

GO FOR GOLD

Expert advice from **Nick Williams**, director of Olympian Garden Buildings in Sandbach



A private gym, a shrine to your musical heroes or a games room for entertaining: how would you use a bespoke garden room? Over the past 35 years, Nick's family business has designed, created and installed exquisite garden buildings - bringing luxurious outdoor comfort and relaxation to Cheshire homeowners.

"Playrooms, music rooms, workshops, outdoor entertaining spaces with bars, garden offices and personal training studios... we've built them all," he says - speaking to *Cheshire Living* from the company's headquarters.

"At the other end of the scale, it can be as simple as wanting to have a place to relax with a book or somewhere to take your cup of tea out to in a morning. Often, customers want an escape; they enjoy having their own space."

Nick's father Barry founded the company in the 1980s. A successful British athlete,

he reached the finals of the 1972 Munich Olympics (hence the company name). Today, Barry retains a director's position - having an input on production issues - but it is Nick and his sister Hannah Brown who lead on a day-to-day basis.

"Everything is made in house to order, so I first started assisting with basic jobs in the factory when I was 16," recalls Nick. "I went full time after completing my degree and became director of sales when I turned 23. Hannah is also a director and our operational

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lead; mum helps out with tasks in the office.

"We're a family business in every sense and children are always welcome at our show site. Usually, you'll find them sat happy as anything on the sofa watching Netflix while their parents browse around.

"There's over 80 buildings on display and you can stand inside and get a real idea of what they look and feel like."

The display models are the tip of the iceberg, with endless scope for customisation - from height and configuration to the choice of timber and roof covering.

It was around seven years ago that Nick first noticed a rising trend among homeowners looking for better, well-made buildings that were completely tailored to their needs. Many come to the show site with a clear vision in mind; others need an expert helping hand to define their brief.

"We don't work on commission, so we never jump on people!" Nick says. "If they



have a direct question we're happy to answer those, but wandering round the site and being open to ideas is really the best place to start.

"Think about how you plan to use your room and how big you'd like it to be. It also helps to have a budget in mind. Inviting us to come and look at your garden in person on a no-obligation basis allows us to get a real feel for what you're trying to achieve."

For a bespoke cedar building, prices can start at £20,000 and rise to around £40,000 (in comparison, a quality summerhouse costs between £5,000 and £15,000). Using only Canadian cedar - known for its great depth and range of colours and minimal imperfections - Olympian designs exceed current building specifications for new-build properties. This includes using Kingspan insulation, brushed chrome fittings, aluminium windows and doors, and Firestone roofing.

Once a design has been agreed upon, the main structural framework and floor are built in Olympian's factory, which has a staff of 28 employees (*many of whom have more than 15 years' service*). The rest of the build is completed on site at the customer's garden over a two-week period. Only when the team are satisfied that the plastered walls are dry will the flooring be laid down.

"Our team consists of people that we genuinely trust to deliver the best service," adds Nick. "We can also arrange for landscaping and multimedia installation, as well as air conditioning, security alarms, bars and bathrooms for that luxury final fit-out."

"Whether you want to host a dinner party or a games tournament; get family and friends round for drinks; or create a personal zen-like space to practise yoga, a garden building is a great alternative to expensive construction work." Daniel Muff from estate agents Jordan Fishwick Exclusive comments: "A high-end quality garden room should comfortably pay for itself in terms of the value you can place on your home. In terms of saleability, they are especially of interest to businessowners who require an office space away from the main house or people who want to exercise in private." 

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