

Artist Living in Garbage Bin Shows England's High Housing Costs

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. Property (Noun) /'prɒ:pərti:/ an area of land and the buildings on it
Example: The property is available for weekly or monthly rentals.
2. Move in (Phrasal Verb) /mu:v in/ to start living in a new home
Example: We bought the apartment a few months ago, but won't move in until the end of the year.
3. Statement (Noun) /'steɪtmənt/ an expression of an attitude, belief, etc. that is made through one's actions or appearance
Example: Activists sat in cages outside the government buildings to make a statement about animal cruelty.
4. Afford (Verb) /ə'fɔ:rd/ to have enough money to buy something
Example: I love this emerald ring, but I'm afraid I can't afford it.
5. Site (Noun) /saɪt/ a place where a building, town, etc. is or will be located
Example: This is one of the proposed sites for the city's new airport.
6. Portable (Adjective) /'pɔ:təbəl/ able to be carried or moved easily
Example: My phone ran out of battery while I was hiking, but thankfully I had a portable charger with me.



Properties in London come in all shapes and sizes, but not many are quite like Harrison Marshall's. He's moved into a garbage bin. Well, not just a garbage bin — Marshall, who is an artist, has made it into a very small home. He says he plans to live in it for a year to make a statement about high property prices in the English capital.

In March 2023, UK bank Halifax said the average price of a property in London was around \$640,000 — about \$290,000 more than the average price in the rest of the country. And according to apartment sharing website SpareRoom, in December 2022, the average rental price of a room in London was about \$1,150 per month.

Marshall said that living in the garbage bin — in an area called Bermondsey, southeast of the city center — was the only way he could afford to live in this part of London. The garbage bin house — which is built on a bin 3.6 meters long and 1.8 meters wide — is made from wood, and has space for a bed and some personal items.

An arts charity has allowed Marshall to use this site, and he's paying about \$60 per month to use the bin. He said it cost a little less than \$5,000 to build the home. There's no bathroom inside, so he uses a portable toilet on the site, and he showers at work or at the gym. Marshall said this is a statement about house prices, and not a solution — adding that no one should have to live in a garbage bin.

DISCUSSION

1. What are your thoughts on Harrison Marshall's garbage bin house?
2. Do you think you'd enjoy living in a very small home?
3. How big is the average house or apartment where you live?
4. Is housing expensive in your town or city? Has this changed in recent years?
5. Have you ever thought about building your own home?