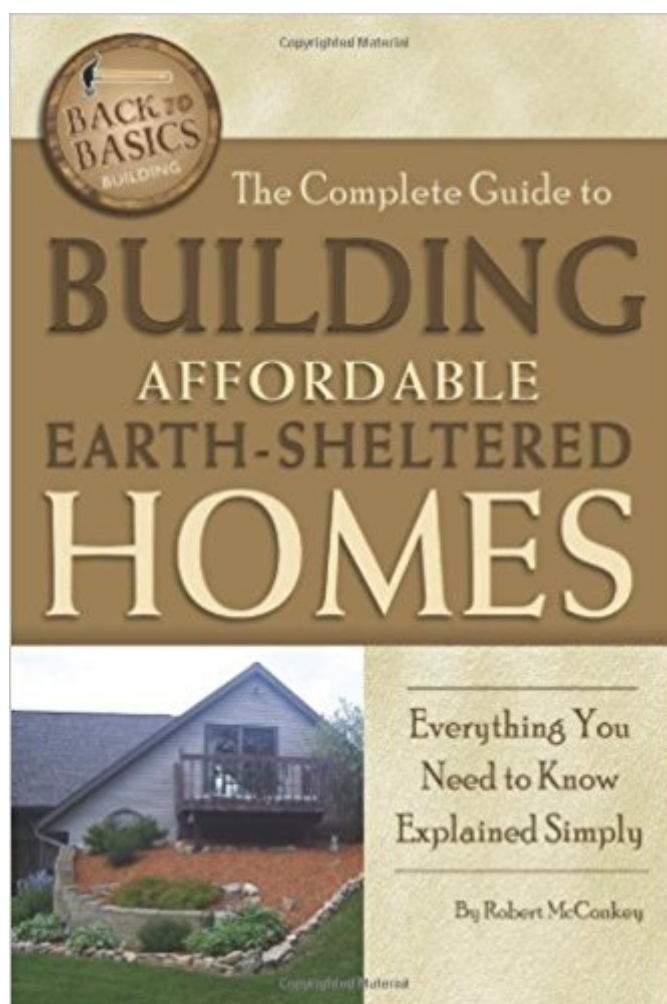


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# The Complete Guide To Building Affordable Earth-Sheltered Homes: Everything You Need To Know Explained Simply (Back To Basics Building)





## Synopsis

Earth-sheltered building has existed since the heyday of Skara Brae in Scotland 5,000 years ago, and is used today by people around the world, from the Yaodong of northwest China to the subterranean residents of Coober Pedy, Australia, and even to converted missile silos in America. Contrary to popular misconceptions of being cramped, dark, or dank domiciles, earth-sheltered homes come in a number of different styles, incorporating brilliant techniques designed to bring light and air into the home. With *The Complete Guide to Building Affordable Earth-Sheltered Homes*, you will learn about the many different types of earth-sheltered homes and their various advantages: life span that can be two to three times longer than that of conventional housing inexpensive building materials reduced maintenance costs lower energy costs (some by as much as 80%)

The book also examines the different environmental factors that you need to consider when selecting which style to build and how to begin, and carry out, your building process. Some of the factors discussed include the different types of soil and how to adjust to them, the level of precipitation and how to manage runoff, and how to maximize use of natural light sources. Construction experts and earth-sheltered homebuilders have been interviewed and their expertise is included in this guide to help you learn how you can create your own underground home. Details of construction methods are found throughout the book, including tips and advice for planning, excavation, flooring, walls, framing, waterproofing, roofing, drainage, and insulation. You will also learn how to pour your own footings and floor, how to dry stack concrete block walls, how to use post and beam framing, and how to waterproof the membranes. With the information provided in this book, you can start planning and building your own earth-sheltered home in no time so that you, too, can benefit from the natural protection of the earth. If earth-sheltered building is good enough for Bill Gates \$136 million mansion, then it just might be good enough for you too.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Robert Alan McConkey is a native of the Pacific Northwest where he grew up with a passionate interest in science and business. After getting an undergraduate degree in Zoology and Oceanography from the University of Washington, he went on to manage a small homebuilding and remodeling company in the Seattle area. An active member of the Kitsap County Home Builders Association, McConkey served as a national director to the Home Builders Association in the early 1980s. Later he owned and operated a marine construction company that built concrete and wood floating docks. Robert is still active in his marine construction and maintenance business and works part-time as a freelance writer and business consultant. He currently teaches several online courses on e-commerce and is a published writer and poet. He has a master's degree in business and holds a teaching certificate for High School level math and science. His wife Helen and two grown children, Andrew and Kendra, enjoy an active life in the Pacific Northwest that includes boating, scuba diving, running, and cycling."

Recently's "recommendations" for me came up with a lot of titles in the Earth Sheltered Housing subject line. Most of them were "picture books" from the 70's & 80's that weren't worth very much even then, let alone now. This was the most recent one I noticed so I bought it on impulse, not expecting much. I don't think the thing is enough for anyone to go out and use as a construction/design manual but careful reading and note taking should help a person decide if one of these homes is something for them. If you've read Mother Earth News magazine for enough years you'll have come across much of what is presented and may have even seen some of the websites profiled (some of those sites quite badly done- their design/construction work hopefully better). Most of the limited book list isn't worth very much in my opinion- 's way of showing "people who buy/look at this often b/l these" is bound to turn them up and maybe better books too. If you can find a contractor locally (some of the profiled ones do travel it seems) reading this book will give you enough information to ask the right questions and maybe even determine whether or not your "contractor" knows what he's doing. It's worth adding to your dream home library but you'll need

more to actually go out and build.

Book was very "incomplete". I picked it up because it was more recent than others, but it was badly put together. Editing was also really bad. There are paragraphs that are repeated or say the opposite of what the author probably intended, etc. Very unimpressed.

Helpful

ok

This is probably the best book on underground house construction in print. Rob Roy does a good job of telling us the good and bad experiences he had building several earth sheltered houses.

Easy read! This book makes this dream of mine seem very doable!! My husband has been reading it & is excited about the prospect & benefits as well. Great guidelines!

I am always suspicious when I see a book title proclaiming the book is complete and everything you need to know about a subject. This usually is not possible, especially with any complex topic. So when I received a review copy of *The Complete Guide to Building Affordable Earth-Sheltered Homes: Everything You Need to Know Explained Simply* by Robert McConkey, I raised my eyebrows. And in this case, it was for good reason to be skeptical. I think that a better title for this book would have been *Building Tips from a Seasoned Contractor, with Some Emphasis on Earth-Sheltered Housing*. There is some good information in the book, but you really have to dig through a lot of poorly edited prose to find it. This book could have been about half the size and still contained everything useful in it. And some of the illustrations have such poor resolution they are unreadable; it looks like they were pulled off the internet. I am surprised that Atlantic Publishing let this out the door the way it is. Well, enough grouching...what of value can I point to? The advantages of earth-sheltered homes over more conventional housing in terms of energy savings, personal comfort, less general maintenance, and disaster resistance are explained, along with the possible difficulty in obtaining a mortgage or finding a buyer. Some historical perspective on earth-sheltering is also offered. When considering appropriate design, the author mentions the challenge of providing sufficient natural daylight, and how this can be addressed. How to conform to building codes? How to provide proper drainage around the house? What building materials are appropriate? What

planning needs to occur? General site selection and excavation needs are discussed. A detailed description of forming and pouring concrete stems from the author's years of experience in doing this on many types of projects. Electrical and plumbing needs are discussed from a general point of view, without much specific attention to the needs of earth-sheltered homes. Different heating options are briefly mentioned. Some of the greatest value of this book emerges from the author's experience as a building contractor. He frequently mentions ways that you might save money by careful shopping, selecting and negotiating with sub-contractors, locating the right equipment, avoiding construction delays, etc. Obviously there can be challenges for anything underground to keep it warm, dry, and with fresh air. The chapter on waterproofing, insulating and ventilating the home does address these needs more specifically for earth-sheltering. Most of the discussion about finishing details is really general to any home construction. And that is about it; not a whole lot of meat to this book...certainly far from the promise of its title!

Great book!!!!

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