

WARM UP

1 According to what you have read so far, decide if the statements below about cohousing are true (T) or false (F).

- 1 People want to help protect the environment. _____
- 2 Outside caterers prepare the meals. _____
- 3 Residents save money on heating and electricity. _____
- 4 Outside areas are kept in order by gardeners. _____
- 5 Everybody takes part in decision-making. _____
- 6 They are easily sold because not often found on the market. _____
- 7 Personal indoor space is limited. _____

GLOSSARY

wheelchair: sedia a rotelle

fencing: recinto

to deem: ritenere

wrought iron: ferro battuto

A cohousing project in the USA

Swan's Market in Oakland, USA is a historical building dating from the early 20th century, which has been renovated to accommodate a food market, an art gallery, a children's art museum, shops, a café, offices, houses to rent at reasonable prices, and cohousing. This is the first project of this size which mixes cohousing



with commercial and cultural facilities, and is part of an ambitious plan to bring life back into Oakland's city centre. The residents of this cohousing are enthusiastic about their new homes in the city centre and greatly appreciate the advantages of being able to go to restaurants, cafés and shops without having to get the car out of the garage. It is also ideal for disabled people who confirm that the community and the majority of Oakland is easily accessible by wheelchair.

The houses of Swan's Market Cohousing are bright and airy, with one or two bedrooms, and were designed according to ideas put forward by the residents themselves. Safety is also a priority for all residents and was one of the main issues during planning. None of the members of the group wanted to live in a community protected by gates and fencing, but they realised that the centre of Oakland becomes deserted after 6 p.m. and is not deemed to be a quiet neighbourhood. In the end, the residents and their consultants opted for a flexible gate system. The wrought iron gate on 9th Street is left open during the day and closed at night, while the cohousing residents have another internal gate which opens with a key. The commercial success of the project has also contributed to the residents feeling more secure as each day they see new shops and offices opening up in the neighbourhood.

About thirty-three people, ranging from the age of one to seventy, live in Swan's Market cohousing.

Before, there were another five families with young children, but they moved away probably due to the fact that green areas are limited, and also because in the centre of Oakland the schools do not have a good reputation. However, a healthy community which works well, can end up attracting families too, even if they have to spend more on private school education for their children, as they save money on property taxes in areas like Oakland, which are not considered so fashionable on the market.

Adapted and translated from *Cohousing e condomini solidali* ed. by M. Lietaert

READING COMPREHENSION

2 Read the text and decide if the statements below are true (T) or false (F).

- 1 At the beginning of the 20th century, Swan's Market was a food market.
- 2 The people in the cohousing community live in rented accommodation.
- 3 This project has been designed to attract people back to Oakland's city centre.
- 4 Disabled people have no problems getting about the neighbourhood.
- 5 Residents were not worried about safety aspects as Oakland is quiet in the evening.
- 6 At the moment no families with children live in the cohousing community.
- 7 Oakland is not one of the most popular places on the property market.

T	F
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

VOCABULARY

3 Match the following words or expressions with their synonyms.

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 1 keep in order | a <input type="checkbox"/> inside |
| 2 take part | b <input type="checkbox"/> popular at the moment |
| 3 indoor | c <input type="checkbox"/> participate |
| 4 reasonable | d <input type="checkbox"/> choose |
| 5 bring life back into | e <input type="checkbox"/> tidy |
| 6 accessible | f <input type="checkbox"/> suggest |
| 7 put forward | g <input type="checkbox"/> revitalise |
| 8 opt for | h <input type="checkbox"/> moderate |
| 9 fashionable | i <input type="checkbox"/> able to be got around |

