

**WEEKEND PROJECT**

# Brick Letterbox

Concrete a permanent front yard installation around the water meter

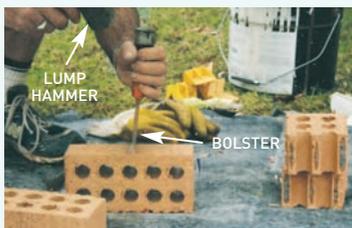
PROJECT JOHN BOWLER

**DIY** \$475  
HAVE IT DONE FOR \$1300  
**SKILL** 123456789  
**TIME** 2 DAYS

**B**rick letterboxes last a lifetime and are virtually maintenance free. This one has solid brickwork with a newspaper faceplate and brass-plated letterbox on one side. The other side is single-skinned brickwork with an open back to house a door made from recycled timber for access to the water meter.

## Cutting bricks

Position the bricks on firm ground. Place a bolster on the set-out and hit it firmly with a lump hammer on all sides for solid bricks and on one side for extruded bricks. Use a scutch hammer to neaten the edge. **TIP** You could also use an angle grinder with a diamond disc.

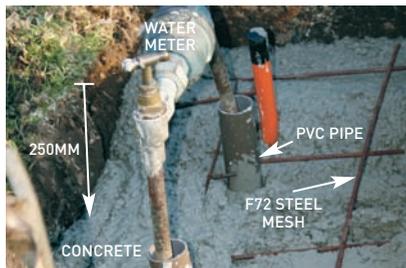


## Bricklaying set-up

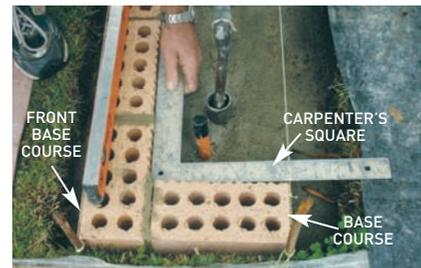
Lay out the base bricks on the concrete slab and set stringlines for the front and back, square the ends with a builder's square and mark the bricks on the footing. Remove the bricks ready for laying when the mortar is mixed. **MIXING MORTAR** Use pre-mixed mortar by the bag, or mix it on site at a ratio of four parts builder's sand to one part cement. Mix in a wheelbarrow with a shovel until it's an even colour, adding water and plasticiser to make it pliable.

**HOW TO**

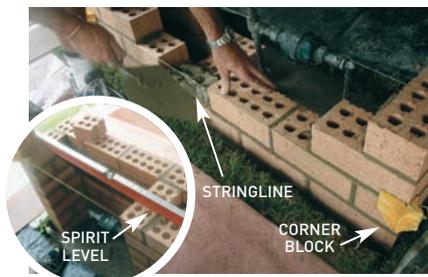
## Build a brick letterbox



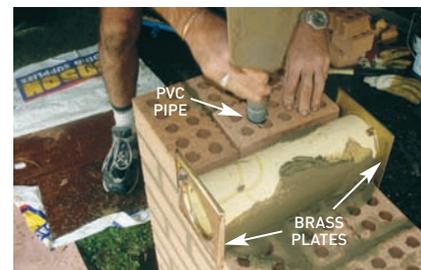
**1 Pour the concrete footing**  
 Mark out the footing, allowing 75mm around the brickwork, and remove soil to 250mm deep. Cut PVC pipe to fit around the water pipe and position F72 steel mesh. Mix and pour the concrete, using a float to level the surface (see Diagram).



**2 Lay the base course**  
 When the concrete is dry, set stringlines for the base course and trowel on a 20mm-deep bed of mortar. Lay the front course, maintaining a 10mm mortar joint, check the corners are square using a builder's square then complete the base course.



**4 Fill between the corners**  
 Set a stringline from corner to corner in line with the top of the next course. Trowel mortar on the top of the last course, batter the bricks with mortar into position. Complete seven courses between the corners, checking with a spirit level.



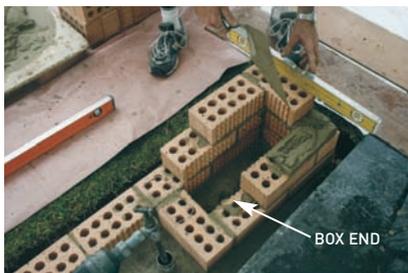
**5 Add newspaper faceplate**  
 Cut 100mm-diameter PVC pipe and attach the brass faceplates with stainless steel screws. Position the pipe in the centre of the letterbox section and bed it with mortar. Cut and bed bricks up to the base of the letterbox.



## Adding trims

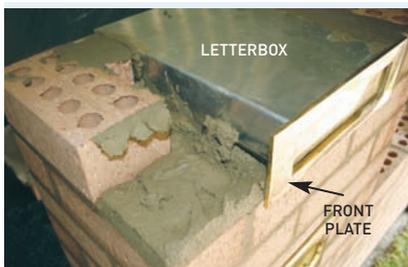
**SANDSTONE CAPPING** was cut to size by the supplier. Apply landscape adhesive to the top brickwork, 15mm from the edges, position the two sandstone slabs and leave to dry.

**HANG THE NUMBER** by drilling a hole using a masonry bit. Apply construction adhesive to the hole and insert the number. Temporarily hold it in place with masking tape until completely dry.



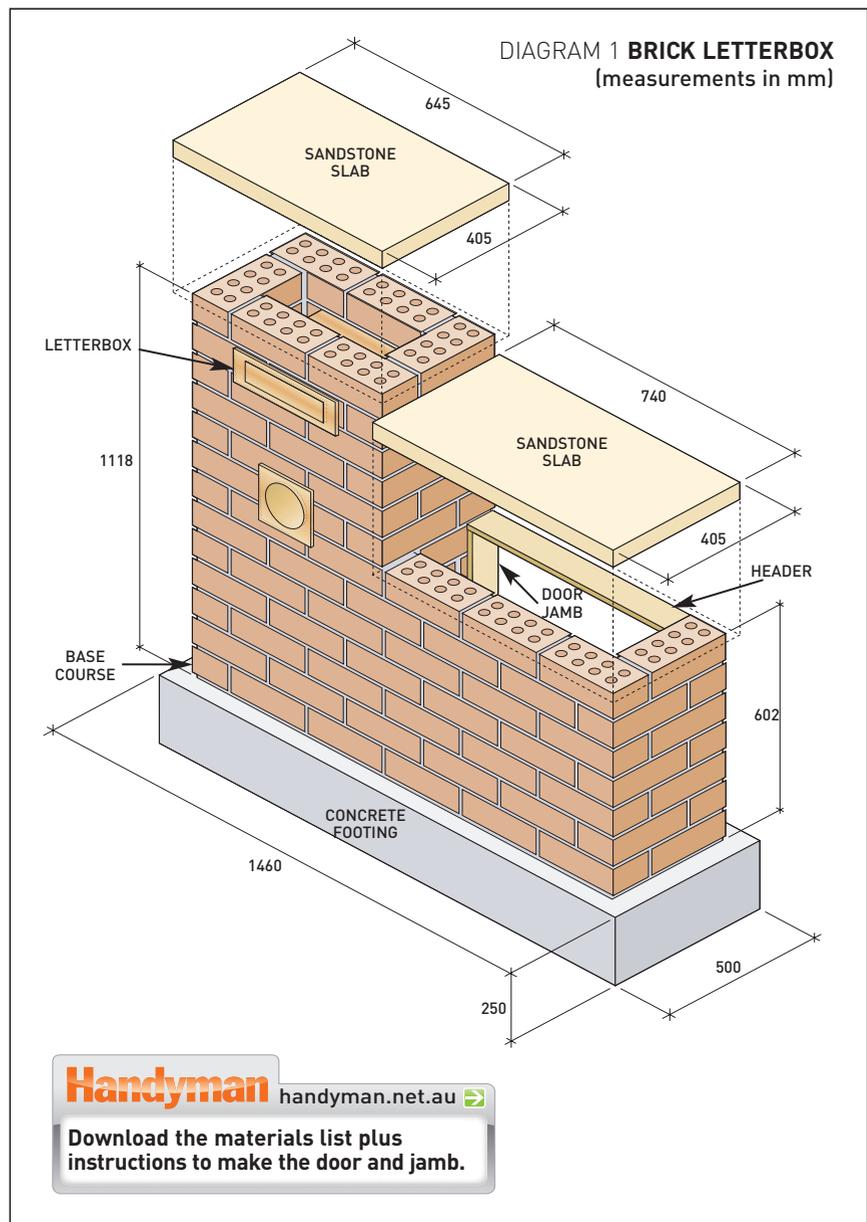
### 3 Build the corners

Remove the stringlines and build up the corners, starting at the open end, using staggered brick-bond joints. Work at one end at a time, checking the brickwork is straight, laying five courses across the ends.



### 6 Install the letterbox

Position the brass slotted front plate with threaded rod each side, bent to hook behind the brickwork. Seal the edges of the box, except the base, with silicone. Put mortar on each side, cut bricks to fit, and lay the top course over the box.



**Handyman** [handyman.net.au](http://handyman.net.au) ➔

Download the materials list plus instructions to make the door and jamb.