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Since our last update, the architects and clients selected a contractor, Steve Olson, and the manufacturer, Carolina Building Solutions, began work on the Dwell Home at their factory in Salisbury, North Carolina. Initial cost estimates for the home had come in at \$50,000 over budget, and so some design and construction elements needed to be revisited in order to keep the cost at \$200,000. The design that Resolution: 4 Architecture had originally submitted had exceeded the square-footage requirements in order to accommodate the clients' specific programming needs. A reduction in scale from 2,260 square feet to 2,040 square feet helped bring costs down. Some exterior decks were eliminated, as was a 250-square-foot studio/office. In another cost-saving measure, the house was re-sited, which meant removing the walk-out basement that had originally been proposed. Once these modifications were made and approved, the architects revised their working drawings for the home and received new break-out cost estimates from the contractor and updated pricing from the factory. At press time, when the manufacturing process had just begun, I spoke with architect Joseph Tanney about the progress of the Dwell Home. As you are reading this, the Dwell Home modules may very well be on their way to the home site in Pittsboro, North Carolina. . . .

Modules on the Move

After five months of research, reflection, and revision, construction begins in earnest on the Dwell Home.

AA: So what will happen at the factory?

JT: The framing and the five wood modules will be constructed. The more that can be factory-installed, the better. CBS will install the Loewen anodized-aluminum windows and interior window trim, sheathing, Tyvek, the interior partitions, the insulation in the walls and ceilings, the plywood subfloor, all kitchen and bathroom cabinetry, the rough plumbing and electrical, 80 to 90 percent of the Sheetrock, and the conduit to prepare the house for Home Director's home networking system. Once this is completed over a period of 8 to 12 weeks, the five modules will be loaded onto five trucks and delivered to the site. The cost of factory work comes in at just under 50 percent of the total budget for the home.

AA: And onsite?

JT: Once the modules are delivered to the site, the contractor will supervise the installation of the roofing membrane, the exterior cladding (cedar and cement board), the bamboo floors and Marmoleum floors, all of the Kohler bathroom and kitchen fixtures (with the exception of the tub, which will be factory-installed), the bathroom and kitchen countertops, the Lennox HVAC air-conditioning system, two Neptune doors, and the Kadan storage cabinets.

AA: What was the most difficult thing about finding the right factory?

JT: Each manufacturer has different levels of ability and willingness in terms of what they can and cannot build. One of the biggest challenges was that a modern home doesn't look like anything they've done before, so it's identified as a problem. There is a stigma of building ugly modern houses. A lot of these manufacturers don't want any part of it. So finding someone receptive is key.

AA: What did Carolina Building Solutions have to offer?

JT: Carolina Building Solutions was able to work out the roof issue quickly—that issue being that the roof was atypical from what they usually do. It's not a gable roof. It's not that they can't do it but that it affects their assembly line and therefore their bottom line. The ingrained aesthetic has influenced what's done on the assembly line, which affects the cost of homes and the profit of manufacturing companies. Today, modular homes cost less because everyone is doing the same old, same old. Not until Dwell Home—like modern homes are being built at a substantial volume will the costs really come down.

CBS had never built a 16-foot-wide module before. We think that 16 feet is the most efficient module to use, but not all manufacturers can or are approved to build them. It typically has to do with transportation. Twelve and 14 feet are more typical. We were lucky that CBS could build the 16-foot module for us. We have more flexibility in terms of layouts. It's big enough to accommodate domestic life. It's a dimension that comes from doing a lot of lofts and apartments in New York City, where space is at a premium.

Ultimately, our design methodology needs to embody CBS's construction methodology. They have an assembly line and we need to understand that what we're asking them to do is a variation from what they do every day.

AA: What has been the biggest obstacle to the Dwell Home?

JT: Ask me in another couple months. Seriously, we are going for it, but there are many hurdles. We can see the path, we just have to get through it. The good thing is that we are getting closer and closer to realizing this idea. And that's exhilarating. ■



1st Floor

A Living Room
B Dining Room
C Kitchen
D Powder Room
E Carport
F Storage Area

2nd Floor

G Office
H Bathroom
I Bedroom
J Walk-in Closet
K Master Bedroom
L Terrace

We'd like to thank our Dwell Home sponsors: Artemide, Bang & Olufsen, Bienenstock, Casarstone, Emma Gardner Design, Fisher & Paykel, Forbo,

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