can be an expensive purchase it is wise to choose one that will last and give you best value for money. A carport that comes with a good guarantee is a reliable indicator that the carport has been built to last and the company is confident in the structure's durability.

Why Have a Carport

- Protects your vehicle from leaves, sap from trees, bird droppings, rain, snow and UV rays.
- Reduces the amount of ice on your car in cold weather.
- Protects other vehicles and equipment not just cars
- Provides an easy access covered area – no heavy door to open, perfect for frail or the less able
- If you get the choice right it can add value to your house
- Allows you to travel from car to front door in the dry and protected from the sun
- Makes it easy to load or unload your car in wet weather
- Discourages hoarding or clutter as contents under carport is on show
- Makes a perfect car maintenance or car cleaning area.

Why Choose Our Carports?

- Our carports are made with the highest quality materials that have been specifically chosen to create structures that will not only stand the test of time, but also look fantastic with any building style
- We have worked in partnership with the UK's leading extrusion specialist to create a carport system that is quick and easy to install
- We pride ourselves on our exceptional service, and have developed long term clients, which has resulted in them returning to us time and time again



Our recommendation:

With all the above in mind we have developed a range of simple to install carport systems; cutting edge solutions that are cost effective and have a life expectancy of 25 years. Constructed from durable aluminium and polycarbonate, DiatoStyle carports are engineered to conform to UK wind and snow loadings and offer you a choice of styles to suit your home. Our Standard modern design suits contemporary homes, or our Victorian Upgrade with ornate posts complements more traditionally designed homes. Our carports are supplied with a 10 year guarantee and are easy to maintain.





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