

A Prefabricated Site Hut

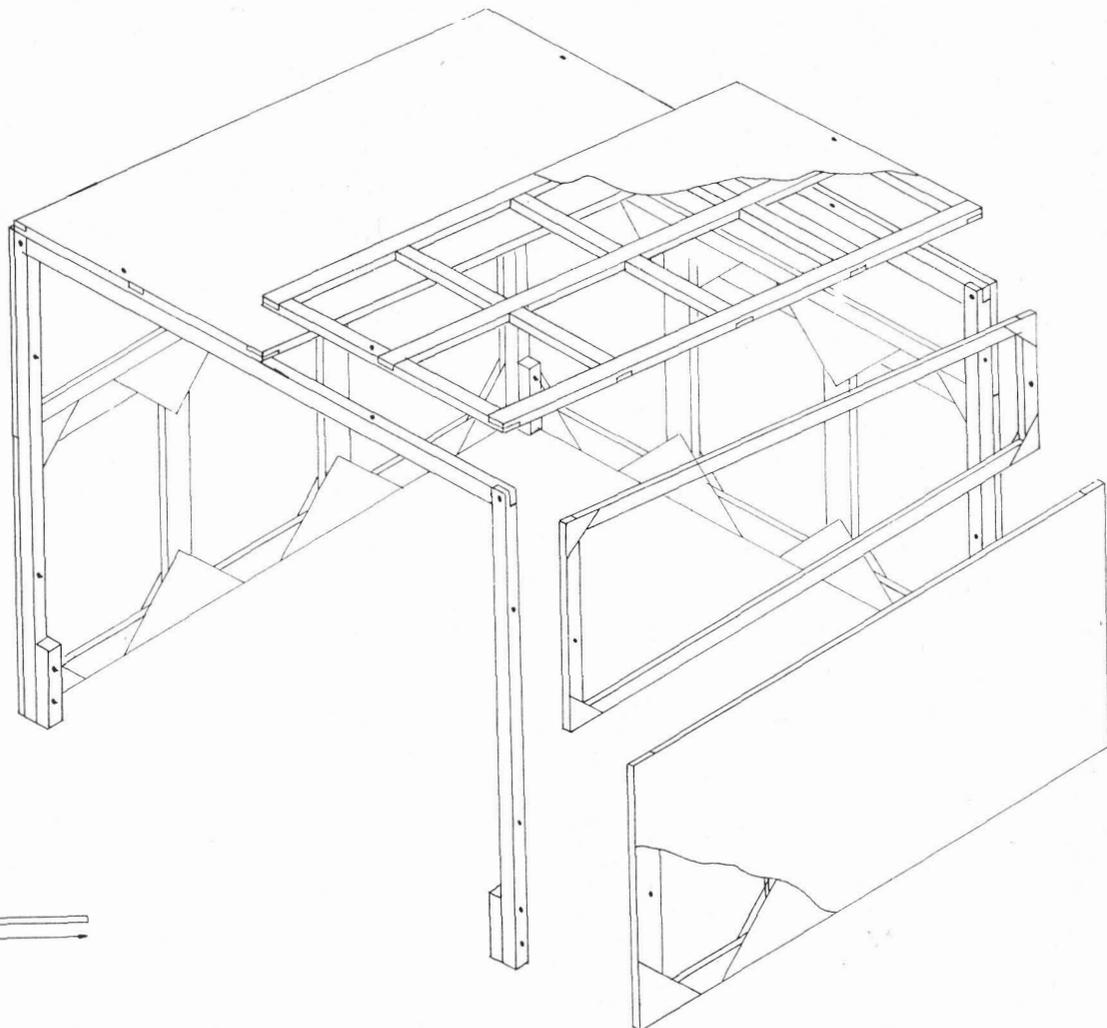
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MODERN EXCAVATION TECHNIQUES require a good deal of detailed on-site recording, making some form of site office a necessity. Unfortunately huts or caravans are very expensive, and are prime targets for vandals. The Hendon and District Archaeological Society have tried to overcome this problem at our West Heath site by providing a cheap, rapidly assembled and easily transportable structure which can if necessary be left stacked on the site, and which when erected provides adequate shelter for the administrative work of the dig to be carried out in reasonable comfort.

The 'foundations' of the hut consist of four wooden stakes which protrude about 30cm (1ft) above ground level at each corner and are the only

parts of the structure that have to remain on site. To these are bolted four uprights, the front pair being a little higher than the back to allow the roof to slope. Each pair is connected by a cross bar so that the finished framework resembles two sets of football goals. The wooden stakes and the framework are of 50mm (2in) square timber.

The largest sheet which can easily be handled by one person and also be easily carried on a car roof rack is about 2.4 by 1.2 metres (8ft x 4ft). The three sides of our structure (the front is left open) are thus constructed each in two pieces, a lower frame about 2.4 by 1.2m and an upper one of about 2.4 by 0.9 (8ft x 3ft) sloping to 0.6 metres (2ft). The simplest construction method for the lower frame appears to



be to use an outer frame of fairly wide but thin timber—old floorboards being ideal. The timber is cut to length and simply butted together, the joints being made by nailing triangles of hardboard (of short side about 30cm (1ft)) on both sides of the timber at each corner. The outer skin of the frame is probably best made of hardboard (ordinary interior quality seems to be satisfactory), but thick polythene sheet will also work. The upper frame can use smaller section timber (about 25 by 50mm or 1 x 2in), using the same jointing method. On our hut the upper frames are glazed in transparent polythene sheet.

The roof of the structure is again most conveniently made in 2.4 by 1.2 metre (8ft x 4ft) sections. Timber of 38 by 50mm (1½ by 2in) section, half-lap jointed and screwed and with cross bearers every half metre (foot and a half), form a satisfactory frame. The simplest, though perhaps the most expensive, sort of roofing is corrugated PVC sheeting. If this material is used a waterproof seal between the frames can be made by simply allowing the sheet to overlap the edge of one frame, so that it covers the joint when in position. All the frame sections and the roof are bolted to the uprights. Bolts of 75 by 10mm (3 by 3/8in) size are used for the cross bars and of 115 by 10mm (4½ by 3/8in) for the rest of the struc-

ture. The use of butterfly nuts considerably speeds assembly, particularly when it is being carried out by the inexperienced. Metal washers should always be used to prevent damage to the timber.

This provides a hut 2.4 metres (8ft) square, though of course there is no reason why by adding more uprights and frames its could not be a good deal larger. Also provision of one extra upright at the front would allow a door to be fitted. The use of corrugated PVC for windows instead of polythene sheeting would then produce a relatively secure structure which could if necessary be left assembled.

The hut can be erected by an experienced person in about 10 minutes. Our first hut is now in its second season of use, and has been erected more than a hundred times. We have found that if each upright and its adjacent frame sides and cross bar ends are given a code letter it is an easy matter for even 'first time' erectors to work out where each piece goes.

A brief list of materials required is given below. It should be emphasised that our hut was built from secondhand materials for no more than a few pounds but that, if new, the cost would be in the order of £56. There is no reason why the design should not be adapted to suit whatever is available.

Materials required:—

No.	Length	Dimension	Use
4	0.9m (3ft)	50 x 50 sawn (2 x 2in)	Stakes
2	1.8m (6ft)	„ „	Uprights
2	2.1m (7ft)	„ „	Uprights
2	2.4m (8ft)	„ „	Crossbars
6	2.4m (8ft)	25 x 100 sawn (1 x 4in)	Frame sections
12	1.2m (4ft)	„ „	Frame sections
3	1.2m by 2.4m (4 x 8ft)	Hardboards	Frame skins
6	2.4m (8ft)	25 x 50 sawn(1 x 2in)	Frame sections
6	0.9m (3ft)	„ „	Frame sections
	Polythene sheet		Frame skins
6	2.4m (8ft)	38 x 50 sawn (1½ x 2in)	Roof sections
8	1.2m (4ft)	„ „	Roof sections
4	2.4 by 0.75m (8 x 2½ft)	Corrugated PVC	Roof
24	116 by 10mm bolts		
4	75 by 10mm bolts		