

7

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE POSSIBILITIES?

The following six case studies provide information on how a range of housing providers have used modular or manufactured homes to provide affordable housing.

Project Name: Wellington Heights

Location: Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Developer: Rural Housing Institute (RHI) and Mid-America Housing Project

Home Manufacturer: Iowa Quality Homes, subsidiary of RHI

Design: Three infill homes are two-story "Queen Anne" Victorian style in keeping with the neighborhood. Total square footage of the three-bedroom, two-bath homes is 1,320. Features include a peaked roof, garage, front porch, and shutters.

Why chose modular: Mid-America was aware of modular construction and used modular homes for several reasons. The homes' dimensions were a perfect choice for deep, narrow lots. It was also believed that the cost would be lower than site built.



Modular units feature site-built porches and steep-pitch roofs (courtesy, Rural Housing Institute).



Working with permit officials:

The modular producer was much more accustomed to working in rural areas where “anything goes.” City codes were much stricter and there were tighter constraints to design.

Reception by neighborhood:

Plans were taken to the neighborhood, which had a well-organized homeowner group. Brought in an artist’s rendering of the plan and made several minor design changes after the meeting.

Point of interest:

Rural Housing Institute, a nonprofit developer in rural Iowa, became interested in using modular homes. The organization worked with several manufacturers but found that they were unable to accommodate the customization they wanted. So they opened their own 20,000-square-foot modular housing plant. The land was acquired through grants and was in an industrial part of town. The plant was built from scratch. While starting up was not an easy prospect, they’re now producing homes and plan to produce 45 this year. They have worked out great deals with local Iowa manufacturers like Pella Windows and Amana to obtain products at low costs.

For more information: See www.ruralhomes.org.

Project Name: Hazel Park
Location: Hazel Park, Michigan
Developer: Venture, Inc., a subsidiary of Oakland/Livingston Human Services Agency, Pontiac, Michigan

Home Manufacturer: Redman Homes, Topeka, Indiana

Design: This project consisted of four homes: two ranch homes at 1,230 square feet; two two-story Colonials at 1,560 square feet. These fit into an eclectic neighborhood filled with many home styles.

Why chose modular: Quick site wrap-up left little exposure to theft or vandalism of both homes and tools in this inner-city project. Also allowed the nonprofit developer to start and wrap up the project in minimum time.

Working with permit officials: No problems here. City planner was supportive of the plan following a presentation to the city council where sketches were shown and



Single-story modulars fit into this neighborhood of eclectic home styles (courtesy, Venture, Inc.).



assurances were given that they were not “mobile” homes. The newspapers also picked up on the story and presented it in a positive way.

Reception by neighborhood:

Neighbors were happy that these unsightly empty lots were being revitalized. On the day the homes were set, neighbors assembled their children, set up lawn chairs and watched the procedure. Lemonade was passed out.

Point of interest: The prevailing concern for these homes was that they be energy efficient. To reach an ENERGY STAR rating, they used basement walls made of reinforced concrete with insulation applied to interior of walls. Redman Homes agreed to do extra sealing between marriage walls with particular attention to sealing the area between the sill plate and foundation wall. All lighting fixtures have compact fluorescent light bulbs.

Project Name: ROAR Project

Location: Toledo, Ohio

Developer: Wallick Construction, Columbus, Ohio, along with Renaissance Ottawa Area Residences, a nonprofit housing group in Toledo.

Home Manufacturer: Unibilt Industries, Inc.

Design: This large-scale scattered infill project consisting of 50 homes is, at press time, more than halfway completed. The homes are all variations of three basic neo-Victorian styles in sizes ranging from a 1,300-square-foot three-bedroom, one-and-a-half bath home to a 1,500-square-foot four-bedroom Colonial. Homes have front porches and garages and feature fish-scale siding, gable details, varying window sizes, and different colored siding.

Why chose modular: Main reason was to get the house up and secured quickly to deter thieves and vandals. Quicker production time also helped save money on interest on the construction loan.



Modular homes in foreground are virtually indistinguishable from older house at left (courtesy, Unibilt Industries, Inc.).



Working with permit officials:

This plan was developed in conjunction with the mayor of Toledo who used his influence with city officials and inspectors to help push the project through the permit and the building process. Revitalization of a neighborhood in need was the main goal.

Reception by neighborhood:

There was no opposition and neighbors were happy to see the project getting underway.

Point of interest: To fit into the neighborhood and to maximize square footage, these houses were designed with partial basements built to store the home's mechanical systems. The basic plan called for one-third basement, one-third crawl space, one-third under garage as is. This also helped solve another problem relating to urban sites—dealing with what lays underground, for example, fuel and septic tanks, old foundations, and more. These items didn't necessarily have to be unearthed and disposed of but rather left buried underground.

