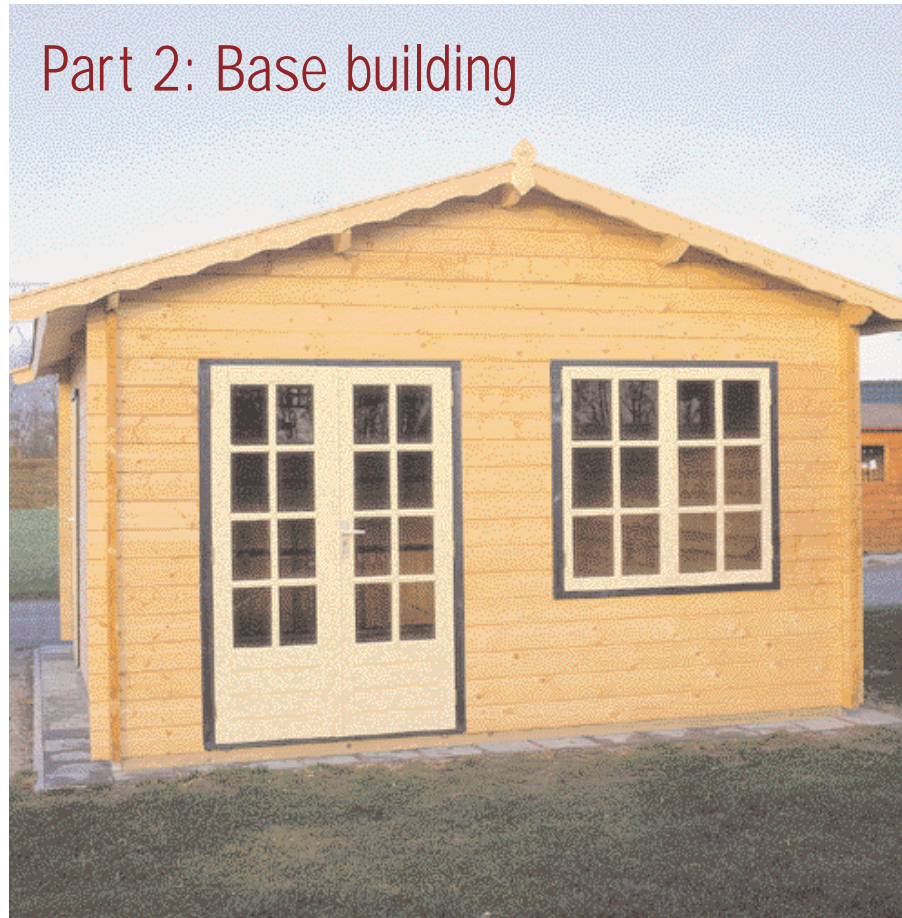


Part 2: Base building



Preparation is the key to all woodwork projects and workshop construction is no exception. Mark Ramuz shows how to prepare for your new workshop

Our log cabin was delivered on a 35 tonne truck direct from the Dutch factory and dead on time. The cabin arrived in three wrapped pallet loads: the windows and doors; the roof and floor and the wall beams. The T&G 44mm thick planed softwood beams sit on pressure treated sole plates that lock together at the corners. It's worth asking the driver to place the pallets separately rather than stacked so that you can keep the roof and floor under wraps while you work on the wall construction. Also supplied is a checklist of all the parts, fixings, roofing and instructions.

Once you've decided on the location, shape and size of your workshop, it's time to move on to the hard work of forming a level base. You may be lucky enough to have an existing concrete pad or paved area which is dry and level. Otherwise, you will need to prepare the area. You may need to build a retaining wall and dig out more subsoil on a sloping site. It pays to invest in a 6-8ft long spirit level and builders' square to check you have a flat, symmetrical base.

Step-by-step

1 Our site slopes sharply away from the rear fence of the garden. The first job is to level the 4x5m area, remembering to add at least another 300mm all around so that rainwater and earth don't build up at the cabin base. You can use the pre-treated sole plates as a guide. Clear away any large rocks and roots. This site slopes steeply so the front of the cabin will be supported on a deck frame.



2 To keep down weeds, lay a nylon membrane across the area. This is available from garden centres and builders' merchants for around £15 per 1x12m roll.

3 Continue to lay the sheet around the vulnerable areas. It's not essential to cover the inner section as this will be covered with flooring anyway.

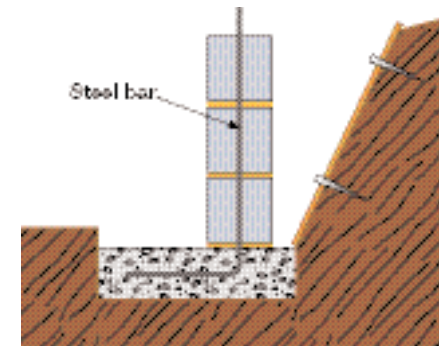
4 Providing the ground has been well compacted, you can lay the sole plates directly on to paving slabs, placed around the perimeter of the workshop.



Use 50mm of sand or MOT type 1 aggregate to level any uneven areas and form a base for the paving slabs. It's a good idea to make you base at least



1st class cabin



Build retaining walls from stone, brick or blockwork. Use angled steel bar to reinforce the wall to its full height. Don't build this type of structure above 1m high

150mm bigger all around so that you can add a layer of gravel around the edge. This will stop water building up or splashing on the cabin sides.

5 As the site has such a steep slope, the front section of the cabin will project over the retaining boards and be supported on 4in square fence post uprights. These will have 4x2in sawn cross beams bolted to the front and back of the uprights. The front beams will support the front of the workshop and the back sections will support the floor



Figure 1 Area marked out with guide lines

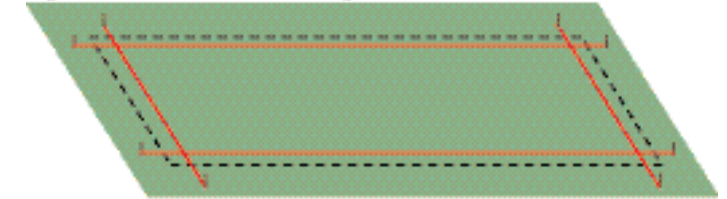


Figure 2 Completed formwork

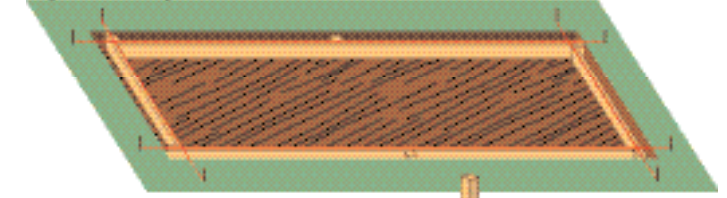


Figure 3 Level hardcore

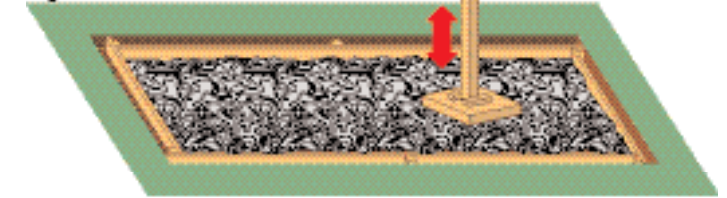


Figure 4 Compact the concrete with a plank

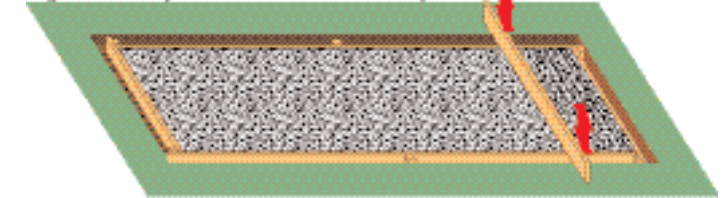
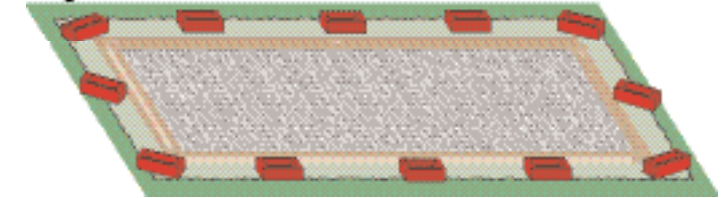
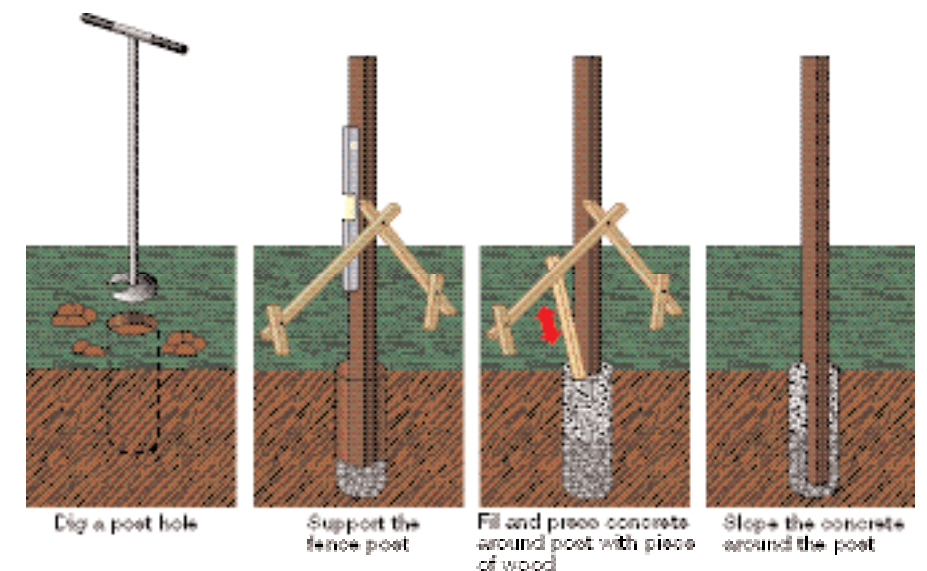


Figure 5 Cover pad with sheets of polythene, weighted down with bricks



How to fix timber uprights to build a deck



WORKSHOP

edge. Quick-setting cement is a fast and accurate way of positioning the uprights. Don't use steel fence spikes. The sole plate has been temporarily nailed to the posts to check the levels.

We used one of the new 8ft BMI spirit levels imported from Germany by Brimarc. These have twin extra-large horizontal bubbles that can be viewed from the sides as well as overhead.



6 To support the cabin sides, the 4x2in timbers are coach bolted to the 4in uprights. Check the sole plates are horizontal then drill through the timbers. Quick cramps are ideal for holding the pieces in the correct position.

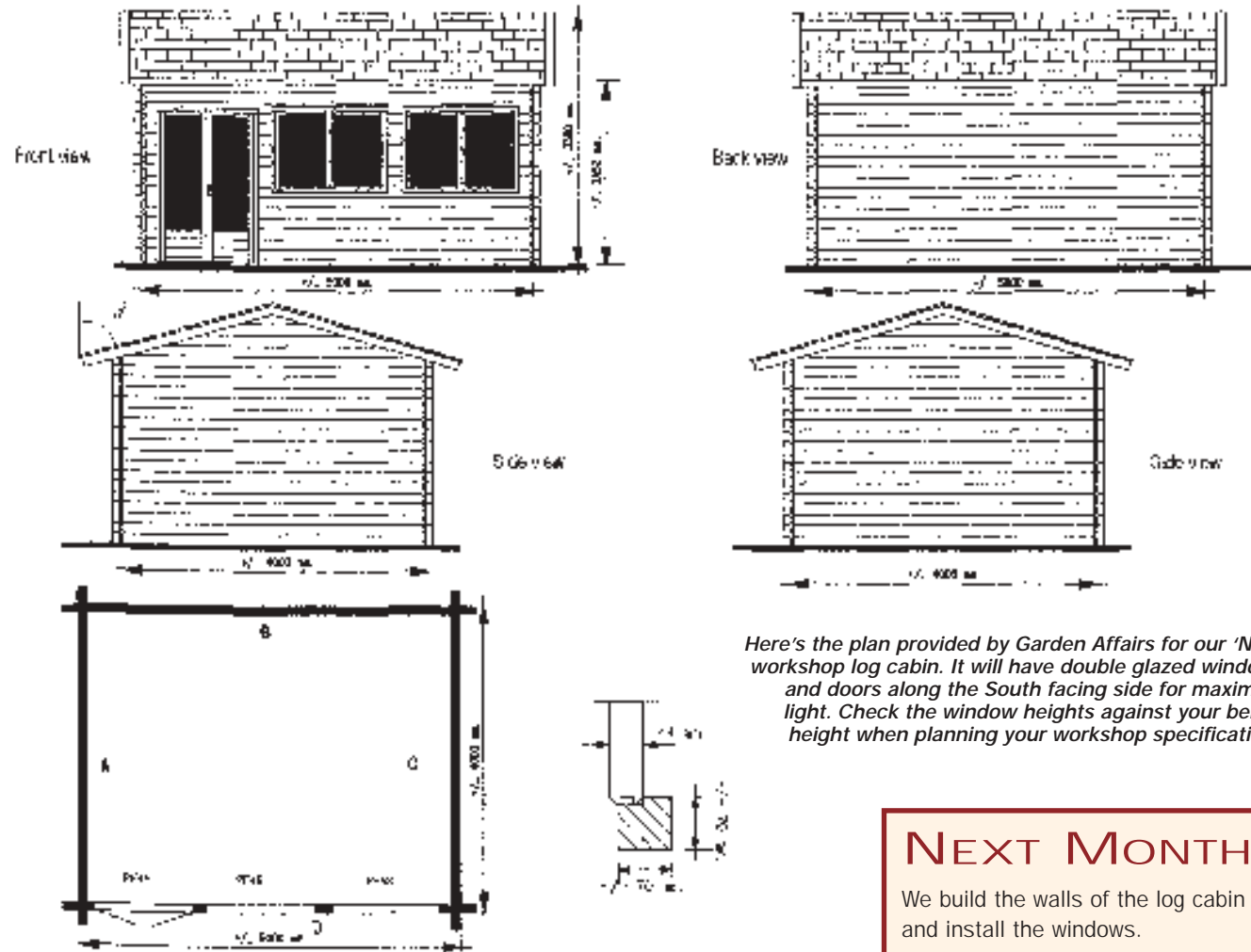
7 Fit two coach bolts per upright and tighten. Position these diagonally across the timber face for strength and tighten. Saw off any excess bolts.



Useful information

Our Lugarde log cabin and all buildings shown here supplied by **Garden Affairs Ltd**
 ☎ 01225 470372,
 fax: 01225 442855
www.gardenaffairs.co.uk
 BMI spirit levels supplied by **Brimarc**
 ☎ 0845 6590000

Of course you don't have to stick to a square or rectangular shape for the workshop (Ludgarde)



Here's the plan provided by Garden Affairs for our 'Nick' workshop log cabin. It will have double glazed windows and doors along the South facing side for maximum light. Check the window heights against your bench height when planning your workshop specifications

NEXT MONTH

We build the walls of the log cabin and install the windows.