



Storage cupboards form part of an outdoor kitchen on an urban roof terrace project by Pre-Registered SGD Member Katharina Nikl

STORAGE SOLUTIONS

A mix of integrated thinking and creative ideas can banish bins and outdoor clutter from a client's garden for good, as **Annie Guilfoyle** explains

I have a pathological loathing of wheelie bins. I understand that they are both practical and necessary, but that doesn't stop them from being utterly unattractive. I also find it intriguing that people seem quite content to have them lurking in front gardens, dominating the streetscape like redundant Daleks.

I realise it's unavoidable for those who live in terraced houses, where side access is restricted or non-existent. The simple solution would be to build storage to conceal them, but unfortunately building any form of shed in the front garden is not permitted. Planning restrictions state that "an outbuilding

on land forward of a wall forming the principal elevation is not allowed". I can understand to a certain extent why we have this regulation, but if the planners were to advise on and control the design of the bin storage, surely a modest structure with a green roof would be a marked improvement?

For my clients, I automatically include bin storage into the garden's design and, where possible, I will include a green roof into the unit – that way it looks so much better when viewed from above. If you are designing bin storage, ensure that you take accurate measurements of the bins and remember to do this with the lid both open and closed. Most local authorities offer a variety of different bin sizes, so make sure you are aware of the correct dimensions if you don't have the bins on site to measure. Some local authorities supply up to three wheelie bins and may also issue smaller recycling boxes.

The height of the bin store will depend on whether you want the bins to remain inside the store when being filled. If so, the roof will need to be considerably higher than the bins. If you prefer the roof to be lower, the alternative is to pull the bin out slightly to open the lid. You could incorporate an opening lid into the store itself but it will need to have hooks or struts to keep it open while the bins are being filled. A top-opening bin store would also rule out being able to include a green roof.

On my own bin store, I have combined two bin compartments with a small log store section to one side (see page 34). To give the store visual impact and provide a habitat for insects I have used a variety of different natural materials to create the walls and doors. The materials include lengths of bamboo, cut rounds of timber, thin silver birch branches from my own tree and

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hazel sticks. The materials are sandwiched in between two sheets of weldmesh, which keeps it all firmly together while still allowing visibility. This is topped with a green roof where I grow a mixture of alpines and herbs.

When designing log stores, the most important thing is to determine what the average length of wood will be once cut and stacked – logs used in wood burners generally need to be shorter in length. Decide whether the logs are going to be stacked one row deep to form a tall, narrow pile, or deeper with a few rows. Firewood should be kept dry and sheltered from prevailing rain, so try to position the store where the rain will not blow in, or include an overhanging roof in the design to keep the wood dry. If you are building a tall and narrow log store, it will need to be stabilised for safety and require fixings to secure it to the wall.

For a recent commission in a West London garden, my clients requested a tall log store to hold a large quantity of logs. It was to be located on a narrow wall underneath an overhanging balcony. I designed a Corten steel unit that was fabricated by a company called Outdoor Design, based in West Sussex. It was constructed in large square sections; each square was then subdivided into four triangular segments. This allowed the wood to be stacked in any of the triangular segments, enabling the clients to easily remove the wood without it all collapsing. Once fabricated it was extremely heavy, requiring brackets to fix it to the wall. However, the brackets were well hidden by the wood.

Integrated solutions

Particularly when designing small gardens, I try to include adequate storage and, if possible, incorporate the storage into other features – seating can double up as a storage box for tools, toys or cushions, for example. Take note when designing storage for cushions. It should be completely damp-proof, or you will get mould patches on the fabric that are almost impossible to remove. Retaining walls are another feature where it is often possible to incorporate storage cupboards; these can be built up in block work and then faced with wooden doors.

Outdoor kitchens and built-in barbecues are becoming more commonplace in UK gardens, and there are companies that will design and install to your specifications. For the outdoor kitchen of an urban roof garden, Pre-Registered SGD Member Katharina



Photo: GAP Photos



Photo: The Posh Shed Company

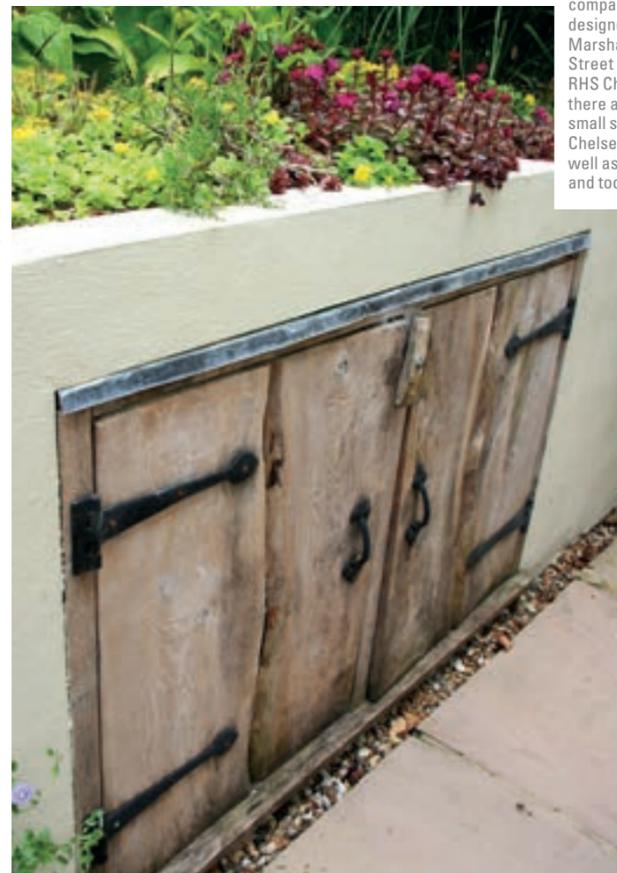


Photo: Annie Guilfoyle

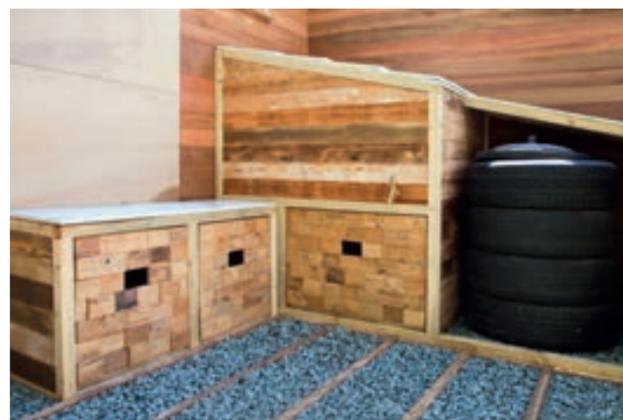


Photo: GAP Photos/Rob Whitworth



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT This bespoke wooden storage unit is used to conceal a tap and hose but with a lock it could function as a bike store; Annie Guilfoyle designed this log store and had it made for a nook in a small garden; cupboards integrated into a retaining wall; seating with built-in storage and a compost bin compartment on designer Ian Dexter's Marshalls Living Street Garden at RHS Chelsea 2009; there are clever small sheds like The Chelsea available, as well as half sheds and tool cupboards

Photo: Annie Guilfoyle



Photo: Annie Guilfoyle

ABOVE The combi log-and-bin store with green roof in Annie's own garden

RIGHT Cleverly hidden storage in a raised planter at the Mien Ruys Garden in the Netherlands

Nikl designed extra storage cabinets, as the roof was one storey above the kitchen. These units provide ample space for cooking utensils, as well as somewhere to store items such as lanterns. During the summer, additional cushions and blankets are also stored here to save the clients walking up and down the stairs.

Bicycle stores are often requested by clients who may not have a garage in which to store them. Bikes can be hung vertically or horizontally – but it can get more complex if you have a whole family of bikes to house, as they are tricky to stack together and require a surprising amount of space. They may also include ground anchors so it is possible to lock the bikes inside.

Off-the-shelf bike stores can vary in design from large, lockable tin boxes to rather nifty wooden cupboards with sliding floors and green roofs. If you don't think you can better the basic design, you could buy a basic tin-box model and clad it to disguise the contents and make it more visually appealing. ○

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- www.gardentrellis.co.uk/page/ bespoke/ stores/ bin-stores
- www.thebinstorecompany.co.uk/about
- www.outdoordesign.co.uk/
- www.asgardsss.co.uk/bike-cycle-storage



Photo: GAP Photos/Brian North