

First came the man cave, now the gran cave is all the rage

By *Katie Morley and Lydia Willgress*

SOARING property prices and planning restrictions are driving growing numbers of people to live in “posh sheds” at the bottom of gardens, experts have said.

Campaigners for homeowners said customers are “getting creative” and saving thousands by picking larger cabins to use as permanent homes.

There was a 15 per cent increase in mentions of log cabins on UK property listings between 2015 and 2016, according to figures from website Rightmove.

Unlike so-called granny annexes, cabins are often deemed outbuildings and so do not usually require planning permission.

Provided they are an extension of the main home, and not a separate residence, they are also not liable for stamp

duty or council tax. Among those to become a shed dweller is self-styled “lady in the lodge” Val Dawson, who moved into a lodge in October last year.

The 78-year-old chose to live in a cabin, which has a shower and a double bed and seating area, in her son Chris’s garden in Cheshire.

“My son had the idea of getting me in before I needed any caring. At first, being a very independent lady, I didn’t really want to sit in his garden for the rest of my days, however the more we thought about, that I wouldn’t have to pay council tax, it seemed to make sense,” the grandmother-of-seven said.

“I think overall it was around £50,000, so much cheaper than a house.”

Paula Higgins, chief executive of the Homeowner’s Alliance, said: “Thanks to stamp duty the cost of moving is so high that it just loses people money, so instead they are being creative with their space.”



Valerie Dawson, the “lady in the lodge”, lives in her son’s garden in Knutsford

