



Step by step Log Cabin Buyers Guide

What Is a Log Cabin?

A log cabin can be whatever you want it to be, bar, studio, chill space, entertainment area, or home business. Let your imagination run wild! Log cabins are made from whole logs or cut logs that are fitted together to provide an aesthetically pleasing space in your garden.

Log cabins come in many styles and not all manufacturers offer what you would consider to be standard as 'standard'. This guide will help you by giving you the tools to make an informed decision on what is a long term purchase.



ASK YOURSELF

1

Benefits of owning a log cabin

2

Plan ahead

3

What space do you have available

4

What are you using it for?

5

Do I need planning permission?

1• BENEFITS OF OWNING A LOG CABIN

Log cabins carry a wide range of benefits to make them the perfect addition to your garden or outdoor space. Make sure is manufactured from high-quality Scandinavian timber and supplied with double-glazed windows and a “10-year manufacturer guarantee” on pressure treated timbers, large garden buildings provide an attractive, spacious and long-lasting structure.

Large windows provide your new space with ample natural light to allow use throughout the day without the need for lights to help reduce your electricity output. As with most timber structures, maintenance is important but cabins are easy to maintain through the use of water-based, spirit-based, oil-based, pressure and solvent treatments. Correct maintenance paired with a suitable foundation ensures your log cabin will last for years to come.



2• PLAN AHEAD

Consider what base you are going to need. Are you going to opt for concrete or make use of a pre-existing base such as a patio. Either way, do you require any additional materials?

Check the cabins specification details and remember that these could include overhanging roofs, verandas or other features. Make sure there is enough space for windows and doors to open, check internal square meters to be sure.

Keep an eye out for some competitors offering inward opening windows! They will take up internal space.

Your budget will help you decide on style size and any extras you desire.

Are you thinking of financing your Log Cabin?

The traditional way to finance a Log Cabin is either through savings or via a credit lender such as a Bank. Be aware that rates vary so it pays to shop around. There are several useful sites on the Internet that will give comparisons on costs, ease of obtaining and availability.

Dunster House offer 25% deposits on initial purchases OR you can opt to pay via PayPal in 3 interest free payments over 3 months.



3• WHAT SPACE DO YOU HAVE AVAILABLE?

Go into your Garden and think about where you are going to place the building. If you want to use it as a Summerhouse then consider the sunniest area of the Garden. Make a note of the view you would like to have and enhance, especially if you plan on having a log cabin with lots of windows.

The position will therefore tell you the size of space you have.

Plan on having 1-2 feet of space around the perimeter for maintenance.

If space is at a premium consider a corner log cabin or a cabin with a sidestore so you don't have to buy an additional shed.



4• WHAT ARE YOU USING IT FOR?

Decide what your cabin will be used for and how it will be furnished and decorated. Remember the way you use it may change with the seasons.

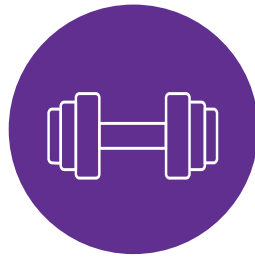
If you're using it all year round consider fully insulating the log cabin, this will keep it warm in Winter and cool in Summer. Look for low uValues, the lower the value, the better the insulation and therefore lower energy costs.



PUB SHEDS & MANCAVES



LOUNGES



HOME GYM



GARDEN OFFICES



BEAUTY SALON



STORAGE SHEDS



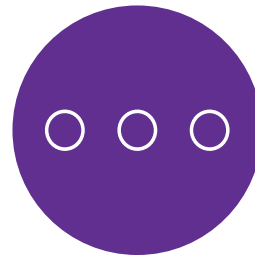
ARTS & CRAFT



PLAY ROOM



HOT TUBS



OTHERS

NEED INSPIRATION?

Mancaves



Pub Sheds



Beauty Rooms



Art Studios



Craft Cabins



Garden Offices



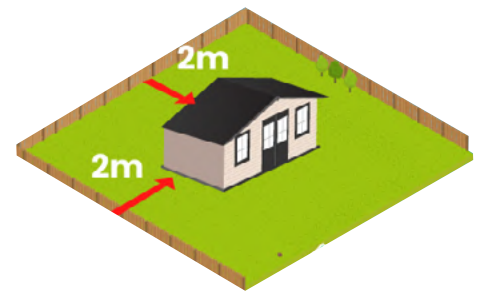
WHY DO THESE STEPS MATTER?

A budget, when properly done, gives you a full view of your project, in this case a log cabin. It should include the costs of making the base, the cabin itself, any builder or hired help you may need, preservatives or paint.



Be aware that some of the features that you would expect as standard may be charged as extras by some competitors such as roof, floor, air vents and even storm braces.

Knowing the space you have available will help you identify the size of cabin you will be able to purchase, the size of cabin will also help you determine whether or not you will need planning permission.



Knowing what you're going to be using it for, will help you identify what wall thickness you will need and whether or not you will need to add roof or floor insulation or maybe opt for a fully insulated log cabin.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Average annual train ticket for commuters is estimated around £5000.

This makes a garden log cabin an extremely cost effective option for working from home. It pays for itself, over 10 years that's £50,000 in train tickets.

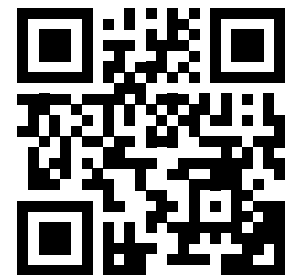
5• DO I NEED PLANNING PERMISSION?

For planning purposes, log cabins fall into the outbuilding category. Most do not require planning permission. However, permission is required under any of the following circumstances:

- The log cabin is not for domestic use
- It will be sited to the front of the property's principal elevation
- It is over 3m high with pent roof
- It is over 4m high with an apex roof
- It is within 2 metres of the property boundary and over 2.5m high
- It will result in over half of the property's surrounding land being covered

If in doubt, or if the property is in a protected area, consult the local planning office

TAKE OUR PLANNING QUIZ



CHOOSE YOUR WALL THICKNESS

Now you've outlined what you are using your log cabin for you should be able to determine what wall thickness you will need. Keeping in mind the thicker the better, however this does not mean you need to have the thickest walls. It may be a luxury you don't need.

28mm Cabins

28mm walls are almost 50% bigger than a 19mm wall and are ideal for larger buildings for seasonal use. (U-Value 2.59 W/m² K)



34mm Cabins

Our 34mm walls contain over 20% more wood than a 28mm wall. (U-Value 2.26 W/m² K)



45mm Cabins

45mm walls contain over 60% more wood than a 28mm wall and are ideal for use all-year-round. (U-Value 1.93 w/m² k)



62mm Cabins

62mm insulated walls are a sandwich of timber and polyisocyanurate. An innovative concept which helps retain heat far better than Rockwool or polystyrene. It produces a U-Value equivalent to 140mm wall thickness. (U-Value 0.69 w/m² k)
Cool in the summer.
Warm in the winter.



The lower the U value, the better.

PERSONAL PREFERENCES

Once you've established all your technical needs, you can start to choose a cabin which best suits your garden and taste.

Log cabins come in a wide variety of styles including traditional and contemporary, as well as more specific designs. For a traditional log cabin, look for chalet cut corners and apex roofs. For a modern log cabin, look for pent roofs and an abundance of glazing.

Corner cabins, cabins with statement overhanging roofs, cabins with verandas and log cabins with sheltered exterior space are just a few of the styles available.

Think about the use of the log cabin when deciding on style; for example, an overhanging roof can protect a computer screen from glare.

Some log cabins are ideal for multi-purpose use. Log cabins with integral sheds maximise space in the garden. The shed doesn't just have to be used for tools; it could store office files, gym equipment or art materials, for example, they allow for combining an office with a gym or mixing family entertainment space with a hobby studio.

Keep in mind any additional access points and windows when planning out the space in your garden.



CHOOSE YOUR ROOF & STYLE



PENT ROOF

A pent roof offers a more modern design for a log cabin. The roof typically slopes backwards, allowing for additional headroom at the entrance. Many companies will give you the option of changing the configuration, so the entrance can be placed on the low side of the cabin.



APEX ROOF

An apex roof provides the more traditional look of a log cabin. This design allows for increased headroom in the centre of the building. Many apex log cabins also feature an overhang to protect the building from rainfall. Make sure you do not install apex log cabins too close to a boundary fence, as the dual pitched roof could cause rainwater to pour into your neighbour's garden.



MODERN/SALTBOX ROOF

Saltbox/modern roofs work well in northern climates with mild to heavy snow and rainfall. Since they have no flat parts, they prevent rain or snow from settling on the roof. They can endure strong winds and are easy to maintain.

CORNER CABINS



A modern log cabin, designed to fit perfectly in the corner of your garden. Useful for where you have an unused area.

MULTIROOM CABINS



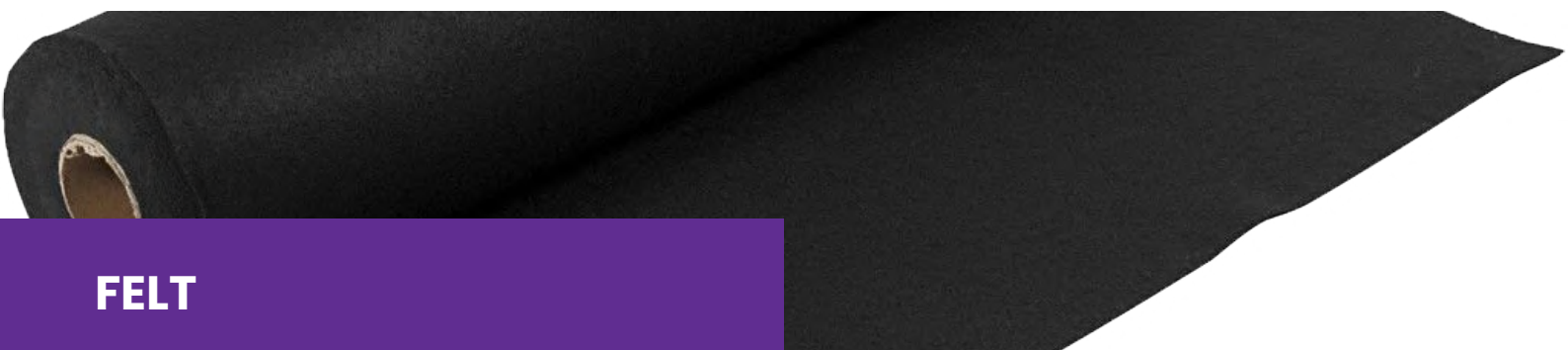
As it says these are cabins that have more than one room. Very useful when you have different uses in mind for your cabin and restricted garden space.

SIDESTORE CABINS



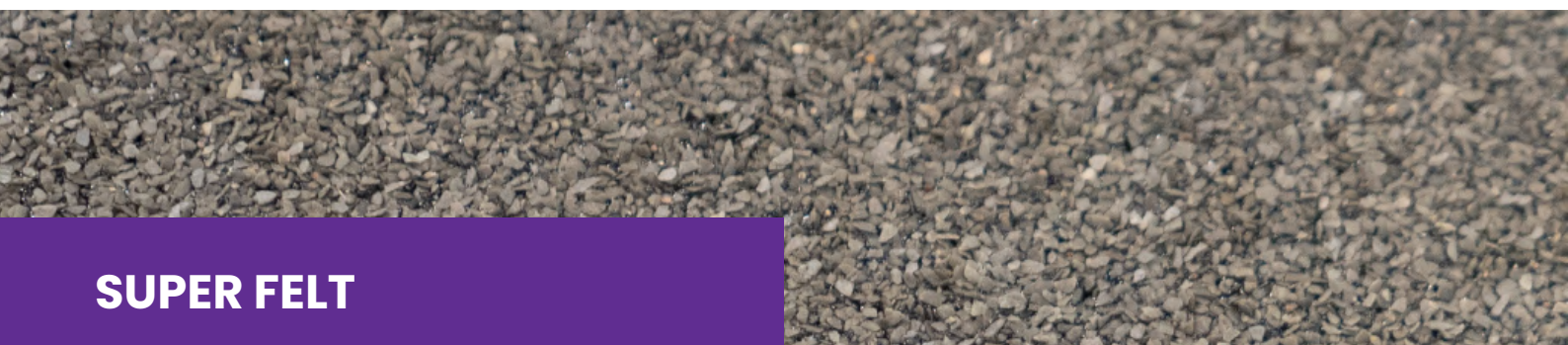
These are cabins that provide a 'shed' like additional storage area, saving room in your garden as you do not need a further expense of another building.

WHAT ROOF MATERIAL SHOULD I USE?



FELT

Standard shed felt is formed of bitumen impregnated fibres, is supplied on a roll and lasts about 5 years. Cheap felt is often supplied as standard on pre-made sheds to keep the 'sticker' price down. The standard garden shed roof covering is cheap roofing felt. This system does the job of keeping the water out but is fragile and relatively short-lived. A bit of unseen damage to the shed roofing will allow water in, and cause damage to the structure of the shed/log cabin.



SUPER FELT

An improved version of the shed felt uses a base of polyester fibres impregnated with bitumen is more durable and lasts for up to 15 years. The longer lasting felt is a very sensible upgrade.



SHINGLES

Using bitumen shingles is a good step up in quality from bitumen roll roofing. Three-tab shingles are laid starting at the bottom of the roof. The shingles overlap each other by about 150 mm, at the ridge a capping piece is used.

This roof finish is a vast improvement on using a roll of Mineral felt and is much more durable.

NOW YOU'VE SELECTED YOUR CABIN, IT'S TIME TO PREPARE YOUR GARDEN

WHAT BASE SHOULD I USE?

As with any building the base is key. For problem free longevity a log cabin must be built on a strong level surface. If you are using an existing base ensure it is level and damage free before installation.

If installing on grass or rocks, tree roots and other obstructions must be removed. A damp-proof membrane should be used then a poured concrete base, concrete slabs such as an existing patio or plastic base can be constructed.

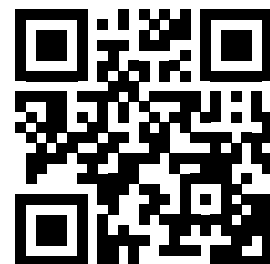


Alternatively Dunster House's RapidGrid Foundation System is a cost effective and environmentally friendly alternative to concrete foundations. Costing much less than a concrete base would, the RapidGrid Foundation does not ruin the surrounding soil and needs very little soil to be removed compared to if you were laying a concrete base.

It is made up of weed control membrane and high quality, heavy duty plastic grids. These grids interlock for ease of placement and to help with rigidity, creating a strong support that spreads the weight of the building across the ground under the entire building.

Please note with this system you will need to purchase pea shingle type stones from a local builder's merchant to fill the grids with.

WATCH OUR VIDEO ABOUT THE RAPIDGRID SYSTEM



LOG CABINS F.A.Q

What Is A Log Cabin?

A Log Cabin is a garden building constructed using individual lengths of timber (logs), which interlock to form a solid structure. Log Cabins can have numerous uses, such as a garden retreat or garden office, an extra family room, a games room, a music room, a gym... the list is endless.

Our Log Cabins are made from slow-grown spruce, and feature pressure treated bearers, 4mm toughened glass and domestic locking systems.

Do I Need Planning Permission?

Due to the unique design of a Dunster House product, in the vast majority of cases our garden buildings can be installed without the need for planning permission.

However, there are a few other factors to consider:

As all properties are different in size, shape and style we can only advise based on how we have designed our products, not on your property.

When to consider planning permission :

- If the garden building exceeds over 2.5m tall - the majority of Dunster House buildings do not exceed this.
- If you intend on putting an outbuilding in front of the main elevation of your property (as it was originally built or as it was on 1st July 1948) will require Planning Permission.
- If you live in a listed or graded building
- If you live in a designated area such as areas of outstanding natural beauty, national parks, world heritage sites and conservation areas.
- If there is a possibility that over 50% of your garden would be taken up by outbuildings.

What Are U-Values?

U-values tell us about the heat loss properties of the material you are measuring. The lower the number, the better insulated the Log Cabin will be.

How To Keep My Log Cabin Warm?

There are several options available when looking at how to keep your log cabin warm. Firstly, if you are only planning to use your log cabin occasionally, we would just recommend putting in a small electric heater in the cabin.

However, if you are planning to use your log cabin all year round for either business purposes or a play area etc, we offer different wall thicknesses on our cabins. 28mm, 45mm and 62mm (insulated) are the options available.

We have designed a unique concept - the Warmalog range, which is our insulated range of cabins. The cabin walls, roof and floor have all been insulated with polyisocyanurate to help you keep warm in the winter and cool in the summer. The wall thickness is equivalent to having a standard cabin with walls 140mm thick.

IMPORTANT FEATURES TO LOOK OUT FOR

Windows

Lower quality log cabins may be supplied with windows that are less than fit for purpose. Be wary if cheap materials are used such as styrene instead of glass.

Styrene is notorious for scratching and becoming brittle over time. Not only that, styrene is going to be far less effective in protecting you from the elements when compared to double-glazed sealed units.

Look for toughened glass too. It's far safer than non-toughened glass because it's going to be more resistant to knocks.



Handles and Doors

Why opt for a low-quality finish? Ensure the cabin you source is supplied with domestic style window and door handles rather than cheap stay arms and cheap shed quality handles and locks.

If you're investing in a new log cabin, why not make sure that it's extra special?

Ensure the windows and doors open outwards. Some cabins sold on the market may open inwards taking up valuable internal space!



Locking systems

Keeping your belongings secure will for most people be of high importance to most.

Make sure the cabin you are after takes advantage of multi-point locking systems rather than basic locking systems which are more suited to cheap sheds. Most log cabin companies only supply a multi-purpose stay arm opener for both locking and keeping the window open.



Not all timber is equal!

Ensure that the best quality timber is sourced for your cabin. Fail to do so, and you may experience a number of issues. Spruce is considered more stable as it expands and contracts less than pine. This stability means that spruce walls minimise gaps appearing as the timber changes along with the weather.

Timber should be responsibly sourced, where it grows slowly in the cold northern regions.

This will mean that the timber has a tighter grain and widely spaced rings. Each ring helps prevent cracks and shakes from appearing in the densely packed timber.

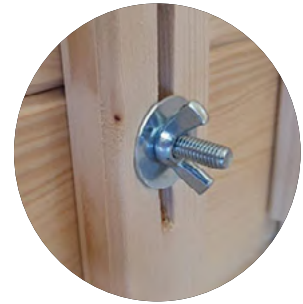


It's the little things that matter...

Storm Braces

Any good quality cabin should be provided with air vents and more importantly, they shouldn't be charged at an extra cost.

Adjustable storm braces allow for natural movement of the cabin, which helps prevent gaps from appearing between wall logs as the logs settle and move. It also helps to protect the cabin in adverse weather conditions.



Air vents

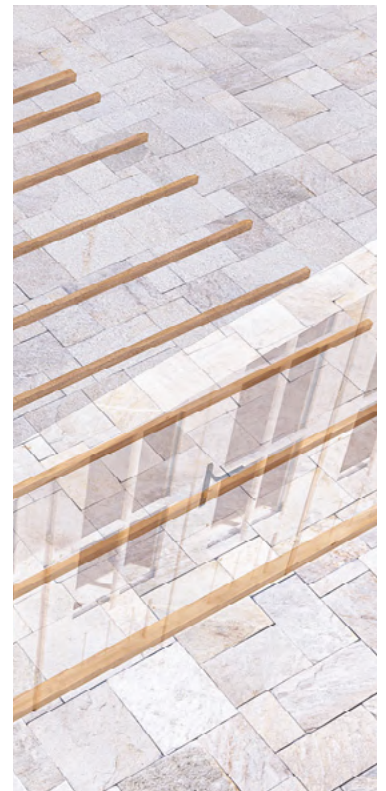
This is to ensure airflow and minimise moisture at all times. Some competitors charge you extra for these or again, do not even offer them.



Pressure Treated Bearers

Always look out for pressure-treated bearers as they are exposed to the damp, cold ground. This treatment will prevent them from rot, decay, and insect infestation for up to 10 years.

Shockingly some competitors offer untreated bearers to keep their costs down. Who wants to have to annually deconstruct and re-treat the bearers each year!



INSTALLING YOUR CABIN



Even if you have strong DIY skills, be aware that constructing a log cabin is usually a two-person task due to the size and weight of the various components involved. An instruction manual will be provided and Dunster House also provide links to videos that will support construction.

You can find construction videos on our YouTube channel about:

- Drilling Bearers
- Lower Walls
- Door Frame Construction
- SMB Brackets
- Connection Boards
- Apex & Purlings
- Roof Boards
- Internal Apex Trim
- Floor Insulation
- Storm Braces
- Roof Insulation
- Fascia Boards
- Vents



HOW DO I LOOK AFTER MY LOG CABIN?

Your Log Cabin is made from a natural product, wood. Wood by its very nature absorbs moisture when wet and when dry will expel any retained water.

This causes cracking and warping. To stop this, it is recommended that, as soon as construction is completed a preservative is applied to the exterior.

It can be water or oil based, typically paint does the job remarkably well but use a good quality exterior one. This should be done every few years to preserve your cabins good looks and extend your investment.



FEATURE AS STANDARD AND INCLUDED IN PRICE	Dunster House 28mm Log Cabins	45mm Log Cabins	Warmalogs & Dominator	Competitor 1	Competitor 2	Competitor 3	Competitor 4	Competitor 5	Competitor 6
10 Year Pressure Treated Guarantee	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Vents Included	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Pre assembled Windows	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗
Wide Opening Windows	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Multi Point Locking Windows	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Internally Beaded Windows	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
4mm Toughened Glass	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Pressure Treated Floor Bearers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
19mm T&G Floor	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
19mm T&G Roof	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
Adjustable Storm Braces	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Insulation Available on all Cabins	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗
Insulation Fitted as Standard	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Double Glazed Windows on 45mm or greater Cabins	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓

Log cabins - Buyers Guide

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