

1 SPEAKING

a Work in pairs. Tell your partner about a house you like. It could be yours or belong to someone else. Talk about:

- location
- size
- number of rooms/bedrooms
- decor

b Work with another pair. Compare the houses you described in 1a. Decide which one most of you would like to live in, and why.

2 VOCABULARY

a Look at the words below and talk to your partner about what they mean. Match them with definitions 1–6.

architecture client column
designed inspired supported

- 1 a tall, solid, usually stone post which often holds up a roof in a building _____
- 2 how something is planned and made _____
- 3 someone who pays someone else for a service _____
- 4 having weight held by another thing _____
- 5 the design and style of a building _____
- 6 to be given the idea for something _____

3 READING



BETTER READING: USING IMAGES TO MAKE PREDICTIONS

Images such as photos, illustrations and diagrams help you to understand a text as they provide context and additional information. When you first look at a new text, make brief notes about the images to help build your understanding.

- 1 Look at the photographs of homes described in the article, *Hidden Homes*, on page 47. Make predictions about each one.
- 2 Read the article and check your predictions.

a Read the article again. Correct the mistakes in the notes.

The flower house	1 The building was inspired by science fiction films. 2 Has no effect on the surrounding landscape.
The hobbit motel	3 Was used as a set in the film, <i>The Hobbit</i> . 4 Is partly made from polystyrene to keep it cold.
The tree house	5 Was built only using natural materials. 6 Is easy to get into.
the secret eco village	7 Used modern building methods. 8 Was eventually knocked down by the local council.
Fallingwater	9 Was built for architect Frank Lloyd Wright. 10 Is a family home at the moment.

b Match student comments (1–5) with homes (a–e).

- 1 I love the way it blends in with the landscape around it. It looks like a piece of nature, not a home.
- 2 I like how it's a natural form, but it's a pity you can only see it at night.
- 3 It's great that the homes don't need to use any fossil fuels – that's good for the environment.
- 4 It must be uncomfortable living there during the winter months.
- 5 It looks fascinating, but it would feel like you were on a film set.

- a the flower house
b the hobbit motel
c the tree house
d the secret eco village
e Fallingwater

4 SPEAKING

a Work in groups. Ask and answer the questions.

- 1 Which of the five places in the article would you most like to live or stay in? Why?
- 2 Which would you least like to live or stay in? Why?

b Work in groups. Design your own dream home.

- 1 Agree on the following:
 - country
 - city or countryside
 - size
 - number of rooms/bedrooms
 - decor
 - architecture
- 2 Present your ideas to the class.

Hidden Homes

Architecture is an art form that is always changing. Once we used to build tower blocks and skyscrapers with hundreds of floors, as buildings dominated their surroundings. Now, we're starting to build the other way – into mountains and below the earth. In the past we used to destroy forests and fields as our need for homes increased. Now, more and more, we are building with nature in mind. Here are some examples of homes that blend in with their environment.

1 The Flower House

While the idea of an underground bunker might seem like something from a science fiction film, it is increasingly common for homes to be built into the earth. While many people might assume that a home underground would be dark, the use of sun pipes to the surface means this isn't the case. Due to their position, sun pipes bring in light for a longer period of the day than most windows. Underground houses are also more energy-efficient as below ground the temperature tends to stay comfortable all year round. The Flower House, home to former footballer Gary Neville, is an interesting example of an underground home inspired by nature. Designed in the shape of a flower, each room is a petal. At night, when the lights are on in the house, it creates a beautiful flower of light in the surrounding countryside.

2 The Hobbit Motel

For many people underground homes are associated with the book and film of *The Hobbit*. The film has inspired a very special motel in New Zealand. Like Tolkien's fictional houses, the motel is built into a hillside and rooms have circular windows and doorways. To make the building more energy-efficient, it is partly made out of polystyrene. This helps to keep it cool in summer and warm in winter. Unlike a 'real' hobbit home, the rooms are actually quite spacious, making the motel a very comfortable place to stay.



3 The Secret Eco Village

In 1993, a group of friends didn't just build an eco-friendly home, they built an eco-friendly village. In the mountains of west Wales, they built a number of huts from wood, mud and straw. The small community generated their own electricity and grew all their own food. They didn't tell anyone else about it, and the development was a secret for five years. From a distance it's hard to see the huts as they are covered in grass. However, in 1998, the pilot of a plane flying overhead noticed the sun reflecting off one of the village's solar panels, and so the secret came to an end. The local council wanted the village to be knocked down, as the houses didn't have planning permission. It took twenty years until they agreed to let the eco-village stay.



4 The Tree House

When Nick Weston lost his job in London, he wanted a change. Moving from the hustle and bustle of city life, he decided to go to relocate to a forest and build a home in the trees. Using recycled rubbish and a little wood, he built a tree house. The small, one-bedroomed home has a wood-burning stove to provide heat and great views of the tree canopy. To enter the tree-house Nick climbs a ladder. And every morning, he wakes to hear squirrels on his roof. Nick has completely taken to woodland living – instead of shopping, he hunts and eats the wild animals of the forest.

5 Fallingwater

When a client wanted a house built near a beautiful waterfall, famous architect Frank Lloyd Wright went one better. He built a house over the waterfall, making the house seem to float above the falling water like magic. In fact, it's supported by a central column. Fallingwater has been called the 'best all-time work of American architecture'. Surrounded by glass, you feel as if you are outside when you are inside. Fallingwater wasn't easy to build – it would cost \$2.7m in today's money. The house is now open to the public as a museum, and has more than 100,000 visitors a year.

