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today in Adobe construction, rammed earth, and compressed house earth blocks. Today's log houses are often spacious and elegant, but in Colonial America log cabins reflected the difficulties of life on the North American border. This simple design and hardy construction technique is said to have been brought to America from Sweden. The Homestead Act of 1862 created an opportunity for the do-it-yourself pioneer to come back to Earth with sodhus, cobhouses and straw bale homes. Today, architects and engineers are taking a new look at man's earliest building materials—the earth's practical, affordable, energy-efficient materials. Prefabricated houses in a mobile Home Park in Sunnyvale, California. Nancy Nehring/Moment Mobile/Getty Images (cropped) The expansion of the railways and the invention of the assembly line changed the way American buildings were put together. Factory-made modular and prefabricated houses have been popular since the early 20th century, when Sears, Aladdin, Montgomery Ward and other mail-order companies delivered house kits to remote corners of the United States. Some of the first prefabricated structures were made of cast iron in the mid-19th century. Pieces would be cast into a foundry, delivered to the construction site, and then assembled. This kind of assembly line manufacturing became popular and necessary as American capitalism flourished. Today, prefabs are gaining new respect as architects experiment with bold new shapes in house kits. Spherical Home designed to mimic a molecular carbon atom. Richard Cummins/Lonely Planet Images/Getty Images In the 1950s it was all about the space race. The Age of Space Exploration began with the National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958, which created NASA and a lot of geeks and geeks. The era brought a plethora of innovations, metallprefab Lustron houses to the eco-friendly geodesic dome. The idea of constructing dome-shaped structures dates back to prehistoric times, but the 20th century brought exciting new methods to dome design—of necessity. It turns out that the prehistoric dome model is also the best design to cope with extreme weather trends like violent hurricanes and tornadoes—a 21st century result of climate change. The 21st Century Tiny Home. Bryan Bedder/Getty Images Architecture can touch memories of a homeland or be a response to historical events. Architecture can be a mirror that reflects what is valued—as neoclassicism and democracy or the showy oeuzzling of the gilded age. In the 21st century, some people have turned their rat breeds alive around by making the conscious choice of letting without, downsizing, and clipping away thousands of square feet off their living area. The Tiny House Movement is a reaction to the perceived social chaos of the 21st century. Tiny homes are about 500 square feet with minimal amenities—seemingly a rejection of the supersized American culture. People join this movement for many reasons, explains The Tiny Life website, but the most popular causes include environmental conditions, financial problems, and the desire for more time and freedom. The Tiny House as a reaction to societal influences can be no different from other buildings built in response to historical events. Every trend and movement perpetuates debate of the issue—when does a building become architecture? Architecture?

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