



## Can't get me out of my shed

**M**an's last bastion, the humble shed, has been taken over by women looking for a bolt-hole.

New research shows that 40 per cent of women now use sheds to house entertainment dens, meditation rooms, offices and even miniature spas.

One-and-a-half million sheds and timber buildings were sold last year, according to the report by Standard Life Bank and The Future Laboratory.

Analysts claim the report indicates a move away from open-plan living towards 're-compartmentalism'. Some say it will not be long before Victorian terms such as parlour, salon and

boudoir are once again in common usage in the home.

The report found that space-poor 'Shedites' are using sheds as a way of extending living space without the need for planning permission. The additions also offer a sound investment, with timber buildings adding up to five per cent to the value of a property.

The research, based on a survey of more than 1,000 householders and property experts, also found that one in three people believes a home office adds value to a house. Nearly 75 per cent of Londoners and Midlandsers said they had second offices at home.

A quarter of those surveyed

want a spa or gym at home, while one in ten believes a wine cellar is a selling point. Staying in is definitely the new 'going out' with 70 per cent of homeowners admitting they catch up with friends at home.

The report also found that bathrooms have evolved into 'wellness' rooms packed with de-stressing aids such as mood lighting and essential oils.

But the dining room is dying a death with the sitting room now considered to be the focus of the house. Only 1.2 per cent of those surveyed thought a dining room was important, while many admitted their dining tables served as makeshift desks.

One woman who has fully embraced the 'joy of shedism' is Morag Myerscough, a designer who lives and works in a five-storey house in Clerkenwell, Central London. She has created a unique 'hut-on-a-roof', housing a kitchen and dining area and converted the downstairs into her shop. The 41-year-old said:

'The roof hut is very much my retreat. I go up there to cook and it's where I bring my friends to socialise. In my bedroom I have a Victorian bath in the middle of the room and it's a very feminine space. I also have a living room with an enormous TV, which I escape to at the end of the day.'