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Living in a box

Could a humble sea container help solve the housing crisis in our cities? **Anthea Masey** meets the crate-dwellers who are happy to call them home

A mile east of the gleaming towers of Canary Wharf, close to the mouth of the River Lea on the north bank of the Thames, is a wasteland of old wharves, warehouses and burnt-out buildings. As the developers' bulldozers have moved eastward through what remains of the London docklands, this post-industrial

Carole Luby is a mature student in the final year of her fine art degree at the University of East London. "I was living in Crouch End and the journey to college each day was killing me. I was attracted by the idea of living and working in a container, but when I first visited there were no live/work units on the site and I went away disappointed. Then, a

minutes in my YW van. Before I came here, I lived in a traditional two-bedroom flat in a converted house, but now I find I am happy to live frugally, with few possessions, surrounded only by what I need. I find the whole experience very liberating."
In the short time Carole has been here, she has forged links between the University of

hot, but I can always open the large sliding doors on to the balcony and the porthole window to create a breeze."
Across the landing from Carole's container lives Paul Lee, an internet systems administrator. Paul's live/work unit, for which he pays £800 a month, including service charges, is spread over two 18ft by

Container City is the brainchild of Eric Reynolds, who has been instrumental in establishing some of the capital's best-loved markets over the past 30 years. He was a skilled silversmith, and so understood that crafts people needed not only cheap work space but also somewhere to sell their wares. This vision lay behind the