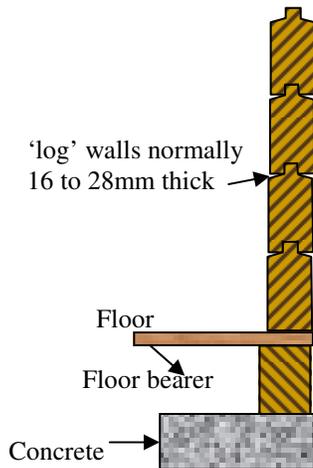


# Wall construction methods used in summerhouses and sheds

A brief outline of the construction methods used garden buildings. The first two represent about 80% of the mass produced budget market. The last two are as produced by BESPOKE suppliers.



## The log cabin stacking method.

This building method is proliferating the market. The buildings consist of untreated spruce timber machined to stack on top of each other with no other mechanical fixings. The strength comes from the corners interlocking. Their MAJOR issue is that they are based on a method that was designed to use quality timber such as Larch or Redwood. Most you see sold are actually made from untreated spruce. This has a life expectancy outside of 5 years. It can be extended if you are prepared to TREAT the wood EVERY year with a timber treatment. If rot does get in then, normally at the base. The whole cabin has to come down to replace the timber.

Cheap short term but very expensive to maintain. We have never seen one last 10 years and we get hundreds of calls for help with rot. Our best advice is to avoid them. Many offer 10 year guarantees that are not worth the paper they are written on. One of the largest retailers of these buildings for example when supplying their buildings Offer a range of water based preserver to 'protect the outer surface with. In the small print of the guarantee however they say it 'MUST BE TREATED EVERY YEAR WITH A SPIRIT BASED TREATMENT.' as an unfortunate GP in Horsham found out after 6 years and his building rotted and the supplier refused to help.

There are good quality Log Cabin manufacturers such as 'The Norwegian Log Cabin Co.' but their buildings start at £12000 for a small one. They are beautifully made from good quality material that is factory treated.

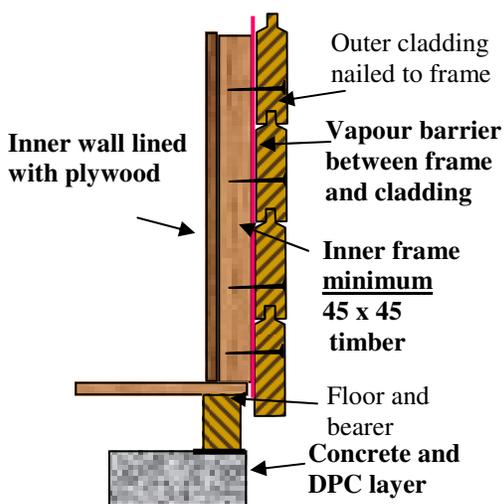
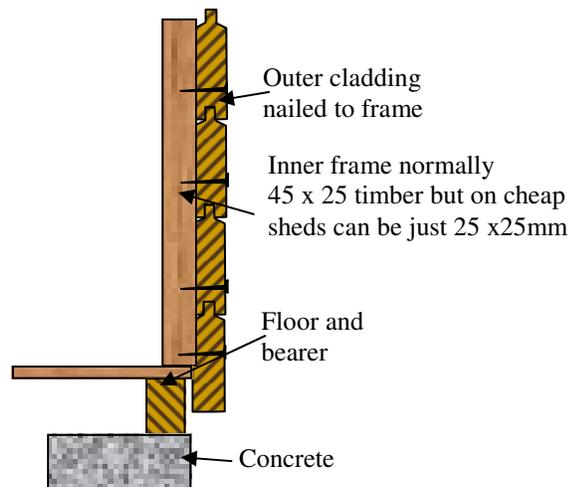
## Traditional or Conventional shed building method.

This method has been used for over a century and is the basis of most construction techniques. A frame is created and then clad over with timber that is nailed or screwed to the frame. Cheap garden buildings have very flimsy frames normally 2"x1" wood, better quality buildings use 2"x2" timber. Cladding Thickness varies from the ridiculous at 8mm thick to 16mm depending on price.

They are great as a shed for storing a few tools or a 'cheapy' summer room style budget building to give some shade BUT the timber walls are not TRULY waterproof, timber lets moisture migrate through which will cause soft furnishing to get mildew and mould on them, Tools rust and the air is damp. Cheap versions also suffer from 'LEANING' as the structures invariably have no inner bracing.

Their only real benefit is that they are cheap but at least they can easily be maintained, if the cladding rots it can be removed and replaced. Average life is 10-12 years if treated regularly but again avoid the cheapest and be very wary of the specification. It is such a competitive market that all manner of cheap materials are used, most not suitable outside for example cheap OSB floors and roofing. They are however perfect for a cheap garden tool shed that is used to hang a garden spade or fork up in. Perhaps a little crude for a building that is going to be occupied even occasionally such as a summerhouse unless you like sitting in a shed.

This building method is used by most commercial garden buildings producers who make models in value from a few hundred pounds to several thousand.



## Upgraded shed / summerhouse building method.

Now the quality is starting to improve dramatically. Here the aim is to create a building that will last for many years and will not require painting every year. This method is representative of most of the better quality suppliers that make garden buildings. Prices start at around £3500 for a small structure and exceed £10000 for a large building. The frames are much stronger and braced diagonally to stop the building leaning. They almost certainly will incorporate vapour barriers, virtually all timber will be pressure treated which means if you miss out on painting it for a few years the wood won't worry or deteriorate. The walls are often lined to protect the Vapour barrier. All fixings are galvanised and the whole structure normally has Membranes and DPCs protecting it from ground water.

This is the sort of minimum standard of say 'The Posh Shed Co.' or 'Crane Garden Buildings.' We use this method for our smaller buildings and by adding a sheet of OSB3 (Orientated strand board) fixed to the wall between the frame and the vapour barrier before cladding can be used to make very large structures. It creates a completely dry stable environment that can be worked in or used as an entertaining space. The building will easily last 30+ years with the absolute minimum of maintenance. The structure is incredibly strong and will withstand any severe weather. We even had one survive a 6" OAK tree bow falling onto it from 30 feet. More expensive but you won't be revisiting it with issues every few years which is important if you plan on developing the space inside. The log cabin in Horsham mentioned earlier had been fitted with a gym, fully lined and heated all at a cost of £6000 so when the building failed all this additional expense was lost as well.

## Ultimate Wall construction for Garden Structures

For some buildings that are to be regularly occupied then it is necessary to create a space and environment similar to that in a house. We are looking for a dry stable space that can be heated in winter and is not too hot in summer. The walls are made with thicker timber frames to allow insulation to be incorporated into them. Walls are clad inside and sheathed with OSB3 capped with a vapour barrier before external cladding. Floors are often laid over a full membrane that stops draughts coming up and again can be insulated. A space like this can easily accommodate living quarters and also cope with electronic equipment which is important if using as an entertainment space or home office.

This method is similar to the standards used by Timber Framed House Builders. Incredibly strong and well insulated it will last with minimum maintenance for decades

This standard of building is strictly associated with Custom Or Bespoke buildings. There are a few specialist suppliers who make 'off the shelf' garden offices to set sizes but most opt for a custom made approach as every application is potentially different.

We have used this method for all sorts of buildings where the client is looking for some sort of occupation.

