

Langue : <b>Anglais</b>	Niveau : <b>5</b>	Date : 13 JANVIER 2024	Durée : 1h30
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## **Priced-out UK house-hunters turn to lorry-sized tiny homes**

*Trailer-like homes are attracting people struggling to buy or rent a house.*

*Robert Booth, Social affairs correspondent. 15 Jan 2023, The Guardian (abridged)*

You might bump your head, and the wheels betray its caravan roots, but it's yours – and that's the key for a growing number of people fleeing the UK housing crisis in a "tiny home".

Factory-built, shaped to a lorry's dimensions so that they can pass under road bridges, and styled to feel like a backwoods cabin, tiny homes are attracting people struggling to afford soaring rents, living in vans or whose hopes of buying have evaporated with rising interest rates.

This week, the Office of National Statistics revealed a rise of 19,000 households in England and Wales living in caravans or other temporary or mobile structures in the last decade. Home ownership is falling and since 2001, the number of households renting has more than doubled. The world's richest man, Elon Musk, reportedly bought a tiny home to use at his Texas spaceport, but for most people the motive is more prosaic: overcoming the fact that across large areas of the UK, including in Manchester, Bath, Nottingham, Cardiff, Brighton and Exeter, average rents are now classed as unaffordable.

A scheme is under way to build up to 15 tiny houses on a former council site in Bristol. Startup companies are offering to deliver tiny homes for prices ranging between £30,000 and £100,000, depending on finish. Cornwall council has installed 15 SoloHaus units in Truro as "move on" housing for some of the 730 households in the county currently in temporary or emergency accommodation. And thirtysomethings despairing at their prospects of owning a home are tapping up<sup>1</sup> friends and farmers for pockets of land on which to park a factory-built house.

"I think a lot more people are going to go down the small house route," said Thom Barber, 33, a former British army soldier and now lorry driver who is planning to move into a £30,000 tiny home in a site on his parents' land in Yorkshire next summer. "A lot of my friends are in camper vans at the moment."

Barber is looking to buy a unit from Ross Clarke, who runs Minor Homes, a new company that has supplied timber-frame units to clients in Oxfordshire and Dorset.

Barber is driven by a desire to "get self-sufficient and use less stuff", and to own a mobile property that will provide him and his family with resilience in the face of future employment and financial shocks.

He is one of millions of people on the wrong end of a huge generational wealth shift that has created the need for options such as tiny homes. His parents "did well, buying and selling

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<sup>1</sup> Asking for.

30 houses,” and he grew up in a seven-bed Victorian property, but now he says “I can’t even afford a one-bedroom apartment” despite working solidly “six or seven days a week”.

Janie Harper, 33, a project manager in Dorset who has been living in a van after finding rent unaffordable since divorcing her husband with whom she shared a four-bedroom house, plans to move into a £50,000 tiny home next spring, which she intends to locate on a friend’s land.

35 She wants to stay in the Lyme Regis area but said that with so many second homes in the area, rent was unaffordable at about £1,300 a month. “I never thought that I would be in a position in my 30s when I wouldn’t have anywhere permanently to live,” she said.

By no means a cure-all for the UK’s housing affordability crisis, the emergence of tiny home experiments nevertheless probes at several of its root causes, including the inflexibility of  
40 planning laws and the cost of land.

Tiny homes have an ambiguous planning status. Some authorities have required planning consent for a dwelling.

Clarke said [...] a tiny house could be classed as a static caravan, but he wants the government to consider them as a new separate planning class because they have architectural merit.

45 “We want to build these for people that want to live in them [as opposed to using them as spare bedrooms],” he said. “We want to bridge that gap between people that feel like they’re living transiently – on a narrowboat, in vans or caravans – into living with a feeling of permanence or semi-permanence.”

Tiny house life has the hallmarks of a social movement, he said. “Living simply, consuming  
50 less, and being more connected to nature are all intrinsic values,” he said. “Tiny houses today can be defined as architecturally relevant houses, less than 400 sq ft, that are built off site, not connected to the ground with foundations and are movable.”

Rachel Butler, 53, from Bristol is a founder, director and co-project manager of the Tiny House  
55 Community, a planned scheme of up to 15 tiny houses on a former council site that was released by the local authority for housing. She has been paying more than £1,500 a month in private rent for herself and her 19-year-old daughter, and recently came close to homelessness because it was so hard to find an affordable property.

They are trying to build the homes for less than £2,000 per sq metre, partly by recycling from  
60 construction sites, and rents will range from £350 to £500 a month, with some will be available for shared ownership.

She said key reasons for choosing to build tiny homes were the idea of “sufficiency, having enough not too much”, limiting the use of resources so “we’re not going to be overshooting planetary boundaries,” and keeping costs down so homes are genuinely affordable.

65 “It’s not about trying to accumulate tons and tons of stuff to feel safe,” she said. “It’s about living in a community to feel safe and to bring that resilience together.”

**Examen Terminal - examen écrit - Semestre 1 2023-2024**

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***WRITE ALL YOUR ANSWERS ON THE EXAM PAPER SHEET. THANK YOU!***

**A/ COMPREHENSION (10 points)**

*Note that you are expected to write organized answers based on the key ideas developed in the text. Use your own words (you can quote key words from the text but not extensive passages) and structure your answers, using appropriate linkers.*

- 1) What phenomenon is described in the article and what are its root causes? **(180 words ± 10%)**
- 2) According to the proponents of the tiny house movement, what are the benefits of living small? **(150 words ± 10%)**

**B/ WRITTEN EXPRESSION (10 points)**

*Choose ONE of the following subjects and write a well-organised essay of **300 words ± 10%**. Give strong, convincing arguments to support your ideas; choose relevant examples; and make sure your English is sophisticated enough.*

*When relevant, references to the documents you studied this semester will be appreciated.*

*Indicate which topic you have chosen.*

- 1) Do you consider the growing number of tiny houses could be a sign of people's changing attitudes about wealth and materialism?
- 2) In the context of the growing housing crisis, some cities have developed housing programs for homeless people and built tiny house communities. Discuss the pros and cons of such an alternative.
- 3) It is widely accepted that a home should offer a sense of permanence. Draw from the documents and examples you studied this semester to discuss this idea.