

## VICTORIAN PLAYHOUSE



This project is one of the most beautiful yet challenging projects we will present. This particular house was built by a builder for a home show competition for playhouses.

It won!

It may not be more difficult to build than a simple playhouse, but it has more detail and trim work which dramatically increases the time and expense. This house follows typical building practices of residential construction such as framed walls with sheathing, covered by siding on the outside and drywall on the inside. The only thing it is missing is the wall insulation!

Before we go further, let's cover some of the rules for this project:

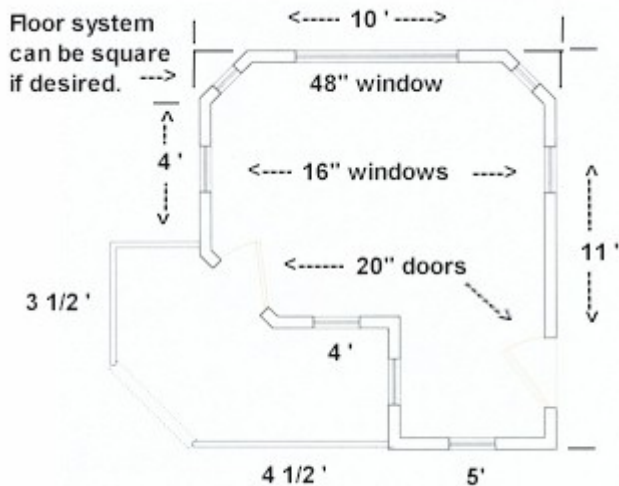
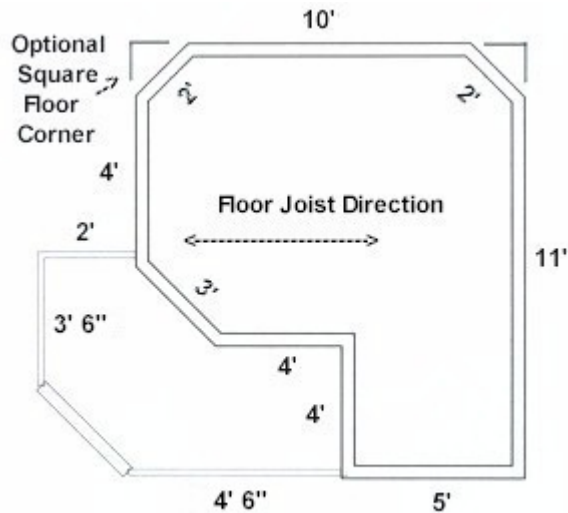
- We assume a basic level of framing and construction knowledge. For instance when we say the roof pitch is 12/12, we need you to know what that means and how to make the cuts for the roof rafters. If you do not and are willing to educate yourself by reading up on those subjects you are unfamiliar with....go on to the next rule.
- Every item in this playhouse was made by hand...even the front and back doors. The trim is simple 1x4, 1x6, 1x8 except for the gingerbread, and the front porch posts and railings. You do not need to make the doors as detailed as these, but you will need to make them yourself since there are no exterior doors of this size available to purchase.
- The exterior detail work....Siding, Window/Door Trim, Porch Posts, Railings, Soffet, Fascia, and Plexiglas Windows, will cost you more than the cost of materials for rest of the playhouse. Also you will spend 2/3 of your time in building this project on finishing the outside.
- Very Important...This article will not give you exact dimensions for every measurement. We give you the critical lengths, widths and heights, and drawings for unusual framing requirements, but you will have to adjust for variations in measurements to make your project fit together.
- You are now ready to build this beautiful structure.

**Step 1:** Frame the Floor system for the house following the drawing on the right.

**Note:** You can use a square corner floor as shown in our project or miter the floor corner to equal the wall angle on the 10' wall as shown at right.

Measure and layout the entire outline of the playhouse **including the porch**. The house and the porch are **one** floor...using the same joists and plywood flooring.

Use 2x8 pressure treated lumber on 16" joist spacing with a single band board around the perimeter. Install 5/8" (or 3/4") tongue and grooved plywood flooring. Cut flush with outline of floor at the band board.

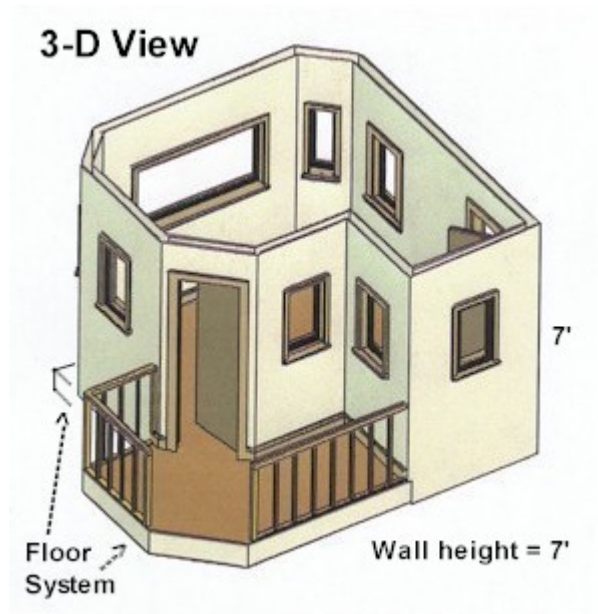


**Step 2:** Measure, cut and frame the walls per the drawings. Wall height is 7'. Most window opening will fit between 16" stud spacing. Use standard framing techniques, including a double top plate.

**Note:** Window and door openings do not need jack studs, except 4' window. The spacing for the windows and doors is small enough that the double top plate will carry the load.

**Step 3:** Assemble, square up and install wall sections. Cover with 1/2" OSB (or plywood) sheathing. Cut out window and door openings.

**Step 4:** Now we're done the easy part...on to the Roof System.



### Roof System



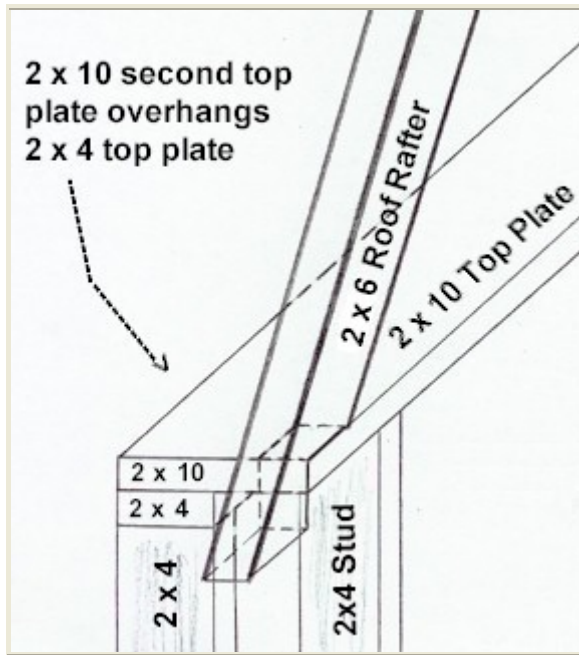
**Step4:** This roof is a standard gable roof running the 10 foot length of the house (1), with an additional gable attached to cover 4' x 5' addition on the right side. (2)

All roof pitches are 12/12.

The only unusual framing detail about this roof is the 4 inch overhang at location "C". See below for the framing technique used to form the 4" overhang of the gable.







Drawing at left represents the gable overhang framing. The 6 inch roof overhang is separate and is in addition to this gable overhang.

Roof overhang can be built by overhanging the roof sheathing 6 inches past the last roof rafter and attaching a 2 x 6 Fascia board (E) as shown on the photo above.

The Porch Roof is framed using standard hip roof techniques. You will determine the individual board lengths, special cuts and angles needed as you frame this roof system. The roof pitch is not critical. It falls 1 foot from the house to the gutter line.

Now on to the exterior trim details

### - Gingerbread Trim -

One of the most striking features of our Victorian playhouse is the lace like trim...which we will affectionately call "gingerbread". A valuable benefit of this article is your ability to copy the shape of the gingerbread trim so you can duplicate it.

**Trim:** All gable and roof gingerbread trim is made from 2 identical halves of the trim you see in the pictures.

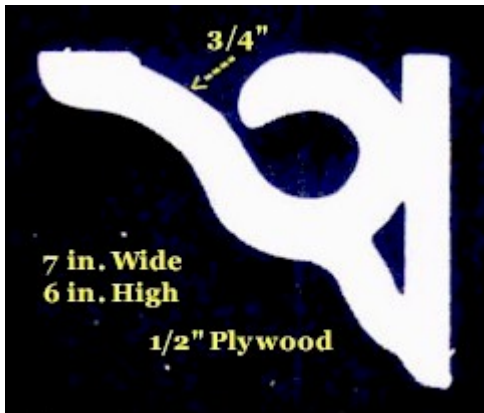
This technique offers the advantage of always having balanced looking trim no matter what the shape. (It also cuts your drawing work in half).

For the gingerbread on your playhouse, your copies do not need to be exact duplicates of the trim pictured here. If your style is close, it will look fine. Because of the mirror image process for making the trim, no matter what it looks like it will be balanced.



The above trim is made from two identical pieces that are 17" high and 17" wide. The finished trim will be 17" high and 34" wide. It is located at each end of the main roof. Location "F" shown on page 2 (This piece of trim is missing from the picture, but the location is marked)

**Note:** Because our roof pitch is 12/12, all of our gable end gingerbread trim will be as high as it is wide.



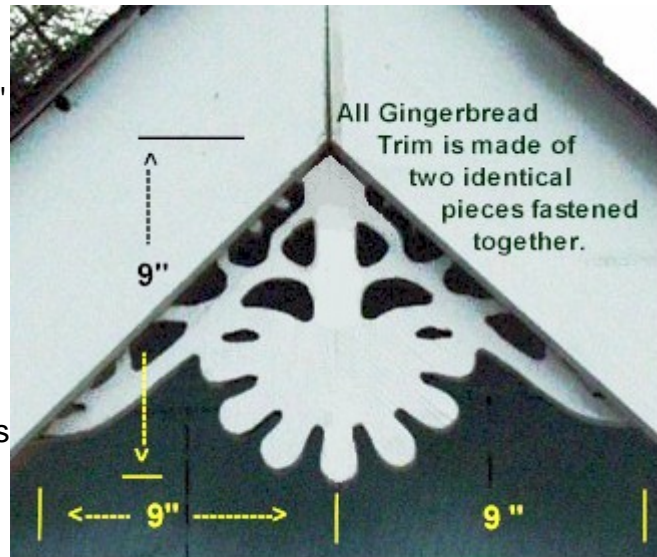
The trim piece to the left is used for the top of the porch posts as shown. Reference location "B" pictured on page 2. Make 8 of them

All gingerbread trim should be made from 1/2" exterior plywood.

The trim piece to the right is for Gable "G" pictured on page 2. (Small Gable)

Fasten the two halves of all gable gingerbread pieces with a small scab of 1/2" plywood on the back at the seam.

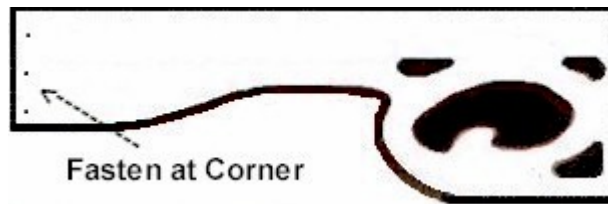
Fasten all trim to the back of the fascia board as shown to the right. (on the 1/2" overhang the back of the fascia board has with the soffit).



The photo on left is the small gable detail.

The outline below is the corner window gingerbread trim. Reference location "A" in

photographs.



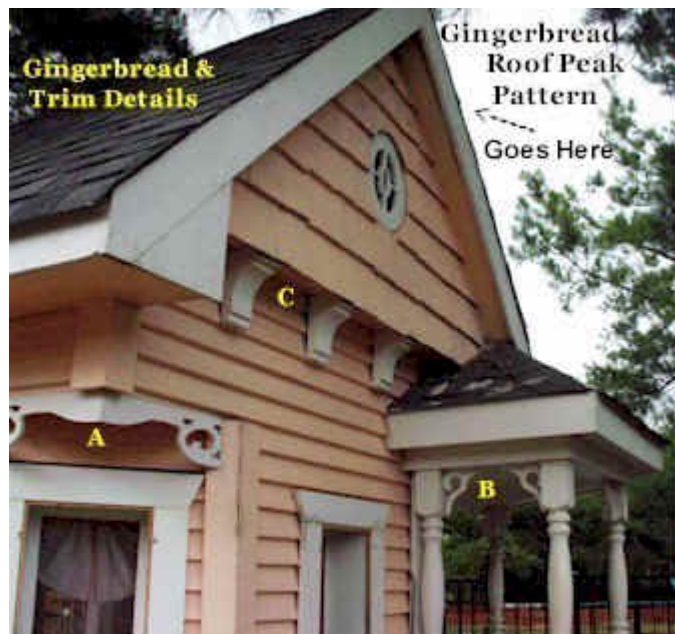
Finishing the outside:

This style playhouse has more detail than most, so be ready for lots of work to make it look like you want it to.

**Siding:** The siding material of our project is regular 3/4" pine boards. We ripped 1x8 pine boards in half to have the small stock necessary to give the look of clapboard siding to scale.

For the Victorian look use cedar shake shingles as siding on the second floor gable ends.

**Window & Door Trim:** Trim around the windows and doors both inside and outside is standard 1x4 pine boards. Door jambs and casing is 1x4 and 1x6 pine stock.





House corner  
with ginger  
bread trim  
and corner  
window

**Doors:** Both doors will probably need to be hand made to fit the door openings you framed. You can look at lumber supply places for "cut down" doors which are made for attic eave access. They come as tall as 5' but are generally an interior door, which will cause a problem with being used on an exterior project.

**Windows:** The windows pictured are an opening in the wall, with screen mounted on the inside, and removable "Plexiglas" window panes on the outside. These windows are an ingenious design where a simple piece of Plexiglas is cut to size and white plastic tape is put on to look like individual panes of glass.

**Porch:** The columns and railing are purchased materials used on regular porches and decks. As you look over the selection to buy, keep in mind that what you buy will need to be cut down. Check to make sure after you cut down the railing pickets or the porch columns that they still look appropriate. Finished columns are 72" long and pickets are 17" tall.





**Other Trim:** The oval windows are hand made with screening stapled to the inside. The corner boards for the siding are simple 1x4's nailed together in an "L" shape to cover the ends of the siding. Notice the angle cut at the top of the window trim. The support blocks below the gable overhang are hand made out of solid pine boards glued together and cut with a band saw. They are 5 " in each dimension.

**Paint:** As you can see the paint scheme can be rather bold and look good on this house. Notice the aqua blue gable that matches the floor and coordinates with the pink house.

**Inside:** You can complete the inside of your playhouse as much as you desire. Our project house has a finished drywall interior with curtains and wallpaper...but remember it was entered in a contest.

In addition to deciding on the interior finish, you can design a ladder up to the attic/second floor as is pictured below if you desire.

- INTERIOR - ATTIC ACCESS



Fancy little bow  
treatments